

The Upper Triad Material

Commentaries VI

Edited by Peter Hamilton

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The Upper Triad Material

Commentaries VI

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The Upper Triad Association is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit educational organization established in 1974 and devoted to the study and practice of various principles leading to personal and spiritual growth.

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The Full List of Upper Triad Books:

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The Upper Triad Material 3rd Edition

Articles	3 volumes
Commentaries	15 volumes
Miscellany	2 volumes

The Upper Triad Material 4th Edition

Introduction
1 Purpose
2 Consciousness
3 Truth and Reality
4 Karma
5 Knowledge
6 Religion
7 Manifestation

A Personal Journey 4th Edition

Through the Grace of God 1st Edition

Preface

The Upper Triad Association is a non-profit educational organization, formed in 1973 and formally organized in 1974 by a small group of Christian students dedicated to spiritual growth through the study and practice of various ethical, metaphysical, spiritual, and theosophical principles.

The Upper Triad Material is a collection of over 1,500 articles and commentaries, plus various prayers, mantras, meditation outlines, quotations, synthetic triangles, and keywords relating to various aspects of metaphysics, religion, philosophy, psychology, and theosophy.

Since 1974, the Upper Triad Material has been published and distributed incrementally through the sometimes monthly, sometimes bi-monthly Upper Triad Journal, and has been reprinted as needed in various forms, most recently in a series of topical issues that cover the entire range of material and through the Association's website.

The Upper Triad Material is written by members of the Upper Triad Association. There is generally no author attribution, as most of the material is evoked through prayer and meditation, and the writers have no need of recognition. The material is augmented by a number of articles written by and attributed to associate members, e.g., two series of articles by K.M.P. Mohamed Cassim and an article by Robert L. Moore.

The various articles are relatively easy to read. The various commentaries are relatively more technical and not as easy to read due to the style of writing and the numerous correlations suggested via parentheses. This style of writing is not contrived. Commentaries are simply written according to the flow of consciousness of the writer.

The commentaries are not intended for the casual reader, but for the more serious student who is willing to invest the time and attention to understand both the semantic context and meditative import. Neither articles nor commentaries are intended to be read in any intellectual sense. Many of the

commentaries are incidentally intended to discourage casual reading and to encourage a more deliberate-but-non-linear approach that allows and stimulates a more intuitive reading.

The Upper Triad Material is not prescriptive, but it is suggestive. It is what we understand, at the moment it is written. It is intended to stimulate constructive thinking and foster spiritual growth. Each thought may be accepted, deferred, or rejected, in whole or in part, according to the framework, perspective, values, and consciousness of the reader. The challenge is for the student to read the material meditatively and intuitively rather than intellectually. We believe that self-realization occurs not through any rational or intellectual process, but rather through grace and through the meditative quality of higher consciousness. In the final analysis, it is up to the reader to discern the truth, according to his or her own consciousness.

Third Edition

This third edition is organized functionally and chronologically, in three titles, namely *Articles*, *Commentaries*, and *Miscellany*. The articles are written without much regard for format or length. Commentaries are naturally constrained to one page as originally published. The miscellaneous material is fairly diverse, but complements the various articles and commentaries.

In this third edition, the material is presented with articles and commentaries numbered according to their original sequence, except in the case of some series, where there are intervening articles or commentaries that would disrupt the series, in which case the series of articles and commentaries are presented in their more natural order.

Notes

To the best of the editor's recollection, all of the material in Commentaries VI was written by Upper Triad staff members.

More information on the Upper Triad Association and a complete index of the Upper Triad Material are provided in the Miscellany volume of this third edition and in the Introductory volume of the fourth edition.

Additional Caveat

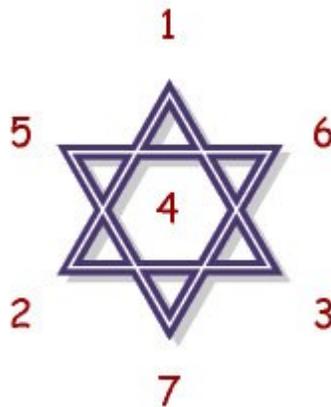
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There is a place, deep within the heart, where we touch God, and where God touches us, where human hearts achieve communion, with God, and with one another, there being no difference, no space between us.

The challenge, for human beings, is to find our way to that place. There are signs along the way, left by those who have passed this way and found that place.

In that place, there is no having, no doing, there is only being. What we have, thus has no hold upon us. And what we do, likewise. As stewards we have things. As servants we do things. But in God we are simply being.



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The Elemental Nature 1

The Earth planetary scheme consists in part of a succession of lifewaves at various stages of involution or evolution. Following the human lifewave in this succession are the animal, plant, mineral, physical elemental, astral elemental, and concrete mental elemental lifewaves, inhabiting the animal, plant, mineral, physical elemental, astral elemental, and concrete mental elemental kingdoms, respectively. The elemental lifewaves inhabit the basic material (matter) (vibration) at their level and provide the basic building blocks for the composite forms of various (higher) lives. This allows the more complex lives to be active on the lower levels of manifestation. This (lower) activity embraces experiences and expression on the (material) levels (physical, emotional, and concrete mental) subject at best only to those limitations of material existence that cannot be overcome by qualification.

The timeframe for experience at the elemental levels is extremely long compared with that of the higher lives (suggesting a principle of acceleration) (except that the greater (logoc) lives are of a higher (logarithmic (exponential)) order and timeframe). Although the elemental lives contribute directly to the higher lives (by providing for forms), so do the higher lives by virtue of (lower) activity contribute to the experience of the elemental lives (by induction). Thus the elemental lives enjoy aeons of elementary experience (elemental existence) with aeons of associated (ancestral) consciousness (memory on a subconscious, instinctive, elemental level) (enhanced by association with higher lifeforms). Their progress is very slow (relatively) (if one believes in temporal linearity (or attributing significance to the perspective of time)), and their experience is therefore intensive because it is reinforced over some considerable duration (with the talent for adaptation and ability to grow (and interact with surroundings) developing gradually).

Having passed through the elemental kingdoms (in a manner analogous to the current elemental lifewaves), higher (composite) lives necessarily draw upon their own elemental experience (dim and distant though it may be) as well as the elemental experience of their present (transient) forms. The mineral (composite) life is heavily dependent on the dense physical forms provided by

the physical elemental lifewave. The plant (composite life) is dependent on both dense physical matter and etheric matter (and to some small extent on astral material). Animal lives are dependent on dense physical, etheric, and astral matter (and to some small extent on concrete mental material). Human forms consist of dense physical, etheric, astral, and concrete mental matter, which constitute (respectively) the dense physical body, the etheric double or vital body, the astral (emotional) body or aura, and the concrete mind.

The higher organisms (forms) are relatively more complex, yet provide for relatively more potent experience and potential for evolution. Every experience and every aspect of (lower) (incarnated) (manifested) existence is a mixed blessing, on the one hand an opportunity for growth or progress in consciousness, on the other hand an opportunity for (mundane) absorption (stagnation) or reversion to more primitive forces. The stress or tension that exists between the two (positive and negative) poles provides considerably greater opportunity for progress than would otherwise be possible.

Thus the challenge of the human being is the unification and reconciliation of all the opposing forces into a coherent and cooperative whole, responsive to the higher will (of the soul or higher consciousness) and therefore well-placed upon the spiritual path (for further evolution).

† Commentary No. 502

The Elemental Nature 2

The three greatest (basic) problems (blessings) (challenges) of the human personality are the elemental nature, the animal nature, and the human ego. The ego is a problem (once it is developed) to the extent that it is potent and independent. With self-mastery (alignment), the ego is effectively destroyed (as an ego) (being effectively transformed and reformed) (and no longer at the mercy of the animal and elemental natures). The animal nature is a problem too in its independence, its relative coarseness, and its relative (considerable) vulnerability to the elemental urges. With self-mastery (integration) the animal nature is effectively qualified. Similarly for the elemental nature, with self-mastery (refinement) the elemental nature is no longer wholly reactive to external forces, no longer a forceful distraction. Thus the three problems have

three solutions, for the elemental nature, animal nature, and ego, it is refinement, integration, and alignment, respectively.

But the solutions must be effected progressively. One cannot achieve alignment (of soul and personality) without first having a properly integrated and qualified personality. And one cannot achieve that proper integration without first having refined and qualified the elemental nature. Having achieved any of these things one cannot then abandon the discipline and continued qualification necessary for proper maintenance, or else the elemental (animal) (egoic) nature will quickly revert. Having achieved these things (through considerable effort), it is relatively easy to maintain the proper state of the personality (i.e., refined, integrated, and aligned).

In order to fully conquer the elemental nature one must fully understand its character and motivation. Each unqualified elemental reacts to external forces on its level. The physical elemental naturally seeks physical activity. The astral elemental seeks intense, diverse, and dynamic emotional activity. The (concrete) mental elemental seeks stimulating mental activity. The unqualified elemental nature is naturally restless, potent, and forever seeking coarse experience on its level. One aspect will naturally cooperate with another to achieve mutually stimulating activity. The unqualified elemental nature will naturally seek to stimulate the animal nature and deceive the human nature in order to achieve its objective, even where detrimental to the existence of the whole (complex) organism (e.g., suicide is the victory of the elemental nature over the preserving instincts of the animal nature).

The cooperation of elemental aspects is possible due to ancestral memories (e.g., the physical elemental lifewave previously inhabited the astral elemental kingdom and retains much of its astral experience as ancestral memory). The animal nature is the collective, partially integrated body consciousness, the sum of three elemental levels. There is at the elemental level an instinctive intelligence (limited awareness and consciousness at the subconscious level) born of experience. That intelligence is naturally protective (defensive).

Constructively, that means that a healthy body (physical, emotional, or mental) has the ability for healing (on its level) (e.g., the natural organization of cells and vital forces for healing is a natural function of the elemental nature), but

that ability can be overwhelmed by intense, external forces or forces induced from some other level (i.e., karmic balance or carelessness). Similarly, the elemental (cooperative) intelligence can organize considerable resistance to the intended refinement, integration, and alignment, at least until properly qualified, whereupon the elemental nature almost glories in the induced refinement.

† Commentary No. 503

The Elemental Nature 3

The three elementals of the human form (physical, astral (emotional), and (concrete) mental) form the collective (human) subconsciousness and are largely responsible for dreams and other subconscious activity, subject of course to the relative qualification (refinement, integration, and alignment). The conscious and subconscious restlessness of the astral and mental elementals are the principal impediments to effective meditation, but where properly qualified, the subconscious nature can be an effective and constructive force for good.

On each of the three levels, the human personality (and respective elementals) can be viewed according to whether the elemental dominates (unqualified or primitive subconsciousness), or a balance is achieved (normal subconsciousness), or the personality is indeed properly and fully integrated (properly qualified subconsciousness). On the physical level, where the elemental dominates there is a reversion to crude (coarse) physical habits. Where a balance is achieved there is the maintenance of basic physical functions (health). Where the personality is fully integrated, the physical elemental is responsive to self-control, purification, etc. On the astral or emotional level, where the elemental dominates there are cravings, intense desires, obsessions, attachments, oscillations and vacillations of emotion (moodiness), unrestrained self-indulgence, etc. Where a balance is achieved there are normal (moderate) (sensible) desires and aspirations. Where the personality is fully integrated (and reasonably purified) there are the higher, less personal affections and aspirations (compassion).

On the concrete mental level, where the elemental dominates there is bias, prejudice, etc., and a lack of objectivity (presumptions based upon feelings).

Where a balance is achieved there is normal (objective, logical, rational) thinking, consideration of ideas, and sensible conclusions. Where the personality is refined and integrated there is more consideration of ideas and concepts, less bias in thinking, and the potential for (proper) intuitive insight. Occasional insight is possible at both the balanced and integrated levels, but the soul's presence can only be sensed directly where the personality is properly refined and integrated and aligned with the soul.

Although much of the human coarseness (self-indulgence) (self-centeredness) (unresponsiveness to higher forces) can be attributed to the elemental nature and the animal nature (normally but improperly referred to as human nature), the human being is still directly responsible for what he or she is as a personality, previous experience, conditioning, and karma notwithstanding. It is also one's direct responsibility to overcome the elemental nature (and the animal nature) and develop the human form (at all levels) to its proper conclusion (a spiritually responsive organism (physically pure, emotionally pure and still, mentally pure and clear) wholly integrated and aligned with the overshadowing soul and therefore an effective instrument of the soul (and not merely the instrument of the ego or personality)).

The refinement and subordination of the elemental nature also contributes directly to the evolution of those elemental lives. Although they quickly revert to coarseness when set free, they retain the subjective memory of the refined experience and are therefore better able to adapt to the changing conditions of the evolutionary field. Without that experience the elemental lives would be far less responsive. In the greater perspective of one life, all is interrelated, the elemental lives being as much a part of that greater life as are the more complex human and deva lives.

The Circle 2

The three-dimensional analog of the circle is the sphere (the circle being a natural extension of a dimensionless point to two dimensions, while the sphere is a further extension to three dimensions). The surface of the sphere has all of the properties of a circle relative to their common central point. The intersection of any sphere with a plane defines a circle (which may or may not be an equatorial (great) circle depending on whether or not the plane also passes through the sphere's central point). The spherical analog is useful provided the student is not distracted by the familiarity of three-dimensional (objective) reality. It is of course a more general analog, and its value lies in the extension to an infinite (or indefinite) number of dimensions.

Another extension of the circle is to the family of closed curves of which the circle is the most perfect, the circle having a single (interior) focus and being equidistant from that central point. This extension of the circle to a family of ellipses and less regular closed curves increases the complexity of the form as a symbol but serves to illustrate additional ideas (the ellipse for example has two focal points and implies acceleration and deceleration and changing magnitudes of respective forces).

The segmentation of a circle into equal areas provides a means of consideration of partials, always bounded by the circle and dependent upon its essential unity. The circumscription of some appropriate other symbol also provides a means to unity (particularly where the other symbol is simple or equilateral). Included in this class are simple series of concentric circles (with linear or exponential variation (in increasing or decreasing fashion) in radii). The extension to partials quickly leads to a consideration of discretion and continuum, to finiteness and infiniteness, to definiteness and indefiniteness (to unity and duality and multiplicity), as does the extension to a proliferation of similar or dissimilar (correlated or uncorrelated) circles (which then introduces the complexity of relatedness).

In addition to the lines of force linking each point on the circle with the central point (and its inverse (complement) at infinity) is the line of force of the circle

itself, linking all points of the circle with a current of clockwise or counterclockwise rotation (one may view the points in motion through the circle or the circle (circular force) in motion through stationary points). That circular force can also be viewed as a vibration within itself (an oscillating wavefront, stationary or otherwise). As the circle exhibits translation (linear motion as a whole, with each point sharing the overall motion of the circle), with (simultaneous) circular motion (angular momentum), the relative motion of a point moving along that wavefront describes a spirillic progression (evolution) with each turn of the cycle (circle) finding a new and different environment (conditions) (region of space) (region within some field of manifestation).

The circle is primarily a symbol of balance between unity and duality (multiplicity). It describes oneness and the relation of all to that unity. It provides a central point of focus in the face of diversity and differentiated manifestation. It illustrates separation, reflection, equivalence, equality, recapitulation, recurrence, progression, etc., while the circle itself remains in stable equilibrium (relatedness). A circle of light is a potent point of focus for the evocation of force, being relatively balanced and stable, and therefore being more easily workable. Above all, the circle illustrates the major precept: "Within the circle, the One is revealed."

† Commentary No. 505

The One Soul

The second ray aspect of unity is the one soul, otherwise known as the oversoul or the basic consciousness of the planetary logos. All individual and group souls within that basic consciousness are part of the second ray aspect of the planetary logos. The oversoul is singular (unitary) in the sense that it is a coherent, integrated, unified whole, with a distinct, functional identity within the life of the planetary logos and an internally and externally recognizable aspect of planetary manifestation.

When the planetary logos begins its manifestation as a planetary scheme, its first aspect evokes the second aspect (the one soul) into being. That evocation includes a succession of lifewaves, the souls of each of which are part of the continuum of the one soul. As each lifewave is differentiated into group souls

and (in some cases) individual souls, the continuum remains and differentiated existence (at the soul level) is not the separation in consciousness that is so apparent at the level of the reflection of the soul (i.e., at the personality level). At the soul level, differentiation implies a consciousness that is simultaneously distinct and indistinct from the one soul, but any particular soul does not lose the consciousness of the whole (if a soul at any stage of evolution loses the consciousness of the whole, then that soul is destroyed (dissolved) and its monad must recreate a new solar distinction within the fabric of the oversoul).

The one soul provides the basis for intuitive, telepathic rapport for any who can embrace the soul on its own level. The one soul provides a major facility for the unfoldment and fulfillment of the evolutionary plan (in the context of the planetary scheme). The one soul provides a basis for relationship (unity) between the various lifewaves and lesser constituents, since each is one with the oversoul and distinctions are merely apparent in the manner of manifestation but not essentially so. The oversoul provides a means of overcoming any paradox (conflict) within (incarnated) manifestation, since distinctions on the lower (objective) levels serve a more general purpose (experience and development and expression of the one soul). The oversoul also provides the power (potential) for overcoming the illusion of separateness and for dissolving the various glammers which serve to challenge the evolving consciousness.

The practical significance of the one soul exceeds that of the one spirit and that of the manifold. The one spirit (first ray aspect) is undifferentiated from the perspective of the incarnated consciousness, while the manifold (manifested forms and their respective (lower) consciousness) is quite distinctly differentiated (at that lower level), although unity is still embraced in two dimensions (the field of manifestation (etheric web, etc.) that binds all separate (incarnated or manifested) units of consciousness together and the bridge to the soul). The practical significance of the one soul is its essential simultaneity in perspective, being one (a continuum embracing all souls, all souls being aspects of the one soul), and being many (group souls, soul groups, individual souls, etc.) without loss of unity. The practical significance of the manifold is merely that of experience, while the soul provides endurance and continuity.

An evolutionary unit in the highest (immediate) human sense is one who can consciously embrace the consciousness of the soul at its level, bathe in that

oneness (and beauty) (and intensity), and manifest that embraced energy (force) on all levels of its (local) manifestation.

† Commentary No. 506

Group Souls

The first differentiation of the (planetary) oversoul is that of the succession of the various lifewaves. Each lifewave is a relatively distinct qualification within the one soul, having certain characteristics and potentials (and intentions), and serves as a unifying force for all subsequent differentiation (within the soul of the lifewave). Each lifewave is thus specialized to some extent and has faced (and will face) relatively different conditions (environments and forces acting therein), although each passes through the various kingdoms in turn and achieves the same (basic) overall experience (in the most integrated and general sense).

The differentiation of the oversoul takes place as a consequence of the forces applied to it. Those forces (which are in turn a consequence of the evolutionary plan) provide a variation in qualification throughout the continuum, with both major and minor distinctions (variations). Each lifewave emerges as a coherent group soul within the one soul (oversoul). Further differentiation may occur according to the degree of development of the lifewave, its place in the cycles of manifestation, and the conditions to be faced. A group soul is typically evoked for every intended species (or group of species) within a lifewave. Each group soul provides a means of particular and appropriate qualification for its (group) manifestation on more objective (physical, astral, or mental) levels, and a means of integrating and assimilating the experience and progress of its elements.

Each element of (objective) manifestation within the field of consciousness of a group soul will naturally reflect the basic consciousness, character, and temperament of its group. The relatively more highly evolved elements (and groups) will also naturally reflect some measure of localized distinction due to particular experience and/or particular conditions (but upon subsequent manifestation (group incarnation) there will not normally be any correlation between (particular) current and previous elements, since the group soul (for subhuman lifewaves) is not differentiated into individual elements). All

nonetheless contribute to the evolution of the (group) soul (and oversoul), each according to their experience.

The group soul provides some measure of guidance for its elements by virtue of its qualification. This is manifested in terms of physical (emotional) (mental) characteristics, abilities, instincts, etc. But there are some basic, considerable limitations upon that group qualification, including external (environmental) qualification and internal (elemental or constitutional) qualification. The forms utilized by the (group) soul are normally more responsive (reactive) to environmental and constitutional forces than they are to higher (soul) qualification. The Earth's environment is heavily qualified by the fourth ray of harmony through conflict, and this provides a considerable opportunity for experience at the expense of considerable difficulty and effort to meet the implied challenge. The elemental nature further provides considerable (instinctive) qualification of the form and its consciousness. Thus much of the intention of the group soul is to develop particular forms, through experimental (experiential) trials, and particular qualification to encourage or insure a successful (eventual) overcoming of these limitations.

Group souls provide a necessary intermediacy between the one soul and the elements (forms and associated consciousness) of objective manifestation. Eventually as a group soul progresses sufficiently, it is able to give birth to a number of self-conscious individuals.

Individualization

The process of individualization marks the transition of a group soul into the human kingdom and is the culmination of aeons of involutory and evolutionary preparation. Individualization is the process by which the fabric of the group soul is distinctly qualified such that each incarnated expression is associated with its respective elements of that group soul, in a recurring manner, until the incarnated expression achieves self-consciousness.

The group soul is alive and conscious as a group soul regardless of having undergone the differentiation that individualization implies, but each soul that emerges within that group soul by virtue of the individualization process then becomes conscious as a distinction within the group soul, ever impersonal and ever aloof with respect to its incarnated reflection (personality). Individualization does not diminish the coherent (unifying) consciousness of the group soul (or oversoul); rather, it magnifies the potency of that group soul and lifts it to a higher level from which to guide and qualify its elements (individual souls), without losing its embrace of its constituents.

Individualization occurs in response to the plan and by virtue of variabilities in the qualification of the group soul and variabilities inherent in the fabric of that soul. A primary variability in qualification is according to the seven rays, so that the group soul is naturally differentiated into seven soul groups, each being qualified by and a manifestation of a particular ray. Thus each soul has a primary (major qualifying) ray that indicates its nature (character) (potential). As the soul evolves it incarnates progressively through the seven rays, (meaning that for any particular incarnation the soul will evoke one or another of the seven rays as a personality ray, to qualify the experience and expression of that incarnated personality), but remains as a soul qualified primarily by its own (soul) ray.

Within a lifewave, all of the group souls do not individualize at the same time, but progressively until all are individualized, according to the plan. The age of a soul (in the context of the esoteric philosophy) does not normally refer to the measure of time since it was individualized; it refers rather to the relative place

of the soul with respect to the evolutionary path. Of all those souls who (which) individualize at a particular time, some will naturally evolve at a faster rate than others because of their inherent nature (responsiveness to evolutionary qualification) (consciousness, character, and temperament related to the variability of the substance or fabric from which souls are formed). That some should evolve quickly and others relatively slowly is necessary for continuity and progress on a larger scale. The pioneers provide encouragement to the whole (group soul) and lead the way to the next kingdom. The stragglers tend to develop different, even to some extent unanticipated characteristics, which nonetheless contribute to the whole.

The experience of an individual soul assimilated by virtue of its incarnated expression contributes both to the evolution of that soul (as a basic unit of evolution) and to the group soul (soul group) (humanity) (oversoul). The magnitude of the particular assimilated energy will be greater for the individual and will potentially directly affect any subsequent incarnated expression, but the magnitude of the characteristic (generic) assimilated energy (within the group soul) will still be considerable and will simply less directly qualify all within that group soul. As a soul (and as a group soul) evolves, its capacity for learning increases and therefore its evolution in consciousness is naturally accelerated (which implies that time is non-linear).

† Commentary No. 508

Soul Groups

An individual soul is simultaneously one with the planetary oversoul, the human group soul, and a ray group soul (one of seven within the group soul of the human lifewave). In addition to these inherent associations, a soul may be associated with one or another or more of a number of soul groups. Soul groups are more specialized than group souls and may or may not be related to the individualization process. Soul groups may be relatively transient or enduring (more significant) as is the association of an individual with a soul group, depending on the nature of the soul relationships.

In the early stages following individualization, the soul groups to which an individual is related are primarily part of the individualization process and the ensuing incidental (karmic) relationships (associations). As racial, tribal, and family groups emerge (by association), so are the participating souls casually related. Normally, through the course of diverse experience in many incarnations those (racial) (tribal) (family) (karmic) relationships lose significance. Sometimes attachments are persistent even in diversity and strong measures are necessary to dissolve those relationships. These groups by association (lesser soul groups) are significant and purposive for their time, but are (should be) relatively transient, being incidental to the evolutionary process, while (greater) soul groups that emerge as a consequence of evolutionary progress (rather than merely evolutionary experience) are more enduring and therefore more significant.

From the standpoint of the oversoul and the group soul (humanity), the path from individualization (the birth of self-consciousness and the entrance into the human kingdom) to initiation (the birth of group consciousness and the exit from the human kingdom) is one in which the group soul is transformed and reconstituted, beginning with the group souls and ending with (evolutionary) (greater) soul groups. In some cases a karmic group from the individualization process (a group soul) will be strong enough and sufficiently distinct (and responsive to the evolutionary plan) to endure as an evolutionary group, but for the most part the (proper) soul groups emerge during the later stages of the path as those who evolve at a particular pace and in a particular manner (i.e., being responsive to the same forces and in essentially the same ways) naturally work together on the soul level and form soul groups for progress (service) rather than (incidental) experience.

Thus in this proper sense, a soul group is a group of souls which evolve together (not necessarily in incarnation together) and develop a certain telepathic rapport (on soul levels) that helps constitute the soul group as an evolutionary entity. This soul group then (at some stage of evolution) constitutes an ashramic group within the human hierarchy and serves as a basis for service (the work of the path) and eventually for liberation. Souls can be attracted to such a (proper) soul group by virtue (maturity) (quality of consciousness) and participate in its work and pass on to appropriate (further) work according to their abilities and calling.

The early soul groups are constituted within a framework of the seven (ray) group souls (not necessarily each within a ray group). So too are the (later) (greater) soul groups constituted, but in a much more meaningful way, for the early alignments are largely incidental while the later alignments are according to developed character and therefore much more contributive as soul groups. Ultimately, as group consciousness in the higher sense is developed, these proper soul groups are effectively constituted as group souls.

† Commentary No. 509

Cooperative Living 1

In the context of some relatively mature spiritual group, cooperative living affords a considerable opportunity for individual growth and group service. In this context cooperative living means living cooperatively in an environment of spiritual values and group service, where a reasonable balance is maintained between individual privacy and the intuitive group rapport (group integration (cohesion)) required for effective group service, and where the individual interests are largely subordinated to the group objectives.

Cooperative living normally occurs in the framework of three regions: (1) the group environment and the spiritual values implied by the character, quality, and temperament of the (mystical) (occult) (esoteric) (spiritual) group, (2) the worldly environment and the worldly (personal) (mundane) values implied by the overall character, quality, and temperament of the people of the external community, and (3) the group periphery or transition region (interface) between the group environment (values) and the worldly (world) environment (values). Those members who are properly established in the group consciousness share (to some extent) a group rapport and are principally (largely) involved in that group consciousness, even when functioning outside the physical boundaries of the spiritual community. Those members who are not so properly established in the group consciousness live (in consciousness) in the difficult position of divided and conflicting values, being distracted by the glimmers and experience of the outer world on the one hand, while being simultaneously (naturally)

(inwardly) attracted (in principle) to (by) the dharma of the path (the inner world) (group energy) on the other.

Cooperative living allows peripheral members to grow within and adjust to the deeper values (character) of the group while the personality still has significant attachments in the outer world. Wherever a difference in values exists, there results a tension (a force seeking resolution (equilibrium) (harmony)). Thus the peripheral member lives in tension, between the inner and outer values. Those living well within the group environment (consciousness) do not normally experience that tension, since the group values are largely embraced, and since the worldly attractions are weak relative to the individual's commitment (involvement) in the group. But those group members do live with (within) the occult tension (dharma) (the subtle evolutionary pressures) of the group (spiritual path).

Individual growth comes with some degree of assimilation of experience and with some progress in understanding. The group environment (and transition region (periphery)) should provide a field of more meaningful experience than the external environs (for aspirants and spiritual students), since the group environment should be more meditative (contemplative) and the learning process is more one of exposure and realization than one of active experience (the process of exposure and realization implies (for the spiritual student) greater ease of assimilation of (such) experience).

But this opportunity requires the student to be somewhat responsive (not passive) to group energy in order to be effective. The group service aspect of cooperative living is more important than that of individual growth, since it is the group service motive that evokes deeper energies of the group consciousness, not any growth motive. Individual growth should come almost incidentally, as the individual consciously contributes to the work (service) of the group and adjusts his or her personality (naturally) to improve effectiveness (and quality) (which leads to better rapport in the group context).

Cooperative Living 2

Adjustments for cooperative living are related to the quality and consciousness of the individual relative to both the worldly nature and the quality and consciousness of the group. If the difference in quality (consciousness) (values) between the three (or at least between the individual and the group) is relatively small, then adjustments are relatively easy. But if the difference is large, then considerable adjustments would be needed, and likely those adjustments would be relatively difficult. Those who already share the basic quality and character of a group are much more easily assimilated and are much better able to express that quality and character.

Cooperative living implies that the individual members (spiritual students) will (gradually) assimilate (embrace) the character, quality, and values of the group, not because that character and quality and associated values are imposed, but because that character and quality and associated values are recognized, understood, accepted, and valued as appropriate. The proper group is aligned within the spiritual path and embraces the character and quality and values of the path, to the extent of that alignment (rapport). Personality-centered groups are not aligned with the path, and any degree of personality-centeredness will inhibit that (potential) alignment. Proper groups are not personality centered and are at least somewhat responsive to the impersonal energies of the path. As the individuals progress within the group, and as the group comes more and more aligned with the path (in terms of character and quality and energy), then the deeper values (character) (quality) can be achieved.

Although individual attention may be afforded in the group context, as appropriate, one should not expect personal or individual attention. Personal interests can still be pursued, as long as those interests are not inconsistent with those of the group. Any inconsistent interests (attachments) merely inhibit the ability of the individual to achieve group rapport. Cooperative living implies considerable freedom, in the sense of being responsible for one's own actions and in the sense of choosing (or seeking) to be aligned with the group, and that freedom implies the (eventual) achievement of considerable self-discipline (self-programming), as cooperative living is embraced as a stepping-

stone from (and transformation of) some degree of self-centeredness to some greater degree of group (universal) values and principles.

Ego (self-deception) (dishonesty) (self-centeredness) (self-indulgence) is the greatest impediment to cooperative living (group service). Mature humility (honesty) (love) is the greatest catalyst for bringing about a group rapport. Honesty in communication is particularly important as it affords (encourages) (evokes) understanding (which in turn affords deeper rapport). Consideration (considerateness) (helpfulness) (without imposition) is also quite essential for group cohesion (interdependence) (rapport).

Cooperative living also implies a sharing of the group work (participation in the group energy). Any external employment should not be considered as an independent activity but should be considered as a channel for the externalization (sharing) of the group energy (without advertisement or imposition). Thus all should share directly in the evocation and expression of group (spiritual) energy. Although provision (and respect) for privacy is essential, that privacy should also be considered part of the group (contemplative) environment and not a matter of separateness. The effective group is one which affords individuality and privacy (freedom) at the same time a group rapport is embraced.

† Commentary No. 511

Peace and Progress

Progress (evolution in consciousness) comes about (1) in part due to the inner potential (qualification) of each element of a lifewave (and of the lifewave itself), that potential being a force for progress, (2) in part due to the manifestation of various primary and secondary evolutionary (external) forces through the field (environment) of experience and expression, and (3) in part due to the working out of karma (karmic force) (at the various individual and group levels). In each case, progress involves the assimilation of experience or understanding in response to one or more of these forces.

The primary evolutionary forces and basic evolutionary qualification involve a gentle evolutionary encouragement. The secondary forces which are evoked as a

consequence of the primary forces (or as a consequence of the response (or lack of response) of the individual (and/or group) consciousness to those primaries (and secondaries, as all are interrelated) and the various karmic forces are all basically restorative, that is, they are evoked in order to restore the basic equilibrium of life, which is the proper place of individual (group) consciousness in the context of the evolutionary plan (and in the case of spiritual students, in the context of the spiritual path).

Peace is defined as freedom from war or hostilities, meaning, in this context, a condition or state of dynamic equilibrium (within certain limits) that affords experience and expression (and assimilation of that experience) (resulting in relative progress) without recourse to the extremes of warfare, hostility, or other natural disasters. A lack of peace comes about where the natural conflicts are not properly resolved in consciousness (understanding), where the individual (or group) is simply not responsive to evolutionary encouragement and the evolutionary pressure has built up over a period of time, eventually resulting in a karmic explosion (war) (accident) (natural disaster). The relatively extreme consequences may be painful or unpleasant (or fatal), but sufficiently dramatic (intense) to register in consciousness on some meaningful level. If the lesson is not then learned on the proper level (scale) (i.e., if the adjustments in consciousness are not made), then the cycle (of gradual intensification and karmic release) will repeat, albeit in another manner.

Peace is obviously preferable and the dynamic equilibrium of peace is (potentially) the more productive (leading to considerable progress), provided the individual (and group) consciousness is responsive. So to insure peace (and effective (continuous (gradual)) progress) there must be a considerable degree of responsiveness, meaning an atmosphere of open-mindedness, a positive attitude toward learning, some degree of humility, etc. Unfortunately (fortunately) (if anything is fortunate or unfortunate), progress is complicated by the non-uniform response across the collective group consciousness (unfortunately because that complication makes matters more difficult to resolve) (fortunately because in that complication is found the potential for even greater understanding).

As a lifewave evolves an intelligent (coherent) group consciousness the tendency is toward more subtle conflict (i.e., without hostility or coarseness)

and more meaningful consideration of the circumstances and lessons afforded. The tendency is also toward greater integration of experience and understanding, in the sense of an individual learning by virtue of his or her own experience as well as (directly more so than indirectly) the group experience. Fourth ray energy (harmony through conflict) is a basic qualification for the human race (lifewave) and the present world environment, but within that energy is much opportunity and encouragement for peace and progress.

† Commentary No. 512

Integral Philosophy

One of the major aspects of the esoteric philosophy (wisdom) is integral philosophy. Integral philosophy relates all of the differentiated species to the whole, and focuses on that whole as a more significant and greater reality than its constituent parts, while differential philosophy focuses on the species and elements themselves. The three aspects of integral philosophy are pertainment, necessity, and operation.

Integral philosophy pertains to the whole, as each element (unit of consciousness) belongs to the whole as a constituent or component. The whole is considered to be greater than its collective parts. The whole is considered as a unitary organism (on its level) and therefore approachable and relatable as a whole. The holistic (integral) approach involves a succession of wholes (each on its own level), each successive whole being broader and more inclusive than its parts collectively and individually. The greatest whole is all-inclusive, embracing all within the ken of its beholder. Inclusiveness (oneness) is the basic keyword of integral philosophy. By viewing things (lives) in an inclusive manner, one begins to embrace the energy of the whole and the understanding that that implies. By viewing things (lives) in an inclusive manner, one is actually invoking (evoking) the integrative forces, strengthening on the lower levels what is already a reality on the higher (deeper) levels.

That which is integral is necessary to the completeness of the whole. Each element of a lifewave is integral, being at once elemental (on differential levels) and one with the lifewave (on integral levels). The whole is necessarily

complete on its level, but may appear less complete (less well-integrated) on expressive levels (levels within its field of manifestation than within its basic causal field). Each element is necessarily an expression (qualification) (manifestation) of its whole, and each whole (the whole) that is differentiated (manifested) is necessarily the integrated result of the differentiated experience.

The whole is the result of the operation inverse to differentiation, namely integration. Integration is the basic evolutionary process (while differentiation is the basic involutory process). Every self-conscious organism (element) (and every organism at some level analogous to that of self-consciousness) progresses (evolves) through some integrative process, through the assimilation of experience, through a broadening (deepening) of perspective, through integrating its constituents and aligning itself with its greater (more inclusive) life. As long as the element (individual) is not self-integrated and as long as the element identifies with externals and/or partials, then that element is at that level merely a differentiated (isolated) (absorbed) element, being part of the whole only on the higher (super-conscious) levels. The immediate (basic) evolutionary objective of the human organism for example is to integrate the various elements of the personality and achieve the alignment of that properly integrated personality with the (more inclusive) soul. At that (higher) level, the whole is the oversoul (of humanity) and the soul is already en rapport with that oversoul.

In differentiated existence where the parts lack the conscious awareness of the whole (where the parts are not aligned with the source on their level), the energy of the whole is diluted and scattered (relatively incoherently). As the manifested expression is gradually integrated, the coherence of the whole (on those levels of manifestation) is gradually achieved and thereby the potency (potential) of the group is enhanced and fulfilled.

The Creative Force 1

Creative force results from the out-breathing of manifestive energy (creative qualification) of some logos. That energy of manifestation has three phases, orchestrated by the logos according to some intention, and filtered down to all levels of manifestation. The first phase (creation proper) is the bringing of things (lives) into manifestation. The second phase is preservation, sustaining that manifested life (consciousness) (matter) with qualification and guidance. The third phase is the withdrawal of the sustaining force (which manifests then as a destructive (dissolving) force (to prepare the way for remanifestation)). These three phases occur in a number of different ways, sometimes simultaneously with various aspects and dimensions experiencing various phases according to the multidimensional evolutionary plan.

The creative force is manifested on all levels of consciousness, in one way or another (or more than one), so that the same (analogous) (basic) creative force applies as well to the human being in incarnation as it does to logoic and atomic lifeforms (and everything in between). Beyond the most basic qualification of that creative energy (which ties all of manifested life together), the qualification of that energy (and the resulting creative forces) varies considerably by dimension, level of consciousness, unit of consciousness, etc., but the rules or procedures for its use and application are consistent, (i.e., the rules for logoic manipulation of creative force are essentially the same as for human manipulation of the same basic force) (the application and intentions may be different in the particulars, but creative force is still creative force at whatever level it is found) (in a sense all force is creative force, it is just a matter of perspective).

The first phase is essentially the process of creative imagination on some level, as is the sustaining aspect of the second phase, while the active aspect of the second phase (and the entire third phase) is essentially occult work of a more direct nature. The bulk of the work of evolution (and therefore the bulk of occult work) occurs (is accomplished) during the second phase.

The second phase is really the first phase in the sense that an equilibrium (field of manifestation) must be achieved before the various lives and lifewaves can be swept into activity (manifestation) (or more properly the first first phase (the first major cycle of the first phase) brings about the field of manifestation (by induction and the sweeping into manifestation of the elemental lives). The first second phase (the first major cycle of the second phase) is that field of manifestation. The second first phase (which is the third) is the sweeping of (involutionary and evolutionary) lives into manifestation.

The second second phase (the fourth) is equilibrium (preservation) (basic, sustaining qualification). The third first phase (the fifth) is progressive evolutionary qualification (evolutionary pressure) (the catalysis of the inherent evolutionary potential). The third second phase (the sixth) is the response of the evolving life to that qualification (i.e., activity (experience) (expression)). The first third phase (the seventh) is the first-order assimilation of that experience. The fourth second phase (the eighth (sixth) (fourth)) is the first order response to assimilation (second-order response to qualification). The second third phase (the ninth (seventh) (fifth)) is the second-order assimilation of experience (i.e., preparatory to withdrawal from manifestation). The fifth second phase (the tenth (sixth)) is the withdrawal of lives from manifestation. And the third third phase (the eleventh (seventh)) is the dissolution of the field of manifestation).

† Commentary No. 514

The Creative Force 2

Each of the three first phases is the first of seven (phase) operations, culminating respectively in the three third phases (each of the seven operations corresponding to the respective ray (of the seven rays) as does each of the (three, five, three) cycles of the three phases (respectively)). The central second phase (experience in response to qualification (evolutionary pressure)) is the median (central domain) of occult work, where a balance is achieved between the incoming and outgoing energies (forces).

That equilibrium embraces a steady-state field of manifestation (a balanced flow of energy resulting in a sustaining (stabilizing) force and an active

(progressive) force). In effect, any (intended) (purposive) excess of energy (over that which is required for the preservation of equilibrium) results in evolutionary pressure (force) to bring about the resolution (fulfillment) (progression) of the evolutionary plan. Almost all hierarchical (esoteric) (occult) work involves wielding some element or aspect of that force as evolutionary encouragement on some level. All of that active force (pressure) must be fulfilled (resolved) in some manner or another according to the needs (situation) of manifestation at some level and according to the talent (ability) (wisdom) (realization) (understanding) (responsiveness) of the creative life (occult student) (spiritual master) (logos).

In this sense (perspective of creative force), black magic involves the disruption of the sustaining force or interference with (wrongful redirection of) the active force, while white magic involves intelligent cooperation with those (creative) forces and the purposes for which they are intended. Proper occult (spiritual) (esoteric) work involves (1) developing the ability to handle such forces, (2) developing the wisdom and understanding required to safely and properly handle such forces, and (3) actually wielding those forces in accordance with their intention. Creative forces are at work on all levels, and much of the occult work involves the proper evocation, transformation, and channeling of those creative forces (the creative force).

The degree of coarseness or vulnerability of the occultist indicates the degree of danger implied by occult work. The effective occultist (spiritual student) (who would work consciously and directly with the creative force) must necessarily be (1) reasonably refined in personality, (2) very stable psychologically (occultly coherent) (i.e., be mentally or intuitionally polarized (anyone who is emotionally polarized is occultly unstable and therefore unable to work effectively (or with trust) on occult levels)), (3) properly (selflessly) motivated, (4) able to understand the forces and their potencies and potentials (intentions) (qualification), and (5) able to work intelligently (cooperatively). As the student progresses spiritually (and in the occult training) the student is increasingly able to work with more intense (potent) forces and more various types of forces (aspects of creative force) and applications. Of course the occult student must have reasonably good control of psychic centers, especially the lower ones.

There is a fundamental limitation in occult work that can be overcome only where celibacy is achieved and maintained naturally. Until that point is reached, the individual is simply limited in the amount and types of energy that can be safely handled (worked). Once that point is passed, the occultist (esoteric student) has much greater freedom for service, unencumbered by sexual vulnerabilities, as the lower sexual (creative) forces are transformed (uplifted) and applied in a more spiritually potent manner.

† Commentary No. 515

The Demanding Personality

One of the problems of a strong, relatively coarse personality is that of a certain self-centeredness demonstrated by that personality making demands of others or of life (God) (the path) (soul). A strong, disciplined, qualified (refined), and subordinated personality is an effective (and necessary) means of progress (and meaningful service) upon the spiritual path (for one who is still upon the wheel of life and death (rebirth)). Such a personality must be strong enough to be relatively free from external forces (at least in the sense of being non-reactive and being relatively free from external glammers and distractions), yet not separatively so or of an independent nature. But the demanding personality is another creature altogether, lacking the spiritual strength and proper humility that are so necessary upon the path.

Making demands upon others is simply not warranted. No one has the inherent right to demand of another (even proper leadership is not a demanding exercise); any demands (or expectations) one may make upon another constitute an imposition, and any imposition (without compelling responsibility) constitutes a violation of the other's aura (karma notwithstanding, since karma invariably takes all factors into consideration). One should respect all others, and in respect, avoid imposition, depending on consideration to achieve one's (reasonable) objectives. In the face of lack of consideration (presumed or apparent unreasonableness) on the part of another, one should, if possible (practicable), simply withdraw from that interaction (relationship) or bring about an appropriate change in one's perspective. One should not, in general, persist in a demanding manner.

Making demands of life (God) (the spiritual path) (the soul) is similarly not warranted. The world (God) (life) owes nothing to the individual (or group) that is not already accommodated in that individual's (group's) existence (karma). To make demands of life (to have expectations inconsistent with one's willingness to work (apply effort (energy)) toward that objective) is to evoke an appropriate force of preclusive tendency. To make demands of God (the spiritual path) (the soul) is to achieve further separation in character and quality of consciousness, for the coarseness of any demand is necessarily separative (all demands are coarse). One cannot even (rightfully) demand of the soul, for the soul is never compelled by its inferior (the personality). One can only approach the soul with humility and qualified aspiration (devotion to duty), and thereby evoke the richness of the love and light of the soul. Without such (humility and qualified aspiration) one simply cannot approach the soul or achieve any response on the part of the soul (the soul is simply not of a nature to be responsive to the self-centered or demanding personality).

Being demanding "implies peremptoriness and insistence" and the delusion of exigency (situational or otherwise). Such self-centeredness is a form of arrogance and presumption that must invariably and necessarily be overcome and transformed into something more appropriate to spiritual undertaking if the individual is to succeed in any spiritual (real) sense. In humility is the preservation of reality, of spiritual momentum, and proper spiritual expression. The demanding personality is merely foolish and naive, even sincerely so, yet nonetheless unable to achieve any rapport in consciousness.

The laws of karma prevail and persist in spite of the follies and delusions of separate (separative) existence. All that is due is present. All that is just is. Nothing is (ever) urgent in any higher or spiritual sense. Therefore demands need never to be made.

Differential Philosophy

Another of the major aspects of the esoteric philosophy (wisdom) is differential philosophy, which focuses on the differentiated species and the differentiated elements of those species, as individual species and elements rather than collectively or relating those individual species and elements to some (greater) whole. While integral philosophy is the first ray (synthetic) aspect of the esoteric philosophy, differential philosophy serves as the third ray aspect. The three aspects of differential philosophy are individuality, relationship, and expression.

Differential philosophy pertains largely to the individuality (illusion of separateness) (relative uniqueness) of a differentiated species or element. From one perspective, all individual species or elements are essentially and inherently similar, in the sense that each is chartered by the greater life, in the sense that each carries the life and (differentiated) consciousness of that greater life and therefore has the same, basic inherent potential of that greater life, and in the sense that each is considered equal, each (one) with respect to every other. From another perspective, all individual (differentiated) species and elements are relatively unique, in the sense that the environmental conditions (external forces) that each faces are necessarily slightly (somewhat) (considerably) different, in the sense that the character and quality of each is differentially (or significantly) different, and in the sense that the internal forces (accumulated from the point of differentiation) that each faces (evokes) are necessarily (relatively) different.

The significance of individuality (the freedom of differential experience and expression) lies in the value of integrated variabilities and in the potential for epigenesis (progress not explicitly programmed or specifically anticipated, but implied and anticipated only in the statistical sense, and without (necessarily) the foresight of realization of significance or specific implication or application). In the first case, the variability in experience and expression across some (differentiated) species or lifewave leads to considerably richer (diverse) accumulated experience than would be the case for undifferentiated experience; in the second case, individual elements sometimes make considerable

breakthroughs which may be worth integrating for the progress (development) (adaptation) of the whole.

The aspects of relationship and expression are directly tied to that of individuality. Relationship provides consideration of differences (relating the resulting force to the requirement of equilibrium) (the expressive and consequential forces within some field of differentiated existence lead to further (and correlatable) experience and subsequent assimilation), while expression provides a release of accumulated or impelling (inner and outer) forces. The illusion of separateness notwithstanding, differential experience and expression is principally a collective manifestation.

The crowning achievement of individualized consciousness (differentiated self-conscious awareness) is the integration of that self-consciousness within the greater consciousness, meaning a subordination of the individuality (self-consciousness) to the next greater level of integration, while remaining potent as a self-conscious element (or species). For this to be successful, a balance is required between individuality and conformity (subordination). Rogue (unintegratable) consciousness is ultimately destroyed; separative consciousness must be transformed before it can be integrated; but intelligently subordinated (purified) self-consciousness is relatively easily integrated.

† Commentary No. 517

The Creative Force 3

There are basically two ways in which a person can attract creative forces (energy) in excess of that which is needed to sustain the basic existence (incarnation) (experience and expression). The first way (the lesser) is by virtue of desire, will, or intention at the personality level, either consciously and deliberately or otherwise. The second way (the greater) is by virtue of the soul's commitment to the spiritual path.

Energy follows thought (and feeling) (and is evoked and projected through desire and the will), and since all energy is essentially (potentially) creative, a person able to evoke creative forces is able (sensibly and constructively or otherwise) to

direct those forces in some fashion. If an excess of energy (force) is evoked (through mental or emotional activity) and that energy (force) is not released in some manner, then the energy will accumulate and be a source of pressure (disease) within the human form, being a natural (karmic) consequence of not living up to the responsibilities (for proper resolution (sharing)) implied by creative forces. If the excess energy is released and not accumulated, then karma is earned according to the motives, manner, and immediate (direct) consequences of that release.

In the first case (creative force evoked by the personality) the personality is simply (hopefully) learning how to work properly with creative force, i.e., developing a mental polarization and learning to wield (the) force constructively and intelligently (without imposition). In the first case there is no obligation to evoke creative force; there is only the responsibility for proper resolution of the evoked force if and as it is evoked. In the second case (creative force evoked by the soul) there is the dharma of the path to consider, which means the spiritual student is expected to adhere to the responsibilities of the path, including recognizing the creative force (excess) and its qualification (intended purpose), wielding that force cooperatively and in accordance with its qualification, and making whatever adjustments are appropriate in the personality in order to more effectively (and more safely) work with that force. The spiritual student (aspirant) will naturally attract (evoke) an excess of creative force, and will naturally share (release) that force (energy) into the environment by virtue of and consistent with the student's quality of consciousness. As the consciousness is refined, as the mental and intuitive talents and faculties are developed, as the occult training proceeds, as wisdom (understanding) improves, so shall the spiritual (occult) (esoteric) student attract and release considerable amounts of creative energy.

The greater the creative energies evoked, the more important it is for the spiritual student to achieve self-mastery (control of all of the lower nature (the lower psychic centers)). If the lower centers are not under the control of the higher mind, then the excess of creative energy can cause considerable damage to the personality vehicles and (potentially) the environment. Celibacy is therefore a prerequisite for (advanced) occult (esoteric) (spiritual) work, since celibacy is the only safe way to control the lower centers and prevent the uncontrolled release of (excess) energy on lower levels (which would be

dangerous and destructive). Spiritual students who are naturally celibate have simply learned the lessons of properly wielding creative force.

The task of achieving natural celibacy (celibacy without tension) is a considerable challenge (and one that should not be embarked upon prematurely) (and one that should not be denied by self-deception (the false assurances of the desire-mind that one is not ready) either).

† Commentary No. 518

Dharma and Karma

The distinction between dharma and karma is that of dharma being a particular form of karma which conveys some degree of obligation or responsibility (duty) that is not the case for the more general and more prevalent forms of karma.

In the more general (prevalent) case (karma), one acquires karmic consequences as the result of action (experience and expression on all levels of consciousness) and within those earned consequences are intended lessons. If a particular lesson is learned (and appropriate adjustments made) then that (associated) karma is fulfilled and one is free to face (create) additional karma (resulting in further progress). That fulfillment occurs through assimilation (understanding), consciously or unconsciously achieved. But if a particular lesson is not learned then that (associated) karma is not fulfilled and accumulates and reforms to remanifest in a similar (albeit later) fashion or otherwise according to overall karmic factors. In this more general (prevalent) case (karma), one is not obligated or expected to learn the intended (earned) lesson at the particular (afforded) opportunity (though it is certainly more auspicious to do so); one must simply learn the lesson eventually and the longer it takes (from the initial affordance) the (relatively) more difficult the consequences (circumstances) become.

With dharma however, the acquired karmic consequences imply a responsibility (expectation) to act or respond in some appropriate manner. In a sense, dharma is a much more potent (yet more subtle) form of karma because it (dharma) implies that the individual has developed (earned) the capacity for responsibility and can therefore progress by fulfilling duty (in addition to (merely) learning

implied lessons). In fact, progress (in the evolution of consciousness) (along the spiritual path) is achieved more potently by adherence to truth (fulfillment of dharma) than by any conscious or unconscious learning of implied lessons, for the greater lessons per se are the lessons of dharma. Karma is qualified by merit, appropriateness, and affordance of some lesson to be learned (experience to be assimilated); dharma is (additionally) qualified by responsibility and the expectations that that implies.

The early forms of dharma involve more mundane responsibilities leading gradually to the (more potent) responsibilities of ethics. The later (and even more potent (subtle)) forms of dharma involve the qualification(s) of the spiritual path (the soul) itself. If one responds (positively) in accordance with dharma, then that dharma is fulfilled and sustained (while karma is merely fulfilled). If one fails to respond properly (if the responsibility is not recognized and honored) then one's karma is complicated more considerably than with non-dharmic karma, but the dharma persists nonetheless. One of the higher talents is the ability to recognize dharma and properly discern its implied (conveyed) responsibilities, and in that recognition and understanding comes the capacity for adherence.

As one progresses upon the evolutionary (spiritual) path, one gradually and eventually becomes free from accumulated karma (karmic obligations), but never free from (instantaneous) karma or the law of karma itself. As one progresses along the path, one earns more and more dharma and that dharma (or more properly the adherence to that dharma) conveys considerable (albeit subtle) and increasing freedom. There is simply a profound freedom implied (conveyed) in adherence to truth (dharma), for dharma reveals the way and conveys the ability to proceed intelligently upon that way, in light and love and power.

The Roots of Black Magic

The later stages of human development (leading properly to the spiritual path and subsequently (ultimately) beyond the realm of human evolution) involve exposure to the tension of the pairs of opposites (to be resolved upon the path itself). The vast majority of humanity eventually survive the tests and trials of the paths of approach and the subsequent pressures of the spiritual path proper, and ultimately achieve (relative) perfection and release from the human sphere. A small minority are the pioneers who tread the path in advance of the bulk of humanity, each of whom must conquer the lower nature, develop the appropriate talents, achieve the requisite quality and wisdom, and complete the human experience. But in spite of the considerable (eventual) success of almost all of the candidates, some (very few) succumb to the temptations of the left-hand path (of black magic) and are destroyed.

Consequently, it behooves every spiritual student to recognize the nature of the black path and the temptations which lead in that direction, for all are potentially vulnerable (yet so few are so corrupted by black magic that they are unable to free themselves eventually). There are two principal roots of black magic, each being a natural part of human life (for part of the lessons of human experience involves facing and overcoming these two natural roots). The first root of black magic is coarseness, the temptation and distraction of matter itself (and the unresolved tension implied in that matter). Coarseness includes materialism and the attachments (distractions) associated with physical, emotional, and mental coarseness (excess) (indulgence). The second root of black magic is ego (egoism), a more subtle form of coarseness (material vulnerability). Egoism includes the more extreme forms of individualism which are separative and (potentially) ultimately destructive.

The problem of coarseness is that it prevents or inhibits the integration of the personality and it prevents subsequent alignment of soul and personality (i.e., it prevents the personality from being responsive to the soul, and therefore to the spiritual path (and God)). That is fine for ordinary (relatively coarse) humanity who are still struggling with absorption in the material world, but it does nonetheless mean that they are vulnerable to imposition to the extent of their

coarseness and it means that they are vulnerable to the temptations of the black path to the extent of their coarseness and to the extent of their development. The more highly developed yet relatively coarse are the most vulnerable, for strength and coarseness of personality lead naturally to self-indulgence, self-centeredness, and separativeness. Strength and coarseness of personality also lead naturally to egoism and the various temptations (paths of destruction) of the ego.

The proper development of the personality is a rather difficult business, for the personality must be strengthened and refined and then subordinated to the soul. If the personality grows strong while remaining relatively coarse, then the emotional and mental potency of the personality will feed the fires of ego (individualism) (separativeness) and lead to a more potent self-centered existence. As this is happening, of course, the ego seduces (deceives) the mind and heart of the personality and the ego then begins to dominate the personality and to seek to influence (dominate) its environment (including the people in that environment (on some scale)) toward its self-centered objectives.

If on the other hand, the personality is refined at the same time it is strengthened, then the temptations of the ego can be ignored and the student can proceed without fear.

† Commentary No. 520

The Angel of the Presence

The angel of the presence is the soul of the monad and results in part from the activity of agnishvattas, the fire devas of the mental plane. The human soul is, from the personality perspective, the higher human consciousness and the link in consciousness between the lower self (personality) and the monad. But from the monadic perspective, the human soul is a vehicle of consciousness as much as it is consciousness. From the personality perspective, there is a clear distinction between the human personality and soul on the one hand and the comprising substance on the other. Likewise, from the personality perspective, there is also a clear distinction between human (active) lives (the human lifewave) and deva (passive) lives (the deva lifewave). But from the monadic

view, the two (human and deva) are so closely coupled that the common distinctions are not so clear after all.

If the monad is the (realized) presence and the soul is the (unrealized) angel of that presence, then the soul includes its reflection (the personality) and a distinction can be made between rupa and arupa devas in connection with that soul. The lunar pitris are rupa devas which form the forms (substance) of the personality on its four levels (dense physical, etheric, astral, and rupa manas (lower mental)). The solar pitris are arupa devas which form the (relatively formless) substance (essence) of the soul. The devas of form (rupa devas) are called lunar, in part because they are (associated with) matter (the third aspect) and are therefore qualified by and naturally responsive to the forces of matter. The devas of formless substance (arupa devas) are called solar pitris, in part because they are (associated with) consciousness (the second or solar aspect) and are therefore qualified by and naturally responsive to the forces of consciousness.

Furthermore, the lesser (composite) deva lives on all levels are impelled by greater (composite) deva lives on those levels, so that, from the one perspective, the greater (planar) devas work upon the forms and vehicles of human consciousness on all levels, and forms are made of their substance (consciousness) (life) so that the human personality and the human soul are undeniably devic. From the deva perspective, the human (active) consciousness is an inductance arising essentially from composite and synergistic deva substance, and therefore (from that perspective) artificial. From the human perspective, the opposite is true (the induced consciousness being real and the substance being relatively artificial).

The agnishvattas (fire dhyanis) (fire devas of the mental plane) are the builders of the (human) causal body, and are (in part) concerned with the development of the manasaputras, the (human) individualities (on the soul level where the principle of self-consciousness (individuality) is dual (simultaneously individual (particular) and collective (general))). The causal body (with its devic implications) is important as the seat of accumulated (substantive) evolutionary experience (wisdom), but is (in a broader perspective) simply one element of a master (and delicate) intersection of human (reflected monadic) force and deva force constituting the solar angel (more properly it is unfair (misleading) to refer

to a (the) solar angel in human context, for it is a plurality of solar angels that form the soul with their substance (consciousness) (life)).

The work of human evolution is accomplished when the human being becomes one with the solar angels, when the (individual) inductance becomes self-realized and the distinction of human and deva is properly recognized (dissolved).

† Commentary No. 521

Masters and Mentors

The immediate goal of human evolution is self-mastery as defined in terms of quality (refinement) of consciousness and mastery of basic forces (of consciousness) on the various levels of human manifestation (physical, emotional, mental, and intuitional). This self-mastery is an effective mastery (refinement and discipline) of the personality and its forces, and in no way implies a mastery of others or the right to impose upon others.

Self-mastery cannot be achieved except within the framework of the spiritual hierarchy, not because of formal sanctions but because the refinement (and awareness) required for self-mastery naturally draws the candidate (spiritual student) into the (inclusive) structure of an esoteric group within the framework of the spiritual hierarchy. As the student proceeds through the various stages of self-mastery (i.e., through the various formal initiations sanctioned by the hierarchy), the candidate (aspirant) (disciple) (initiate) becomes more and more aware of the structure (and inclusiveness) of the hierarchy and the evolutionary plan. In this (proper) (formal) sense, a (spiritual) master (anyone who has achieved self-mastery (as defined)) is never self-proclaimed (nor does such a master ever accept the claims or purports of others on his behalf). Anyone who is self-proclaimed is simply not of the calibre of these masters of wisdom.

The role of the (spiritual) master (of whatever grade) is to encourage the evolution of consciousness and to cooperate with the evolutionary plan, according to the charter of the master's esoteric group (and therefore according to the master's qualification and abilities). The master is not obligated to teach others (though some do) or to respond to any demands of others. The master is

obligated only by virtue of his quality of consciousness, which implies voluntary (impelling) adherence to truth, dharma, the path, etc. The master is principally a spiritual student, of somewhat greater experience and wisdom (quality and ability of consciousness) than the bulk of humanity. As a student, the master continues to develop but service upon the path ever takes precedence over individual progress.

The role or attitude (position) of a spiritual student with respect to a (true) master should not be one of blind faith, devotion, or allegiance, but one of respect, support, and consideration, as appropriate. In this sense, the master should be perceived as a mentor and exemplar rather than as a master in the conventional sense (of emotionalized glamour). It should also be recognized that the master (of the fifth initiation) is only relatively perfect (in the human sense), not absolutely perfect. Self-mastery simply implies virtual freedom from personality-centeredness and mastery of basic occult forces. The student should seek to learn as much as practicable and to serve in accordance with the opportunities and talents afforded. As the student progresses, the student gradually realizes more completely the avenue(s) of service appropriate to his place (position and charter) upon the path. The role of the master (mentor) is to encourage and guide (not direct).

All (true) masters have service commitments (assignments) (as do all serious aspirants, disciples, and initiates). Some are teachers, but all are workers. All work with occult force (energy) within the framework of the evolutionary plan (and the organization of hierarchical resources). As mentors, spiritual masters (and their accepted disciples) encourage individual progress in the context of some service activity. Much of the (available) training has to do with wielding occult force (safely and effectively).

The Johari Window

The Johari window is an application of set theory from orthodox psychology that illustrates certain aspects of interpersonal awareness. Although the Johari window per se is artificial, the principles that it illustrates are natural nonetheless. The Johari window is a two-dimensional model or framework for perception, with one dimension being the extent to which a person has self-knowledge or self-awareness and the other dimension being the extent to which others are aware of that person's personality.

In the simple case, the Johari (total) window has four arenas. The public arena involves (illustrates) (symbolically) all that is known to oneself which is also known or perceived (generally) by others. The blind arena involves all that is unknown to oneself which is (however) known or perceived by others. The private arena involves all that is known to oneself which is unknown or not perceived by others. And the opaque (double unknown) arena involves all that is unknown to oneself which is also unknown or not perceived by others.

The Johari model does not really take into account the validity of the information (beliefs) (knowledge) in each of the four arenas, but it does illustrate discrepancies or inconsistencies in perception (belief); for example, one might perceive oneself as honest (in a given situation) and others may concur, but in fact one might be dishonest and self-deceived but sincere enough that others might not be aware of the truth (in this instance). On the other hand, one might perceive oneself as strong while others might perceive (believe) otherwise, due to different values or interpretation of behavior (perception).

The shape (configuration of arenas) of the Johari window depends on the relative strength of the four arenas and the particular situation to which it is applied, so that the configuration (relative sizes of the arenas) might change from one situation (value) (aspect) to another, from one person to another (since it is basically self-centered (relating an individual perception to that of others)), and from one audience (others) to another. The two processes which affect the shape of the Johari window are called feedback and disclosure. Johari feedback is the extent to which an individual learns from others' perceptions or becomes

aware of the (relative) truth of others' perceptions (relative to that individual and situation). Johari feedback tends to increase the relative size of the public arena while decreasing the relative size of the blind arena. Johari disclosure is the extent to which an individual shares information about himself with others, which tends to increase the relative size of the public arena, while decreasing the relative size of the private arena. In either case (Johari feedback or Johari disclosure) the (symbolic) size of the opaque arena is inadvertently decreased (which is not necessarily warranted by either).

For the spiritual student, the central significance of the Johari window (model) is the dynamic nature of interpersonal awareness and the continuing need for the spiritual student to be increasingly honest with himself and honest (and sincere) in all of his interactions with others. With increasing (improving) awareness, the blind and opaque arenas should be reduced in magnitude, but the student should nonetheless take into consideration the existence (and relative magnitude) (and relative significance) of each of the four arenas, remaining aware that others' perception may vary considerably, that others may see us differently than we see ourselves, that our own perception (or others') may not be correct in some instances (or even generally), and that some aspects remain unknown (opaque) and some even unknowable for the time being.

† Commentary No. 523

The Futility of Black Magic

While coarseness and egoism are the roots of black magic, the individual becomes a black magician only when he has the power and the will to impose (force or energy) upon others. The longer one continues the course of imposition (no matter how sincerely), the further one is seduced by the power of the ego (which is really the coarse power of matter manifested on a larger, composite scale) (which is the source of power for black magic). The worst (most potent) kind of black magician is one who has mastered some degree of occult training before falling prey to the temptations of ego. The black occultist is the least likely to be able to achieve freedom from the evoked forces, and the most likely to be destructive and (ultimately) to be destroyed. Those who fight (blindly or emotionally) for causes, who view ends as justifying means, or who seek to

sustain or increase their personal influence (power), are the most likely to succumb to the (left-hand) path of destruction.

The pursuit (or manifestation) of black magic (the dark path) is necessarily and ultimately futile. It cannot succeed in the long term (or be sustained by the individual (or group) for very long) because it is naturally separative and self-destructive. Cosmic law supports (sustains) progressive evolution according to the logic plan. Any activity not in accordance with that plan (on whatever level or scale) is ultimately dissolved and thereby eliminated, by natural forces (which are a consequence of that evolutionary qualification).

The existence of coarseness (and the temptations of matter and ego) is natural and plays a role in the grand scheme of things, as a matter of experience and growth (progress) by virtue of that experience, but to be renounced progressively as the life and consciousness become (naturally) more aligned with finer forces (group evolutionary goals). Much can be learned by facing temptations and overcoming the lower urges, but where coarseness (and ego) are entertained to excess, then considerable are the resulting dangers.

The right-hand path (of white magic (cooperative evolution (refinement) (expansion) of consciousness)) is essentially constructive, inclusive, and relatively selfless. This means that group activities that are aligned with the path (and where personality-centeredness is effectively renounced) are basically cohesive. More progress is made on behalf of the greater group by virtue of (positive) group activity than is the case for individual activities (which may be nonetheless sincere and appropriate). But none of this holds true for black magic, which is basically self-centered and imposing rather than group-centered and based upon free association and commitment. Group activities along the dark path are not cohesive, since the participants are basically self-centered (coarse) and the association is one of convenience to the individual or involuntary. Since the framework for black magic is not cohesive there is no supporting hierarchy for continuity of operation.

From time to time organizations of black occultists are formed or reconstituted, but none can survive over the long course of human evolution since the principals are gradually (eventually) destroyed by natural forces, either at the personality level (as the personality matrix is dissolved by the soul) or at the

soul level (as the solar matrix (and causal body) is destroyed by the monad). Rogue consciousness at any level is transient and undefendable. Black occultists futilely seek to sustain their powers from one lifetime to the next in face of increasingly intense karmic consequences. In short, the pursuit of black magic is unnatural and doomed to failure. The spiritual student should proceed without fear, as honestly and sincerely (and selflessly) as possible.

† Commentary No. 524

Relativistic Philosophy

While differential philosophy deals with the manifestation of life and consciousness (experience), and while integral philosophy deals with the wholeness of life and the synthesis (assimilation) of experience, relativistic philosophy relates the two and deals with the various processes that bring about experience and the assimilation of that experience. Relativistic philosophy is the second ray aspect of the esoteric philosophy.

The basis of relativity is the lack of absoluteness in manifestation. The absolute exists, yet no aspect of manifestation (differential or integral) is able to embrace the absolute self-consistently. The field of manifestation has aspects that embrace finiteness, and aspects that embrace infiniteness, but none that embrace absoluteness, for all lives and all forces and all things within the field of manifestation exist relatively and are expressed relatively, meaning that they only exist and are expressed in some relative sense (i.e., in relation to other lives, forces, and things). In the absence of other lives, forces, and things, a given element could not exist, for all are interrelated and the greater reality is the more inclusive (albeit less relative).

One of the more relative processes within manifestation is perception. Perspective can vary considerably with time, from one person to another, by level and quality of consciousness, etc. With experience, the spiritual student learns to direct and qualify his perception as needed, taking into consideration the limitations implied in any particular perspective. Another very relative process is karmic adjustment, which must consider all aspects of an individual's history and present consciousness, the respective circumstances, and relationships at all levels and other aspects. Viewed internally (externally)

(from a particular perspective), karmic adjustment is a most complex process of weights, checks, balances, assessments, etc.; yet viewed externally (internally) (from a broader, more inclusive perspective), karmic adjustment is relatively simple and straightforward (wherever there is a deflection from equilibrium, there is a restorative force applied (which might trigger (stimulate) another deflection (experience) and associated restoration, but relatively less intense).

Since a wide range of perspectives is available, there are invariably some perspectives in which (relative) absolutes are embraced. For example, God (the solar logos) is often viewed as an absolute, and for all practical purposes that is sufficiently true, but in the context of logoi relationships, God is merely relative. If God is defined on a higher (cosmic) level, then the absolute recedes and God (again) is merely relative. The same is (relatively) true for truth. There is no absolute truth (short of the absolute itself (which is necessarily unattainable)); all truth is relative and any perceived absolute truth is (from this perspective) merely relatively absolute. Arrogance leads to (the delusion of) absolutes, while humility leads to the acceptance of relatives. Much of the world delusion relates to binaries (binary value systems) and duality, yet in truth all of manifestation is a continuum and even the extreme values are merely relative. Nothing is either one thing or another, except in context.

In the (relatively) final analysis, all things are relative, being neither absolute nor independent, being comparative and relational. All things are causally connected (yet not deterministically so), having antecedents and succedents as well as simultants. Relativistic philosophy simply embraces all this in terms of its three aspects, the absolute, process, and finiteness.

The Fallacy of Logic

Logic is the science that deals with the canons and criteria of validity of inference, of the formal principles of reasoning (and their application). Logic may be deductive or inductive, imperative or indicative, practical or otherwise, but nonetheless dependent upon some measure of objectivity and some measure of adherence to the established rules (structure) of (formal) logic which lead more or less deceptively to some conclusion.

The real fallacy of logic is its dependence on assumption (assuming objectivity and adherence), in the sense that one can make some assertion (premise) and proceed logically to some conclusion while that conclusion may be valid according to the rules of logic but wholly wrong (in truth) if the premise upon which it is based is not true. The danger of logic is the deception implied by drawing a conclusion without reinforcing in mind the provisional nature of all assumptions. It is all too easy to make an assumption, proceed logically (or otherwise), and draw conclusions, then proceed as if the original assumption was a fact. Of course reasoning without logic or reasoning in a biased manner is as bad or worse (and most reasoning is indeed biased by the emotions as well as one's belief or value system) (in general, people tend to believe whatever they want to believe and see and hear whatever they need or want to see and hear in order to reinforce whatever they want to believe).

Proceeding logically based upon reasonable assumptions leads to reasonable conclusions, but one should realize (and continue to realize) that no conclusion is absolute, due to the provisional nature of every premise. One difference between the rational human being (being more or less mentally polarized) and the esoteric student is that the rational human being makes (what he believes to be) factual assertions (and evaluative assertions as appropriate), proceeds more or less logically, and draws (what he believes to be) non-provisional conclusions, while the esoteric student realizes that all so-called factual assertions (premises) are themselves evaluative (based on values and judgment), proceeds (also) more or less logically (but relatively more openly in regard to intuitive

insight), but draws strictly provisional conclusions, allowing neither premises nor conclusions to be treated as absolute or compelling.

Another (related) fallacy (shortcoming) of logic is the tendency to treat truth in accordance with the principle of bivalence (however consciously or unconsciously), which states (falsely) that every statement (premise) (conclusion) is either true or false, that every statement has a truth value and there are just two truth values. More properly, every statement has a relative truth value and there is a continuum of values for most statements. Every statement is relatively (more or less) true or false, depending on the character of the statement and the context in which it is made. In the practical world one must draw conclusions and proceed, but it is better to proceed with the awareness of the provisional (tentative) (relative) (biased) nature of all premises, logical (rational) or intuitive processes, and conclusions.

In the final analysis, the spiritual student must proceed without being able to verify or validate the assumptions (beliefs) (knowledge) (premises) upon which his philosophy is based. In short, one should assume that an assumption is possibly true (false). Rational and intuitive processes are relied upon nonetheless, yet provisionally and relatively; sense impressions are recognized for what they are (merely sense impressions); and the work is performed in (relative) confidence, based upon a faith (inner knowledge) that is amenable to progressive realization.

† Commentary No. 526

The Fallacy of Proof

One of the fallacies of life in the objective world (illusion) is the fallacy of proof. Proof is the cogency of (presumed) evidence that compels acceptance by the mind (or some dimension of consciousness) of a truth or a fact, and the process of establishing the (relative) (presumed) validity of a statement or formulation. The problem is the fallacy of evidence that leads (improperly) to factual assertions. The spiritual student should always treat evidence as apparent and indicative but not compelling or conclusive, since no evidence or assertion (assumption) (premise) can be proven factual or true.

In a sense, proving something means merely convincing someone (or oneself) that something is true, the degree of conviction indicating the degree of proof afforded. Proof is in that sense afforded by various means (emotional appeal, argument by means of formal logic or rational process (reasonably or otherwise), intuitive realization, etc.), but all result in the same basic fallacious process, that of acceptance of presumed evidence (experience) or assertion (premise) and conclusions as valid and true.

The first fallacy of proof is that of factual evidence. The problem is that the real world is psychological and subjective and vastly more complex (and unknown (to some extent unknowable)) than the apparent (objective) (physical) world. The human being is typically considerably biased by previous experience, abilities (habits), and beliefs. Sense-impressions are merely sense-impressions and cannot (should not) be accepted in any absolute sense, so that any evidence based upon observation or perception or intuition is only relatively and contextually valid. Any evidence of the senses (higher or lower) is properly merely information to be considered, tentatively accepted or rejected, etc., without compulsion or non-provisional conclusion. On a practical basis, even for the spiritual student, apparent evidence is best (and at best) tentatively accepted at face value. Provisional conclusions can (and frequently must need) be drawn nonetheless, provided that all conclusions (as all evidence) are (is) considered qualified (by some degree of uncertainty and relativity).

The second (and related) fallacy of proof is that of factual assertion and compulsive (conclusive) argument. Since (by occult assertion (or according to the esoteric philosophy)) all evidence is merely apparent and indicative, then all assertion is likewise merely apparent and indicative (of something, not necessarily of what is asserted). Thus all assertion is evaluative (subject to evaluation, qualification, relativity, context, etc.) and is not in itself conclusive. As the spiritual student evolves a more refined, spiritual, and intuitively responsive nature, a sense of discernment (realization) is naturally developed and revealed which affords a better means of testing for relative truth than merely rational means, but even the highest means of realization (truth recognition) results in merely relative recognition of truth.

In short, nothing is really provable. One cannot prove anything to anyone, although one can convince some people of some things (albeit folly to do so) and

one can convince oneself of anything. In a looser sense, one can (necessarily) only prove something to oneself (since someone else can reject any evidence or assertion), but that proof is merely one of acceptance (belief). Although this entire range of relative and provisional psychological experience is not as comforting as concrete, rational, materialistic (deceptive) existence, it is more useful to the evolving consciousness, the evolution of consciousness being merely a process of progressive self-realization as each level of deception (illusion) is overcome and the next level embraced.

† Commentary No. 527

Janus

Janus was an ancient Roman god (aspect of deity) presiding over gates and doorways, (in recognition of) beginnings and endings, commonly represented with two opposite faces. The significance of Janus lies in the symbolic value of gates and doorways (portals) (as reminders), each passage signifying the beginning or end of some cycle, and in the universal cyclic nature of creative manifestation.

All of manifestation is a manifold of cycles within cycles, levels within levels, and lives with lives, such that on every (apparent) level and for every (apparent) life, every moment (day) (year) (epoch) is the end of some cycle and the beginning of some new cycle. Each new beginning (however major or minor) may be consciously realized (qualified consciously by some intention) or otherwise, naturally motivated by (responsive to) some correlative force or self-motivated by some apparent need or intention. In every ending there is (implied) a new beginning, and at every such ending (beginning) there a release of power (potential) and it is that release of power (the existence of potential) that is symbolized by Janus (as an aspect of divine potency). Since that potential lies as well within every human being, then Janus represents the ability (potential) of each human being for initiative.

Without conscious or deliberate qualification, every new beginning is qualified only by correlative forces. But with conscious and deliberate qualification, that potency is magnified within the human being and collectively to the extent of

the participating and responsive involvement. Every beginning (initiative) should be consciously qualified by the student's realization and earnestness, that the cycle shall be more effective by virtue of the individual's (group's) responsiveness. Similarly, every ending should be consciously qualified by willingness to face the consequences of the forces released during that (ending) cycle and responsiveness to the lessons implied by the experience of that cycle (since each cycle is invariably linked in some way to succeeding cycles).

Of perhaps greater significance than the inherent human ability (potential) to qualify each cycle is the inherent human ability (potential) to initiate new cycles of experience. Every moment can be a new beginning. No matter how discouraged one might be with current circumstances or current performance (response to experience), one can always call upon the inner (divine) resources and evoke a new cycle, consciously qualified by renewed intention (determination) (energy), not ignoring the lessons and consequences of earlier experience but evoking an individual or group renewal (revitalization) unencumbered by previous (apparent) failures. With such potential, one need never feel discouraged.

The symbolic value of portals (gates) can be utilized in ritual qualification (and trigger (by habit (intention)) a reminder of that ritual qualification), as each passage through selected (qualified) portals can be programmed to evoke (qualified) energy for some purpose (e.g., renewal of openness to the lessons of new experience or the renewal of service opportunities in facing new experience). Every (proper) occult school or sanctuary has one or more qualified portals. The two (or more) faces of Janus signify that the energy flows both (or more) ways, that no portal is merely one-sided (even if one passes through in one direction only, the two sides are nonetheless related), and that each (person) is related to the past and to the future.

Yin and Yang

Yin and yang are the two great opposite but complementary forces at work in the cosmos. The interaction of these two great forces produces all form and all phenomena within the entire realm of creative manifestation. Although the terms (yin and yang) are Chinese in origin, the principles which they represent are derived from first principles in the esoteric philosophy and recur in every major exposition of metaphysical philosophy and (at least symbolically) in every major religion.

Yin is the supreme feminine (negative) principle (power) (force), characterized by the earth, darkness, cold, and passivity. Yang is the supreme masculine (positive) principle (power) (force), characterized by the heavens, brightness, warmth, and activity. Cosmological (anthropological) evolution (progress) occurs as the two great forces wax and wane in a complementary manner (as one increases in activity the other decreases). Dynamic equilibrium is maintained at all times such that a balance exists between yin and yang throughout the duration of the manifested universe. Nothing can exist without both yin and yang and nothing can progress without yin and yang.

Yin and yang are more properly referred to as yin-yang, as they are really just two aspects of one single principle. The resolution (balance) (realization) of yin-yang (yin and yang) produces wisdom (harmony) as does the resolution of any of the various pairs of opposites which are analogous. The ray correspondence of yin, yin-yang, and yang are (respectively) the third ray, the second ray, and the first ray (all at the level of triune manifestation) (note that yin and yang have no ray correspondence at the septenary level). Within the human form (as within the cosmos) both yin and yang are equally present, meaning that the human being can draw effectively upon both principles (and in effect live in yin-yang (consciousness)).

The concept of yin-yang is related to the various basic elements of manifestation, to the cyclic processes of becoming and dissolution, and to the relationship (interdependence) between cosmos (the world of nature) and the

individual (the world of man). Yin can be considered energy in the form of matter, while yang can be considered energy in the form of spirit. Harmony is the perfect balance of yin and yang. The separation of human forms into male and female is an extremely minor distinction in the overall context of yin and yang. In a major sense, yang is the force of momentum (progress), while yin is the force of inertia (balance); yang is the masculine aspect of the personality, while yin is the feminine aspect of the personality. Yin-yang is the dance of the cosmos, the progression of the seasons, and the middle ground of the Tao.

In the western (predominantly occult) tradition the various pairs of opposites are referred to consistently in order of male and female (positive and negative) (light and dark) (heavens and the earth) (active and passive), etc., while in the eastern (more predominantly mystical) tradition (at least in the Chinese tradition) these same terms are referred to (conversely) consistently in order of female and male (yin and yang) (at least in this symbolic sense). As the two cultures are inevitably and eventually blended, so is the western (occult) tradition moderated by the eastern (mystical) tradition (and vice versa). More properly the western blend of occultism and mysticism achieves a more effective balance of yin-yang as the influence of the eastern blend of mysticism and occultism is properly felt (and vice versa). In every case, the law of correspondence (laws of correspondence) insure that the proper balance (harmony) (yin-yang) is fulfilled.

† Commentary No. 529

The Long View 1

One of the more significant differences between the way the (planetary) spiritual hierarchy focuses (consciousness) and the way most human beings focus, is the breadth and depth of focus. The spiritual hierarchy embraces the long view, a focus and perspective that reaches forward in time far beyond the normal (human) vision of the (incremental) future.

The breadth of the hierarchical view is considerable, for all lives within the planetary (evolutionary) scheme must be embraced. This inclusive view insures that all of the pieces of the planetary scheme fit together coherently and in a meaningful manner, consistent with the overall plan. But a merely inclusive

view is not enough, for the march of time must also be embraced (causally) (not casually) in order to achieve the reality (fulfillment) of the divine archetypes which make up that evolutionary plan. This means that the (long) hierarchical view must stretch for aeons, linking pieces of the vision together progressively, but based upon the intended goal and how best to achieve that goal. This long view is distinctly different from the incremental view.

In the incremental view, one looks at the present status and perceives (or tries to perceive) the next (immediate) step (i.e., the direction) and the focus or energies (qualification) necessary to bring about that (incremental) progress (in some aspect). The incremental view is important and necessary, but is a (relatively) minor (short-term) consequence of evolutionary momentum, not being (really) part of the (macroscopic) invocation but (rather) being part of the ultimate (immediate) evocation of consequential forces. In the long view, one must first embrace the plan in its greater depths, to see the relative goal at the extent of one's vision. Then one must assess the current state of manifestation (current conditions, circumstances, quality of consciousness, etc.) visualizing (recognizing) a flow of energy from each to the other. This coherent visualization then evokes the forces of change (and progress) which in turn result in the ultimate realization of the hierarchical (logoi) archetypes for this major cycle.

During this process (hierarchical visualization), it is important for the participant to learn to (and therefore be able to) (and) recognize the archetype or goal at the extent of one's vision. There are some hierarchical workers (esoteric students) who focus primarily on the distant objective (which necessarily links the present state to the (distant) future state). There are some who focus on current assessment (being observers of (current) human culture (consciousness)). And there are some who accomplish both, consciously and intelligently bridging between the two. Considerable intuitive (contemplative) talent (atma-buddhi-manas) is required of participants in this process, and that talent (and its exercise) is not possible without alignment in two dimensions (alignment of the integrated and refined personality with the soul and alignment of soul and hierarchical consciousness (which is itself aligned with logoi consciousness (and will))).

This two-dimensional alignment (in the context of the long view as well as some other aspects) means that the individual participant does virtually nothing as an individual. There is no mental deliberation or analysis, no individual ideas to contend with, but, rather, there is a group realization of causal forces, objective, means, etc. The fulfillment is achieved by virtue of that continuing realization (recognition), which is an entirely different process than the normal individual (short-term) creative process (of invocation and evocation in more deliberate terms).

† Commentary No. 530

The Long View 2

In both cases (the short-term and the long-term creative processes), the details of the working out of the creative forces are not (cannot) be considered within the visualization, as that would compromise the effectiveness and integrity of the process. The long view (long-term creative evocation of an established (albeit dynamic in a very gradual sense) archetype) is the most inclusive, least personal activity of all of the hierarchical endeavors.

Although most hierarchical workers (esoteric students) are concerned with incremental processes (nonetheless subjectively and impersonally), those incremental efforts also require the participants to possess some of the same talents and abilities as those involved in the long view (of course those incremental processes are also not concerned with individuals or particulars (the details refer to the structural aspects of manifestation, the framework for the manifestation of creative (evolutionary) forces).

The spiritual student can effectively prepare for the hierarchical work (and the long view) through constructive visualization exercises, in particular by utilizing (or attempting to utilize) long view methods on a shorter, smaller scale, by visualizing an appropriate objective and linking the energy of the present and future without resort to focusing on the details of implementation, but by keeping the vision in mind and allowing the creative forces to evoke that which is envisioned (the details (implementation) are the natural karmic consequences (qualified energy) of sustaining the vision). As ability is developed and refined, the student can gradually broaden and deepen the focus and (simultaneously)

seek to recognize some portion or aspect of the plan to be embraced (which is not the egoistic exercise of projecting one's personality views of how the plan should unfold).

Another useful approach (in preparation) is to develop an impersonal vigilance, by becoming aware of current conditions (and forces) in (human and planetary) consciousness and contemplating their relation to the plan. No spiritual student is an isolated observer, since all are linked in consciousness (on some level) and contribute to the overall (filtered) impression or realization of current conditions, so that every observation (by a qualified observer) contributes to the overall assessment. This vigilance involves effective (objective) observation (awareness) and (subjective) consideration.

The esoteric student who embraces the long view (or hierarchical work in general (as all esoteric students do in some measure)) must ever recognize his or her subordinate position (participation) in these creative and evolutionary processes. The long view is the vision of the planetary (solar) logos (not even the vision of the planetary (solar) hierarchy, which merely assists in the working out of that logoc plan). And the long view is, in the final (non-temporal) analysis, already much more real than the differential vision (and immediate reality) of the human species. The long view also embraces an important and necessary attitude, of doing things (projecting forces) of no concern or consequence to the current conditions or incremental processes, of planting seeds and creating the foundation and framework for future conditions (without being distracted by more immediate needs). The immediate needs may be significant (on their level), but their fulfillment would not be possible if not for the long view (that embraced the current conditions (qualitatively and relatively) in the distant past). To embrace the long view is to tread the more noble path of greater reality (the tradition of service without recourse to seeing the effects of one's work).

The Long View 3

One of the important practical aspects of participating in the long view is that participants are no longer distracted by current conditions and events (narrow focus) and are therefore able to be more impersonal and more inclusive.

There are very many who focus on the present personal situation and that focus is relatively separative. Many focus on the present conditions, seeking to change those conditions through that focus, but such effort (sincere and well-intended) is futile, since the present is entirely consequential and no one has the ability to change the present. Certainly one can change one's attitude toward present conditions and thereby change one's response (which in turn contributes toward further consequences) in a (hopefully) more positive (constructive) manner. Those many who sincerely and actively work with current conditions play an important role nonetheless, in (constructively) fulfilling the karmic consequences of the present and demonstrating the current quality of consciousness. But a present focus does not contribute directly to the creative process of bringing about the intended (qualitative and generalized) future.

Thus although the spiritual student is encouraged to live in the present tense (the timeless, eternal now), the spiritual student is also encouraged to embrace the forces and energy of the future in a positive, constructive, inclusive, generalized, impersonal manner. Relatively few work with the long view (since relatively few are qualified) but those who do work quietly and in confidence, for the vision of the logos is a subtle and encouraging force. The fabric of the future and the creative visions (archetypes) and patterns within that fabric are such that they can only be contacted on abstract mental and intuitive levels, which means that any endeavor of concrete mental activity (i.e., thinking) is at best a response and not the embrace per se.

However, those whose mental activity is reasonably consistent with the higher (abstract mental and intuitive quality) can receive impressions that are in response to and an interpretation of the higher vision and associated energy (and consequential forces). In alignment proper there is no thinking, but with reasonable alignment the higher energies can and do induce thought-forms in

the lower mind (just as the mind can embrace external thought-forms (from the concrete mental plane)), and therefore the esoteric student attributes (assumes) (presumes) no authorship, personal or otherwise. Others may naively presume (personal) authorship (without even thinking about it) which simply distorts the thought-form to some greater extent. But in any case thought-forms emerge which more or less reflect various aspects of the higher vision (the long view) and can be utilized by the individual (and group) as appropriate and according to the character and quality of the thought-form and the character and quality of the perceiving consciousness.

The spiritual student should strive to redeem the views and perception of the personality (which is viewed by the soul as noise), elevating the individual consciousness above and beyond the realm of opinions and other personal energies and attachments in order to embrace the more refined (more subtle) and more inclusive energies of the logos and the interpretation (transformation) of those energies by the spiritual hierarchy into creative forces for the planetary scheme. The student is encouraged to think about those impressions, continually (if not continuously) testing them for quality (relative validity) (freedom from personal energy), in seeking to understand where we (humanity) (the planet) are going (from the higher view, rather than from the appearances of current conditions), thereby contributing to bringing about that realization.

† Commentary No. 532

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is a measure of one's self-respect or self-conceit. Self-respect is the proper (moderate) esteem or regard for the dignity of one's character and temperament (qualities and abilities), while self-conceit (vanity) is the exaggerated opinion of one's qualities and abilities (character and temperament). Self-righteousness is an aspect of self-conceit (pride) and implies (unfortunate) righteousness or hypocrisy in one's own esteem.

Proper (moderate) self-esteem is a necessary ingredient for a healthy personality, both in terms of orthodox psychology and in terms of metaphysical philosophy. The basis and extent (and quality) of an individual's self-esteem is

significant. Many within humanity are lacking (proper) self-esteem (self-respect) (and are therefore relatively ineffective or ineffectual in some basic sense), due to coarseness, lack of integration, emotional vulnerability (lack of self-control), etc. Others within humanity have the exaggerated form of self-esteem (which is conceit) (and are therefore relatively ineffective or ineffectual in more subtle ways), due to an overdeveloped or exaggerated personality (ego) and/or coarseness on concrete mental or astral levels.

For much of humanity self-esteem is based upon various (personal) glammers which are fabricated by the ego or the egoic response to the personal (self-centered) environment. An attractive physical appearance, a successful career or personal achievements, wealth, power, position, credentials (formal education), popularity, etc. are just a few of the more common glammers upon which many people base their positive view of themselves (self-esteem). Of course all of these (worldly) things are superficial and carry no real weight as far as the spiritual path is concerned (although persons of spiritual quality and character may also possess some or all of these superficial indicators, they do not necessarily possess them and if they do they do so incidentally to the (more valued) spiritual quality, character, and temperament).

For the spiritual student (aspirant) there is often the glamour of perceiving oneself as being (somehow) superior to the bulk of humanity because of one's (self-perceived) metaphysical or theosophical knowledge and understanding and/or because of one's self-perceived position upon the path. Of course any sense of superiority is a false self-perception and progenitor of interesting impedimental consequences. No one of any (real) spiritual quality (alignment) can suffer such delusion of superiority. In any event, self-esteem based upon any of the superficial indicators, albeit strong (life-long) and well-established in the personality (ego), is nonetheless based upon the ego and is therefore temporary (in the longer view of the soul) and unreal (improper), necessitating the (eventual) development of proper humility.

The proper self-esteem of the spiritual student however has an entirely different basis and quality. Proper self-esteem is based upon an understanding of the relationship of the soul to the personality and the relationship of that soul to the soul of humanity. Such an understanding conveys self-respect regardless of whatever outer appearances or achievements (or apparent failures) there may be.

As the spiritual student becomes increasingly more honest with himself, and begins to really know himself (strengths and weaknesses, relative character and quality), he (she) finds the previous glammers (upon which the self-esteem may have been based) dissipating, being replaced by a deeper, fuller understanding (humility) of the soul and personality. It is this understanding (self-realization) and confidence in the soul and the spiritual life (path) that are then the (proper) basis of self-esteem.

† Commentary No. 533

Psychological Typing 1

Character and temperament are an indication of the overall responsiveness of the personality to the soul and the various forces of the external environment. A qualitatively (spiritually) strong personality indicates relative spiritual (evolutionary) maturity and responsiveness to the soul, while a qualitatively weak personality (i.e., a strong (relatively coarse) personality) indicates a relative lack of spiritual (evolutionary) maturity (development) and a lack of responsiveness to the soul (i.e., being responsive (or reactive) more to external and personal forces). The character and temperament depend on the nature of the soul (if the person is responsive), the nature of the personality, and the nature of the surroundings for a given incarnation. Character and temperament are the result of evolutionary experience on personality levels. More basically, a person's character and temperament are the consequence and expression of the ray nature present in the personality.

Throughout the ages people have attempted to categorize people into various psychological types (or types of personality character and temperament). The value of proper psychological typing (1) increased self-understanding and therefore an improved ability or potential for improvement and progress, and (2) potentially increased understanding of human nature, value, and character differences (leading (potentially) to improved human relations and rapport). The problem though, is that conventional (and astrological) approaches to psychological typing have numerous weaknesses and limitations, due in part to the complexity of the human personality (being a composite of a large number of interdependent forces) and in part to the grave incompleteness and misconceptions (assumptions) of orthodox science and psychology.

The conventional approach (of orthodox psychology) is to use empirical evidence (based on (naturally biased) observation, experience, and assumptions) to develop and “substantiate” a simple (theoretical) model (construct) (or to propose such a model and then acquire empirical support). In either case the conventional approach to psychological typing (and resulting models) is quite limited in its usefulness and applicability (credibility), due mainly to the arbitrary nature of the models and processes utilized and the limitations inherent in the over-simplification and over-generalization needed to fit data and people to the presumed (necessarily arbitrary) model.

One of the biggest limitations of conventional psychological typing is the number of dimensions or characteristics utilized. A large number of characteristics is rather difficult to measure and correlate by conventional approaches and models (and would complicate the “substantiation” process). Therefore, most conventional models incorporate only a few dimensions.

One approach (model), for example, considers only one scored (presumably measured) dimension (characteristic), categorizing all people (subjects) scored as being either extroverted or introverted (or some intermediate measure), and, based upon a subject’s score, then generalizes or assigns other (presumed and unmeasured) characteristics to that person (temperament) (which may or may not be relevant or reasonable for that (or any) person). Another model utilizes four scored dimensions (extroversion vs. introversion, sensation vs. intuition, thinking vs. feeling, and judging vs. perceiving) (yielding sixteen basic combinations or psychological types). The problem with such a simple approach is that the choices (extremes) are not mutually exclusive (one can be situationally or temporally introverted or extroverted, one can simultaneously respond in a situation in a “thinking” and a “feeling” manner, etc.).

Psychological Typing 2

Due to assumptions (values) (perceptions) made in conventional approaches to psychological typing, conventional approaches rarely effectively measure the intended characteristics or even effectively interpret the intended characteristics. Since almost all personalities have so many characteristics, a psychological typing model of only a few dimensions (characteristics) cannot possibly adequately describe the majority of people (i.e., such a model is (statistically) significant only for those people who actually fit the model and its assumptions (but even so, rarely its generalizations)).

Even without assigning (presuming) (generalized) additional (unscored) characteristics, there are limitations in the measurement or scoring process (e.g., situational factors, binary over-simplifications, etc.) and the results (if scored or measured and interpreted properly) are applicable only to the central portion of the statistical distribution of scores (subjects (people) scored), and not to the wings or edges of the distribution where the non-typical subjects appear (e.g., spiritual students). Consequently, conventional typing is useful only to some limited extent and for a limited set of subjects (people) (and only to the extent that the limitations are recognized and properly weighed and considered).

Conventional typing can be dangerous in the sense that it lends itself to mis-typing or to misleading (or uncorrelated) generalizations (one conventional model of sixteen dimensions, for example, assumes that imaginative people are necessarily absent-minded and impractical (which is not true), that humble people are necessarily submissive (which is also not true), and that people who score well as abstract thinkers are necessarily more intelligent (which may or may not be true)). Conventional typing is also potentially dangerous in practice due to the tendency of people to stereotype other people, drawing (presumptive) conclusions based on unrelated or uncorrelated features.

Astrological typing has significant advantages over conventional approaches to psychological typing, in the sense that astrological types are relatively easily measured for a large number of subjects (i.e., those who are personality-centered and therefore not responsive to the nature of the soul) and in the sense that

astrological typing is considerably more natural than conventional typing (which is almost entirely arbitrary or based on empirical data rather than correlated with the natural organization of manifestation). But astrological typing suffers nonetheless from some of the same limitations as does conventional typing (e.g., the tendency to fail to recognize the significant distinctions of polarization of consciousness, stereotyping, etc.). The two principal (inherent) limitations of astrological typing are its inapplicability to spiritual students (who are to some extent responsive to the soul and therefore less subject to astrological qualification) and its composite naturalness.

The relative naturalness of astrological characteristics derives from the ray forces and energies that make up the astrological qualification, so that an astrological type can be related to a composite of ray forces (while conventional models are not so correlatable unless fortuitously so). But the astrological composite is not easily resolvable into individual or discrete characteristics which are directly correlatable to the seven rays (which constitute the natural organization and categorization of all forces and energies). Consequently, it is the ray approach to psychological typing that is (potentially) the most effective, being the most natural system available.

† Commentary No. 535

Psychological Typing 3

The basis of the seven rays approach to psychological typing is that every major and minor aspect or attribute of the human being is qualified by and is a manifestation of one or another (or some composite) of the seven ray energies which constitute and qualify all that is. Each of the seven levels (planes) of consciousness is qualified categorically by one or another of the seven rays and through the various ray relationships (e.g., the mental plane is qualified by the third ray and its reflection, the fifth ray). The human monad, soul, and personality are qualified categorically by the first ray, the second ray, and the third ray, respectively, and particularly according to the ray nature of the particular human being.

In evaluating a person's (seven rays) temperament, there are a number of qualifications or considerations: (1) The presence and consequences (effects) of

the soul (the soul ray) are only felt (noticeable) when the personality is aligned to some extent with that soul (i.e., when the personality is responsive to the soul) (which is rarely the case beyond the framework of the spiritual path). (2) The presence and consequences of the personality ray are only felt (noticeable) when the personality is integrated (i.e., where the elements or constituent forces of the personality are integrated into a single basic aspect. (3) Prior to integration, the categorical rays of the several elements of the personality will dominate (i.e., the seventh (sixth) (fifth) ray of the physical (astral) (mental) body (respectively). Prior to integration, those categorical rays are manifested relatively coarsely in the personality. After integration, it is possible (indeed an objective) to refine those ray manifestations within the personality (ray) and eventually achieve alignment. (4) The polarization of consciousness is normally a dominating ray influence on the personality.

A physically-polarized (and therefore not integrated) personality is dominated by the seventh ray of the physical body (and physical plane). An emotionally-polarized (and therefore not integrated) personality is dominated by the sixth ray of the astral body (and astral plane). A mentally-polarized (and integrated) personality is directly qualified by both the fifth ray of the concrete mind and the particular ray of the integrated personality (an intuitively-polarized (and therefore necessarily integrated) personality is directly qualified by the fourth ray of the buddhic sheath and the particular ray of the soul). (5) Cyclical rays and the rays of humanity (and other situational rays) are influential but not normally in a dominating manner.

Another (very important) consideration is the strength and quality of a ray manifestation within a given personality. As a person (soul) evolves, the personality (personality matrix) gradually develops from having no particular ray character (of the personality per se) to having all seven rays well-developed and properly qualified (refined and balanced). Initially the (undeveloped) personality simply reflects the relatively coarse ray nature of the environment and the composite atoms of the three (four) personality vehicles (physical (etheric), astral, mental); for each incarnation the soul invokes a particular ray qualification for the personality which (in the early stages of personality (matrix) development (i.e., in the early incarnations)) gives the (relatively coarse) strength of presence of that ray within the personality.

Eventually, the ray nature (as incorporated in and expressed through the personality) is qualified, refined, and balanced so that the (relatively perfect) personality not only reflects the higher quality (of the soul) but is itself a reasonable and qualified synthesis of all seven rays (on that level).

† Commentary No. 536

Psychological Typing 4

Given the various qualifications and considerations of the seven rays approach to psychological typing and given the complexity of the human nature, it is still relatively easy to evaluate a given personality in seven ray terms. One must first determine the level of polarization (and degree of integration and alignment if pertinent). Then, provided that the analyst (observer) understands the various ray characteristics and the various ray relationships (and is relatively unbiased (being objective, intuitive, and impersonal), the subject personality can be tested for the presence (strength) and (if present) quality of each of the seven rays in turn.

Although each personality attribute or characteristic is ray-related, it is not such an easy task to correlate each attribute with its ray. Some (non-fundamental) characteristics are composites and therefore only directly related to some combination of rays. Even the fundamental characteristics may be (observationally) masked by other (more apparent) factors. Consequently, only a properly qualified analyst is likely to effectively assess the ray nature of a given personality, but at least the system is natural and all of the elements are ultimately correlatable. A basically honest person familiar with the seven rays can therefore perform a preliminary (tentative) self-assessment in a relatively straight-forward manner. The student (analyst) must necessarily discern the relative strength of each characteristic as well as the relative quality of that characteristic, and be able to distinguish between strength (magnitude of presence) and quality (measure of refinement).

One must also properly discern and distinguish between the various attributes and characteristics without generalization or presumption and (hopefully) with minimal bias of perception and interpretation (in this sense all approaches to

psychological typing are limited). A successful (personality) assessment is generally possible only with honest observation over some not inconsiderable period of time and over the course of various situations. Otherwise, as in the case of the conventional approach, the results or conclusions will be misleading or only partially applicable.

The individual (spiritual student) who has acquired a basic (comprehensive) understanding of the seven rays on the level of and in the context of the human nature, and who has achieved a fair and reasonably complete self-assessment, should be able to then discern the particular weaknesses of the personality to be transformed (or at least moderated) in the current opportunity (incarnation) (and in such discernment find the encouragement and power to bring about the indicated moderation or transformation), and should be able to discern the particular (qualified) strengths of the personality appropriate for expression and utilization (for appropriate application) in that current opportunity (lifetime). Of course the same realizations might be achieved through methods other than the seven rays approach, but the advantage of correlation within the seven rays understanding yields appreciation for the ray relationships and the ability to (relatively easily) evoke the appropriate ray force(s) and energy. Dealing with forces not consciously correlated with the (nature of the) seven rays means that such dealing (working) is relatively weak.

The evocation of ray forces within and through the personality (in cooperation with and subordination to the soul) is a potent means of self-development but is more importantly a significant avenue of service (in wielding and sharing such energy appropriately) (or a significant enhancement of any service endeavor), the more consciously (and intelligently) the better.

Healing Energy

Healing energy is that aspect of the second ray (love) (wisdom) or fourth ray (harmony) that acts to restore equilibrium (balance) within any and all lifeforms (regardless of level or extent (composition)). For each lifeform there is a natural (healthy) (harmonious) state and there is the actual state which may or may not be the same as the natural state. Whenever a lack of balance (harmony) (consistency) exists between the actual state and the natural state then healing energy will be evoked in the form of restorative force. Success (restoration of balance) depends on the responsiveness of the form (its consciousness) to the opportunity afforded by the healing energy.

Healing energy is quite similar to karmic energy (and must necessarily be consistent with karma) in that karmic forces seek to restore the karmic balance while healing forces seek to restore the natural balance (harmony) (a third balance (archetypal) is maintained by evolutionary forces). On the level of the trinity (the three major rays), healing energy (force) is a manifestation of the second ray; while on the level of the septenate (the seven rays), healing energy (force) is a manifestation of the fourth ray. Thus healing energy comes primarily from the second ray but through the instrument (mechanism) (channel) of the fourth ray. Healing energy is inherent in consciousness (just as karmic energy is inherent in life and evolutionary energy is inherent in matter) and is drawn from the (refined) consciousness on each level.

Healing energy is invoked (and evoked) naturally and automatically whenever a non-equilibrium state exists for a given lifeform, to the extent that that lifeform is responsive and to the extent that karma permits. There are many instruments of healing energy, including the soul, certain orders of deva lives (devas whose specific calling is to channel healing energies on some level of consciousness), and certain occult (esoteric) orders of human lives (occult (esoteric) students whose specific calling is to invoke, transform (transfer), and evoke (direct) healing energies more actively than in the case for the deva lives). Within karmic boundaries there is never a shortage of healing energy, but responsiveness is another matter altogether.

The need for healing (restoration of harmony) is necessarily indubitably linked to karmic and evolutionary qualifications such that responsiveness depends on karmic fulfillment (learning the intended lessons (on some level)) and concomitant (incremental) evolutionary progress. Thus healing energy can never be effectively imposed, for to do so (to impose) simply upsets the balance in another direction, leading to lack of immediate (karmic) fulfillment (i.e., loss of opportunity) and the necessity for (karmic) restoration (before any real (non-superficial) healing can result). Thus those who work properly with healing energy serve to make it available on practical levels without specific (personal) direction or imposition. The proper qualification (evocation) of healing energy is a form of encouragement (non-compelling stimulation) toward learning (understanding), adjustment (right action (response)), and restoration of harmony (health), leading to greater effectiveness.

The great potency of Christ-consciousness is its healing potential (love) (wisdom) (harmony), which can be invoked indirectly (without recourse to occult training). Any invocation of healing energy is more properly a group (impersonal) qualification (e.g., for all of humanity rather than some particular person) (although individual qualification is sometimes appropriate (without imposition)). Where one is properly integrated and aligned, one will naturally (and almost unconsciously) serve as a channel for healing energy.

† Commentary No. 538

Astavimoksa

According to one particular branch or aspect of metaphysical philosophy, there are eight stages of meditation leading to deliverance (astavimoksa). These stages of meditation are progressive, with each stage leading in turn to the next, over a course of (many) years or (several) lifetimes of meditative discipline and training. One might actually consider a given stage for quite some time before the intended realization of that stage is obtained. In subsequent incarnations, one generally recapitulates the earlier effort, beginning (proper) meditation in earnest at the nearest fulfilled stage.

According to this tradition (astavimoksa), the eight stages are (1) attachment to form, (2) detachment from form, (3) meditation on purity, (4) realization of infinity (boundless immateriality), (5) realization of wisdom (boundless knowledge), (6) realization of nothingness, (7) realization of being, and (8) realization of not being (beyond being). Each of the stages indicates a condition of bondage (distraction) (absorption) (limitation), the power (potential) and means to overcome or transcend that condition, and a conveyance (transference) to the next stage as the needed realization is achieved.

Attachment to form is an opportunity for the examination of form and the realization of its coarseness (impurity), leading (eventually) to detachment. Detachment is another opportunity for the examination of form and the (greater) realization of its coarseness. The first case (stage) might be considered the realization of attachment, while the second stage might be considered realization of coarseness proper leading to refinement and acceptance of form (in its place). These first two stages also illustrate the paradox of focusing the consciousness while attached to the object of focus, and the more subtle paradox of focusing (not focusing) the consciousness while not attached to the object of focus. The lifting of consciousness above identification with form leads naturally to the intended detachment, but these processes are not simple in practice. Detachment from form leads naturally to meditation on purity and the realization of desirelessness. Desirelessness permits proper vision and realization of the infinite (boundless) range of immaterial existence. Realization of boundless immateriality leads to wisdom (boundless knowledge). Wisdom leads to the realization of nothingness.

From the realization of nothingness there follows a "realization of the state wherein there is neither thought nor absence of thought" (being) and (relatively) ultimately to a "realization of the state wherein the two aggregates, feeling and ideation, are entirely eliminated" (being beyond being). These stages of being and beyond being refer to levels of consciousness entirely beyond the normal (personality) consciousness (corresponding to buddhi and atma, respectively), while the realization of wisdom and the realization of nothingness correspond to utilization of abstract mind (manas) and intuition (buddhi) by the lower mind (or at least through the lower mind). The earlier meditation and realization relate to the integration of the personality and the alignment of the personality with the soul.

The eight stages (of meditation leading to realization) refer as well to the life and activity of the spiritual student, since upon the spiritual path the meditation work cannot be effectively separated from the personality consciousness (which is after all a necessary instrument) and the relationships (experience and expression) of that personality in the (objective) world of manifestation. Thus some element or aspect of service parallels each of the eight stages and is an ingredient in the intended realization.

† Commentary No. 539

The Three Obstructions

The three obstructions are self-importance, jealousy, and desire, representing that which hinders progress along first ray, second ray, and third ray lines, respectively. In each case the obstruction is really a set of that which hinders and within which is found the key to progress.

The first obstruction is desire. Desire is a projection of personal energy along self-centered lines, a strength of feeling focused on some objective and representative of the coarseness of (unrefined) third ray energy (which includes all of the outer, lower manifestation and the entire personality domain (categorically)). Desire is an expenditure of energy and an indication of mundane (material) absorption on some level. As an expression of energy, desire tends to bring about that which is desired, subject to karmic qualifications; the strength, coherence, and structure of the desire; and the practicality of its evocation. The utility of desire is the development of the personality's ability to project and focus energy. As the student progresses, desire is gradually transformed into goodwill (the underlying third ray quality), as the energy and efforts are brought to bear on more noble and less personal matters. As the student progresses, desire becomes more and more an obstruction to (spiritual) progress, until it is finally overcome and the student achieves the freedom inherent in refined third ray energy.

The second obstruction is jealousy, which is representative and indicative of a range of relatively coarse, separative tendencies associated with unrefined

second ray energy. Jealousy (and each similar emotion) is a projection of personal energy along self-centered lines, one that hinders right human relations and prevents or inhibits the more natural brotherhood inherent in the more refined second ray energy. Like desire, jealousy is a personal activity which must eventually be overcome and replaced by compassion (which is the underlying second ray quality). Jealousy implies individualization (the illusion of independent existence), while compassion (impersonal love) implies a group orientation and the necessary realization of interdependence (as a stepping stone toward realization of unity in consciousness).

The third obstruction is self-importance, which is more general and more subtle than is the case for desire or jealousy. Self-importance is actually implied in all three obstructions, but culminates only (primarily) as the more obvious elements of coarseness are overcome. Self-importance is nonetheless an energy expression albeit relatively more internal than external unless imposed upon others. As an external (internal) expression (imposition), self-importance is a projection (an accumulation) of personal energy along (unrefined) first ray lines. Each (every) projection (accumulation) of relatively coarse (personal) energy impedes the flow of more natural energies, distracts the waking-consciousness and the personality subconsciousness from more noble (impersonal) pursuits, and must ultimately be resolved into some positive realization. In the case of self-importance proper, that realization is humility (the underlying first ray quality).

Each impediment or obstruction carries with it some significant lesson(s) to be learned. Every coarse or self-centered expression is a projection of self-returning energy which ultimately leads to the transformation of that coarseness, from self-importance, jealousy, and desire, to humility, compassion, and goodwill, from the personal (coarseness) to the impersonal (purity), from limitation (bondage) (attachment) to freedom, and from independence (delusion) to interdependence and unity (reality).

Relativity

The basic premise of relativity is that in the realm of manifestation there are few if any absolute (invariant) measures and all things are relative, i.e., depend upon the relative perspective of the viewer. That perspective depends on position, values, character temperament, spatial, spectral, and temporal factors, etc. For all practical purposes, the manifested universe is the domain of relativity and the unmanifested universe (the void) is the absolute domain.

Although relativity is a practical reality and must be considered in all things experiential, relativity is also part of the world illusion (of individual, separate existence). The absolute offers nothing in return but the (unmanifested) existence of the absolute itself. The domain of relativity (the exercise of relative perspective) offers everything experiential and evolutionary, for everything that deals with life, consciousness, or form is necessarily relative and not absolute. The very concept of an absolute consciousness is a paradox, since the absolute is beyond consciousness (consciousness being a transient of manifestation).

Another premise of relativity is that nothing within the manifested universe is a linear phenomenon, that every process and every perception is relatively biased and essentially non-linear (appearances notwithstanding). This means that much of the presumed (observable) universe that appears linear is in fact, non-linear, that incremental experience, perception, and time (space) are all non-linear (having non-equal increments or non-linear variation in parameters). Much within the domain of relativity is naturally logarithmic or exponential (depending on perspective). Much within the domain of relativity is multidimensional and correlative in some matrix sense.

In the realm of relativity, every state of being is “dependent for existence on or determined in nature, value, or quality by relation to something else” (existence is a function of relationships as well as an intrinsic function). Relativity also implies complete interdependence and affords no (real) independent existence (i.e., that freedom and independence are relative phenomena, that all things are necessarily relatively bounded (unbounded) (depending on perspective)). The problem then of relativity is the transient or relative nature of all referents. If

one is to cope with (accept) the relative reality of a relativistic manifestation, then one must appreciate the relative stability of things dynamic (i.e., the underlying patterns and structures that are relatively more “concrete” than the more transient phenomena). This also means that attachments are quite futile and that flexibility (adaptability) is necessary for progress. But one must remain (relatively) stable (coherent) if one is to progress at all, and therein rests the key to (relative) evolution. That key is dynamic stability (coherence). Those who are relatively incoherent are relatively lost. Those who are inflexible are subject to dissolution. But those who are relatively coherent and able to proceed sensibly in the face of relative phenomena are able to evolve much more effectively.

The eventual paradox of living in a relativistic domain is that one must ultimately view things relativistically and at the same time begin to embrace the absolute (which is necessarily indescribable). Progressive meditation leads to (relative) detachment (freedom from matters mundane) and successive realization of relative absolutes (that each higher level of (arupa) consciousness is absolute relative to that which is lower, but merely relative to that which is higher). It is the nature of the absolute to recede, and it is the nature of the evolving lives to approach that absolute.

† Commentary No. 541

Consensus

Consensus is defined as group unanimity or general agreement in sentiment and belief. In the lower sense, consensus implies conscious or unconscious rational (or emotional) agreement (on some subject) or acquiescence to such an agreement generally held by virtually all of those concerned (in contrast to a simple majority which leaves a minority relatively unsatisfied). In the higher sense, consensus implies unanimous intuitively-realized agreement (based upon group realization rather than the rationally or emotionally persuasive processes of consensus in the lower sense). The significance of consensus is three-fold: (1) consensus is the next evolutionary step beyond democratic processes, (2) consensus (in the higher sense) requires the participation of the soul (or more properly, the non-participation of the (independent) personality), and (3)

consensus is inherently a group phenomenon rather than a composite of individual processes.

Although democratic processes are (potentially) significantly better (more fair (effective)) than non-democratic non-consentaneous processes, democratic processes are not as fair and as effective as consentaneous processes (i.e., the achievement of consensus through realization). Democratic processes can be abused, while consentaneous processes (in the higher sense) cannot (simply because in the higher sense the personality is unable to serve separative causes). Of course a real consensus in the higher sense cannot be achieved by a group of people having widely differing values or sentiment (because such a group is in general a group of individuals lacking alignment of souls and personalities). Thus the overall quality of consciousness of the people (group) determine its ability to embrace effective democracy (one that is not dominated by majority or minority (special) interests, but one that embraces what is (apparently) best for all) or (with greater quality of consciousness) effective government by consensus in the higher sense.

An effective (proper) consensus can only be achieved where the personalities are sufficiently refined to permit the soul to qualify the process and where virtually all of the participants are involved at that (relatively high) level and quality of consciousness. This does not preclude differences of relative values or sentiments, but it does require (evoke) that all of the basic (important) values and sentiments be commonly held (which of course is always the case where individuals are aligned with their respective souls (since all (human) souls share the same basic (overall) (inherent) quality)). The differences have to do with variabilities in talent, responsibilities, etc., but where consentaneous processes are the general rule (in the higher sense) then the differences are ever complementary and therefore inherently constructive.

The practical significance of consensus for the spiritual student today (in any era in which consensual processes in the higher sense are not prevalent in the secular or mundane world (which would not be secular or mundane if consensual processes in the higher sense were prevalent)) rests in the role of metaphysical (theosophical) (esoteric) (spiritual) groups to the extent that they participate in or are responsive to hierarchical qualification (the qualification of the evolutionary plan) and are (therefore) self-governing by effective (intelligent and

intuitive) consensus (where individual, rational, or emotional positions and/or processes are not present).

A consensus can be general or specific (limited in scope) (character), (relatively) positive and constructive or negative and destructive (separative). It is for the spiritual student to encourage constructive (realistic) consensus.

† Commentary No. 542

Consensus Reality

Life in the lower worlds is very much a matter of reality by consensus, that default reality being established and sustained over the aeons of subhuman and human experience. Those who are subjected to the lower reality (i.e., those who incarnate) have little choice than to participate to some degree in the lower, practical reality (and therefore in the lessons to be learned or experience to be gained there). The basis of the (lower) consensus reality is the deeply ingrained belief in the reality (preponderance) of material existence (that belief resides in the material (composite) substance of the lower worlds and almost completely enamors (deludes) every personality that has not (yet) been touched by the soul (called toward the path)).

The (lower) consensus reality is sustained by physical, emotional, and mental attachment to (or through) material things (including the personality vehicles). Any continuing belief in material reality as the only substantial or meaningful perspective merely serves to sustain. Although the lower (material) (physical) (objective) reality serves a purpose nonetheless evolutionary, it must be overcome and transcended before any higher reality can be entered or achieved. This process of transcendence (of material and personal (personality centered) reality) means that all of the ages-long attachments to material existence must (gradually) eventually be loosened and released. The process is complicated by the student's need to remain functionally effective in the lower consensus reality (of the bulk of humanity) while gradually embracing more and more effectively (simultaneously) the (higher) consensus reality (which is based upon conscious existence (reality) rather than material existence (reality)).

The perspective of a preponderance of consciousness as reality (vice material substance) is the practical consensus reality of the spiritual path, at least prior to liberation (graduation) from the human domain. In each case (material and conscious existence) the body of thought and feeling sustained by the two groups (one within the other) contributes directly to the nature and progress (development) of the implied consensus. The material consensus is almost entirely involuntary, while the conscious consensus is almost entirely voluntary. As the student evolves and as consciousness gains the upper hand over the material nature, the student becomes (gradually) more and more responsive to the (quality and character) of the higher nature.

Significant stumbling blocks however exist within the lower field of (material) consciousness (lower consensus reality) as those with more potent minds (yet not spiritually responsive) naturally (selfishly) manipulate the lower (default) consensus (i.e., as ideas or beliefs are imposed via the (passive) consensus). Those who impose themselves (or their ideas) deliberately upon others (through the lower field of consciousness) are courting the ways of the dark path, particularly where what is imposed is not even believed by the imposing party but merely projected for some presumed personal (corporate) benefit. Every imposition of belief, value, etc. is a violation of freedom, particularly where the consensus reality is manipulated (consciously or otherwise). Consequently, all who are vulnerable (i.e., who are enamored by material (passive) existence) must be encouraged (not imposingly) to think for themselves (which leads eventually to freedom from material and personal attachments) and to embrace the reality of conscious (active) existence.

The consensus reality inexorably evolves as those who contribute to it evolve in character, quality, and temperament. Those who are able to bridge effectively between the two realities are the encouraging force for freedom.

Ockham's Razor

Ockham's razor is the principle of ontological economy (law of parsimony), normally stated as "entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity." As a scientific and philosophic rule, Ockham's razor requires that the simplest of (non-compelling) competing (candidate) theories or explanations be preferred to some more complex explanation. The principle was popularized by William of Ockham, but has been used (and misused) by many through the ages.

The basic idea of frugality (wisdom) in nature is quite sound, since the basic structure of cosmic manifestation at all levels is quite simple. Simple as well are the relatively few basic laws of nature which govern that manifestation (providing purpose (evolutionary encouragement), (dynamic) equilibrium (balance), and closure (assimilation)). Natural (inherent) relationships are also quite simple in structure. Viewed archetypically, all of the diversity and multiplicity of manifestation can be reduced to a few basic ideas. Of course realization of that simplicity (relatedness) comes only after a lengthy struggle through ignorance (evil) and materialistic absorption.

The problem lies in the very limited nature of ordinary human consciousness. In order to fully appreciate (realize) the beauty (simplicity) (purpose) of life (consciousness) (manifestation), one must acquire (reveal) a considerable breadth of vision (only inclusively can the universe be properly embraced) and a considerable depth of intuitive understanding (likewise only with the participation of the inner self (the soul) can the spark of realization be tendered). Emotional and rational approaches to (greater) understanding are hopelessly inadequate, although where rational approaches are relatively unbiased and tempered by some intuitional insight some progress can be made. The problem is (simply) that the ordinary faculties are of a nature linear and therefore not of a matrix (correlative) nature and so only pieces of the puzzle are normally perceived. Where the proper breadth and depth (quality) of perspective and consciousness are lacking, simple things can appear quite (needlessly) (necessarily) complex and most any attempt at simplification is premature and therefore misleading (and may usually actually discourage or impede further correlation and understanding).

Consequently many rationalists argue natural frugality without perceiving the simple patterns of nature, depending on the paucity of compelling evidence to generate explanations that extend only as far as the empirical evidence. But empirical evidence is the least meaningful as far as metaphysical (theosophical) (esoteric) necessity is concerned, because empirical evidence is so limited (partial) (and therefore misleading without intuitional correlation). Therefore conventional (emotional and rational) attempts to explain natural phenomena are often futile (whereas intuitional approaches are much more compelling but only for those who so embrace the energy of the object (subject)). Some successes have been (can be) achieved nonetheless.

On a practical level, a simple explanation is preferred over a complex one provided that such is both sufficient (to explain the occurrence) and not merely rational (e.g., defensive avoidance). The great multiplicities and diversities of nature are easily and simply embraced by the principle of epigenesis and the reality of the group soul. Viewed inclusively, the apparent complexity and diversity of the esoteric philosophy can be reduced to a few basic ideas (nonetheless redundantly applied to a variety of perspectives). Although Ockham's razor can be misused by material rationalists (and the orthodox consensus), it can also serve to inspire respect for teleological necessity.

† Commentary No. 544

The Triple Point of the Mind

The mind is the only human vehicle that is part of the personality and part of the soul, the concrete mind being the highest aspect of the personality and the abstract (subjective) (higher) mind being the lowest aspect of the soul. At the interface between the concrete mind and the abstract mind a triple point exists. A triple point (point of equilibrium) (in this context) is a point of tension (focus) where three phases, aspects, or perspectives coexist. The triple point of the mind allows the (qualified) waking consciousness (the focus of conscious awareness) to look (up) into the depths of the soul, (out) into the external environment, and (down) into the depths of the personality.

The significance of the ability of the waking consciousness to dwell at the triple point of the mind lies in the clarity of vision that is evoked at that point in any of the three directions. Provided the focus of the mind can be maintained at the triple point, the evoked vision (perspective) is unhindered by the glamour (illusion) of the personality. If the point of focus is lower than the triple point, then the personality distorts the vision. If the point of focus is higher than the triple point, then no viewing is possible since the soul per se does not have the faculty for such perception (the vision of the soul is an entirely different phenomena (process)).

It is relatively important for the spiritual student to (be able to) view the personality honestly (dispassionately) and without being subject to the normal glamour and illusion (distortion) of the (absorbed) personality. The personality cannot view the personality domain honestly or clearly, but the waking consciousness focused at the triple point of the mind and looking down into the personality can generally see the truth or relative reality of the personality (character, temperament, values, etc.) and in such recognition can then invoke the requisite forces (energy) to more effectively qualify (refine) (transform) the personality and its instruments. Similarly, it is relatively important for the spiritual student to (be able to) view the (lower) external environment without hindrance of personality bias. The student must be able to effectively assess the personality and its environment if the student is to work effectively within (upon) the path (service).

It is also relatively important for the spiritual student to (be able to) view the nature of the soul, for in such recognition the student can comprehend the place and purpose of the soul and in such recognition can actually evoke the qualifying forces (energy) of the soul. It is not generally possible for the unintegrated or unaligned personality to evoke the soul's energy directly, but at the triple point of the mind the waking consciousness opens (and sustains) a rapport of personality and soul. Every time the waking consciousness returns to the triple point of the mind it strengthens that rapport, and as that rapport is strengthened then the soul can (and will) continually (and eventually continuously) directly qualify the lower self (personality consciousness). The problem then is in achieving the ability of the waking consciousness to reach that triple point and remain there more than merely momentarily.

The prerequisites are few and simple (but quite difficult in practice to fulfill): (1) the personality must be refined and properly integrated (the emotions must be properly calmed and subordinated to the mind), and (2) the mind of the integrated personality must be further refined and disciplined to enable the quiet mind to emerge as a more natural state than that of the active (thinking) mind (the mind must be stilled to the point where no thoughts can disturb the focus of the mind).

† Commentary No. 545

Esoteric Leadership 1

Esoteric leadership is the process by which the pioneers (spiritual students) of humanity help the bulk of humanity to embrace the evolutionary plan (through the evolution of consciousness). It is not a process of imposition, nor in general is it even a process of education (though education plays a role, most of humanity do already embrace the evolutionary plan more or less unconsciously (and therefore only incidentally)). Esoteric leadership is a process of subtle encouragement, largely through inductive means, based upon the quality of consciousness represented by the spiritual (esoteric) students of the world (i.e., those in incarnation who are therefore within humanity in manifestation) (which presence (quality of consciousness) is a natural and inductive (and positive) force for constructive progress).

Esoteric leadership is a process of relationship, of the responsible spiritual students relating (a largely unconscious) humanity to the evolutionary plan. In relationship there is a flow of energy (in each direction), where the spiritual student (representing the minority group (of spiritual students and the spiritual hierarchy of the planet) induces a flow of energy within the larger organism of humanity (the majority group within which the minority functions)). Thus one relationship (of the presence of spiritual students within humanity) leads to another (the relating of humanity more directly to the evolutionary plan). Thus esoteric leadership is ever a group process, not of isolated individuals but of individuals who represent the group by quality of consciousness (effectiveness depending largely on their group rapport (absence of separative individuality)), not where individual ideas are involved but where individual participants are qualified by the group process.

The actual appropriation of (qualifying) energies (and therefore forces) associated with the manifestation of the evolutionary plan are largely already taken care of by other responsible lifewaves and certain esoteric groups (soul groups) sanctioned by the spiritual hierarchy and planetary logos. Therefore, the spiritual student should be more properly concerned with the human response to that plan (energies) (forces). The leadership process then is the encouragement of proper response. The energy of encouragement must (properly) come from within, via the soul, and therefore be (properly) induced within humanity (which means that in order to be effective in this sense, the spiritual student must be (properly) qualified and therefore have some measure of alignment (of personality and soul) (in order to be responsive and relative)).

The spiritual hierarchy serves as the (group) instrument of leadership of the planetary logos (for the planetary scheme) and from which (and through which) the spiritual students (servants of humanity) should draw their encouragement (via the respective souls). But the (responsive) spiritual students of the world are the instrument of leadership for the spiritual hierarchy, for spiritual students are made manifest and spiritual students are more directly part of the mass consciousness. To be effective in esoteric leadership, the student must not become absorbed in the mundane world of objective humanity, but neither must the student look upon humanity from without (which is equally and substantively ineffective).

It is not so much a matter of what the spiritual student is doing in the outer world but a matter of how the spiritual student goes about that work. It is not so much a matter of activity in the world as it is a matter of spiritual (inductive) presence. In short, it is being there, with some quality of consciousness that matters for esoteric leadership.

Esoteric Leadership 2

While for exoteric leadership the seven rays afford seven (four) basic approaches or styles (methods) of leadership (for the personality), for esoteric leadership the seven rays afford a more subtle process of induction, through four (representing seven) related inductive methods. Since esoteric leadership involves principally inductive response, the personality plays only a minor (incidental) role (as a responsive instrument, reflecting the soul's energy). Thus the esoteric student works with the group (hierarchical) consensual quality of consciousness.

Along first ray (and seventh ray) lines esoteric leadership involves the inductive response to potency, where potency represents purpose and compulsive inspiration. Along second ray (and sixth ray) lines esoteric leadership involves the inductive response to quality, where quality represents love, wisdom, and consciousness (and magnetic induction per se). Along third ray (and fifth ray) lines esoteric leadership involves the inductive response to ideation, where ideation represents the conservation of momentum in manifestation. Along fourth ray lines esoteric leadership involves the inductive response to synthesis, where synthesis represents balance and moderation. In each case the catalyst does not represent one or another of these (four) processes, but represents all four simultaneously (and dynamically), for esoteric leadership is itself a synthetic and general (broad and inclusive) process and not one of analysis or specific activity.

Esoteric leadership involves a synthesis of approaches, emphasizes inductive processes, and is centered in the alignment of soul (presence) and personality rather than in the incidental activity of the personality. As the spiritual student achieves more of a group rapport (via the soul), the student becomes more effective as an inductive instrument of the soul (and the spiritual hierarchy (which works with souls not personalities)). As the spiritual student consciously embraces the hierarchical view, the student becomes even more effective. There are basically two hierarchical perspectives concerning the working out of the evolutionary plan within humanity and the planetary scheme (which is broader than just humanity), the long view and the incremental view, and each of these relates to esoteric leadership.

The incremental view is the process of evocation. One looks at the present status, perceives the next step (in some field of human endeavor), then focuses energy upon that step, thereby evoking the forces (encouragement) of accomplishment. The (hierarchical) (planetary) (evolutionary) force for immediate progress (e.g., within the next ten to a hundred years) already exists as a consequence of prior invocation (through the long view). The spiritual students and spiritually responsive people of the world are simply the instruments of realization (manifestation), with the esoteric students playing a more inductive (leadership) role and the exoteric workers playing a complementary and necessarily (albeit consequential) active role.

The long view on the other hand is the process of invocation, looking far beyond the present (non-incrementally), starting with the most distant future perceivable (within the hierarchical perception) and relating that vision backwards in time to the present. Thus the long view is (1) concerned with longer-term goals rather than immediate (apparent) needs, (2) causal rather than consequential, and (3) much more inclusive and interdependent than the incremental approach. In either case, being within humanity with a quality of consciousness is relatively more important than the details of activity.

† Commentary No. 547

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the act or process of forgiving, of ceasing to feel resentment against some (presumed) offender or giving up some claim to requital or recompense. There are a number of problems related to forgiveness that need to be considered if the separative forces (of forgiveness) are to be avoided.

The first problem of forgiveness is the presumption of wrongness. Many would observe or experience some activity of another and (consciously or unconsciously) consider that activity to be wrong. But it is not for the spiritual student to judge others or their actions (it is rather for the student to observe and evaluate and learn, without judging others in the process). It is (relatively) wrong (inappropriate) for the spiritual student to presume wrongness on the

part of others. It is appropriate for the student to judge his own behavior (actions, feelings, and thoughts) as a means of recognition leading to progress. Thus the spiritual student may set standards for himself but not others, with implied standards effective if and only if they are consciously accepted by the (mind of the) personality (or possibly unconsciously in the case of the soul's qualification of the personality).

Another problem of forgiveness is the tendency toward (or existence of) resentment as a response to (presumed) offense (or wrongness). For the spiritual student (who should know better), resentment in any form is simply unwarranted. It is unwarranted in two respects, in the sense that resentment is itself an inherently separative (destructive) activity (on emotional or concrete mental levels), and in the sense that resentment implies the presumption or assumption of wrongness (or at the very least, a denial of karmic balance). If a person suffers on some level in relationship to some other person's actions, then from the karmic standpoint of the suffering party the suffering is indeed warranted (yet the action is not necessarily warranted from the karmic standpoint of the person whose action is linked to the suffering on some level). In any case, resentment is ignoble and avoidable.

Yet another problem of forgiveness is (believing in one's) having a claim to requital or recompense. Such a perspective is self-centered, narrow, and separative, apparent injustice notwithstanding. Since it is the presumption of wrongness that leads to resentment, and resentment that leads (potentially) to claims-making (or forgiveness of same), then the real issue or focus should be the elimination of one's own (natural human) tendency toward judging others. The outer world is a learning environment for all and many are the opportunities for experience leading to karmic consequences and the assimilation of experience. At first glance, forgiveness appears to be a noble gesture, yet the very act of forgiveness is based upon ignoble presumption (of wrongness or offense taken), for one cannot forgive without first presuming some offense to have taken place. Rather than forgiving, per se, it would seem to be far better (1) to overcome one's sense of being wronged or offended (i.e., to refuse to judge others' behavior) and (2) to apologize (verbally or mentally (depending on the circumstances)) for taking offense in the first place (since one is responsible for one's own offense-taking (resentment) independently of the presumed or apparent offender (for whom one has no responsibility)).

In the final analysis it is the glamour of forgiveness and the illusion of nobility that concerns the spiritual student, for the problem of resentment is usually overcome through the normal processes of refinement, while the problems of presumption and forgiveness per se are more subtle (less coarse) and therefore more difficult to address.

† Commentary No. 548

The Pygmalion Effect

In Greek legend, Pygmalion was a sculptor who carved a statue of an imagined woman and subsequently fell in love with the woman. His prayers were answered by the goddess Aphrodite and the statue became the living woman of his dreams. In a variation of this legend, the Pygmalion effect has come to refer to the process by which a person (catalyst) encourages another to believe that something is possible, thereby bringing about the desired consequence.

The idea (process) of belief bringing about the actuality of what is believed (or projected) is a simple matter of energy following thought. Thinking and feeling are creative exercises (deliberately or incidentally) which evoke consequences (desired or otherwise) according to the strength, quality, and appropriateness (reasonableness) of the projection and the karma of all affected parties. Thus any thought (desire) will tend to bring about the more objective manifestation of what is thought (desired). Each person is directly responsible for the consequences of his or her own thoughts and feelings (actions). In the Pygmalion effect the situation is a little more complicated, because the catalyst shares some responsibility for the consequences (depending on the nature and extent of the encouragement), because the belief(s) of the principal are reinforced by those of the catalyst.

The guidelines for the catalyst are relatively simple and straightforward. (1) Avoid imposition. No one has an inherent right to (seek to) change another person's nature (character, quality, temperament) or circumstances. But where is the fine line between responsible encouragement on the one hand and imposition (particularly where children are concerned) on the other? (2) Be constructive and realistic (remaining wary of one's own bias (in values)). For

the catalyst, success or failure depends on the extent of responsibility assumed by the principal (the student (friend) (child)), the extent to which the desired outcome is consistent with the karma of that principal, and the extent to which the process is constructive and reasonable. (3) Teach principles, allowing the principal to apply them as he or she wishes (and according to understanding), encouraging the principal to take responsibility for any consequences of application (assuming there is no real imposition and the principles tendered are constructive and reasonable).

Another dimension of the Pygmalion effect is the group dynamics (responsibility) of the self-fulfilling prophecy. If enough people of potency (thinking and feeling intensity) (not necessarily quality) believe in something (or fear something), then a tendency arises for that belief to come about, for good or ill (ever karmically consistent). In this way the general intended near-term (group) karmic consequences can be altered, bringing about (for example) war or peace as the case may be. It is therefore prudent, for the spiritual student, to ever seek (and recognize) the good in all, emphasizing constructive (moderating) processes and paying little attention to the negatives (of life in the lower worlds). The occultist must be rather cautious in his thinking and in his speech, as the bulk of humanity are relatively easily swayed in their thinking and feeling.

The esoteric (spiritual) (occult) student is necessarily influential, albeit hopefully only inductively so, and therefore responsible to some extent for the effects of his or her influence (nature) on others. But fear of consequences should never enter into the conscious equation of the esoteric student, for the student should ever proceed according to whatever quality and wisdom he or she possesses, being aware of and accepting the consequences of every action.

Alchemy

Alchemy is the power or process of transmutation (transformation) of something common (the ordinary, relatively coarse human personality) into something precious (the refined, relatively perfected personality that is soul infused). This (alchemical) transformation is primarily (almost entirely) psychological (the material effects being merely consequences of psychological processes (achievements)) and has three major phases.

The first phase is that of the soul working indirectly upon the personality vehicles. In this phase the soul evokes the subtle forces (through the instrument of karma) that qualify the personality experience and gradually bring about a responsiveness to the soul's presence. The second phase is that of the qualified mind, being responsive to the soul (and having integrated and refined the personality) and working directly and consciously upon the personality to effect subsequent and continued transformation. The third phase is that of the soul proper, where the personality is soul-infused and entirely qualified by the soul (without absorption or distraction).

It is the second phase that primarily concerns the occult student, for in the (proper) occultist the mind is developed (but not overly) and trained to work directly and indirectly with a host of natural (external and internal) forces, bringing them to bear upon the personality until the self-transformation is complete (at which time (and increasingly until that time) the forces are wielded through the personality for broader purposes (service)). Alchemy then is the prelude and precursor of occult service and involves the invocation and subsequent evocation of (cyclic) forces tempered (qualified) (guided) by the soul (and in the second stage by the relatively qualified and aligned higher mind) and applied toward the development (and subsequent perfection) of the human being (race or lifewave). The alchemical application of force is a subtle and deliberate (skilled) blending of selected (appropriate available) forces and a refinement (thereby) of the material substance of which the human form is composed (i.e., the dense physical, etheric, astral, and mental bodies and their relationships in vibration and force). Through this alchemy the quality and character of the soul (and higher energies) are incorporated in the personality (which becomes thereby

a more suitable reflection of the soul and the world (domain) that the soul represents).

Alchemy is a synthesis of forces, a synthetic combining (blending, merging, balancing, apportioning) of diverse forces (previously and subsequently present) into a coherent whole (a soul-infused personality). Much of the preliminary occult training has to do with alchemical processes, as the philosophers' stone is revealed as the soul (which has (is) the inherent power of transmutation (ultimately relative to the personality, as the monad relates analogously to the soul)). The dangers of alchemy are merely those of ignorance and coarseness (willfulness) (ego). Without proper knowledge and without that knowledge being tempered by wisdom the alchemical transformation can short-circuit, effectively destroying or damaging all or part of the human faculty.

In a sense, alchemy involves directly the blending and refinement of the seven ray forces as manifested within (through) the human form. Such a blending (orchestration) requires a considerable knowledge and understanding of the rays and their relationships (formulae), the ability to discern their presence and their relative and respective quality, and the ability to wield those forces constructively and effectively. Self-transformation is the (training) exercise that leads to subsequent assignments and opportunities for service.

† Commentary No. 550

Reverence

Reverence is defined conventionally as deferential respect felt or demonstrated. A proper sense of reverence, felt and demonstrated, is one of the many crucial ingredients for human completion. In this (more spiritual) sense, reverence refers to the deferential respect and devotion (adoration) of the human being (spiritual student) toward (1) God, (2) all of the intermediate (hierarchical) lives and forces (nature), and (3) all of life and its manifestation. It is not (in this sense and should not be) a reverence toward other particular human beings (as human beings or as anything supposed otherwise), but it is a reverence toward the life that lives in and through all beings and all forms, without discrimination.

One should then respect all particulars but revere (only) the one life in all (and its manifold of expressions and intermediaries). The importance (significance) of respect and reverence lies in the need of the spiritual student (and humanity) to overcome the existing prevalent separative forces and embrace the unifying forces of the one life. Without a profound reverence for life in all of its manifested forms, it is not possible for the student to achieve the necessary rapport with the soul (for the soul is not separated from the one life (of course neither is the separative (individualistic) (coarse) personality (ego), but the sense of separation (on that level) is sufficient to preclude conscious rapport)). In this relatively impersonal sense, reverence is an important heart-centered catalyst, for reverence (love) evokes the development of the heart-center (along relatively mature lines) and as long as it remains impersonal serves (tends) to balance the head-centered and heart-centered natures.

Another important aspect of reverence is its tempering effect on the ego. If properly cultivated, respect for others and reverence for the one in all will moderate the development of the ego and allow its qualification (transformation) (deliverance) (salvation) by the soul. Without some sense of reverence, the ego can develop beyond bounds manageable, precipitating a crisis for domination of the personality. If the ego is sufficiently strong (resolute), then it will be destroyed rather than tempered (a properly tempered ego is a positive attribute while an unconstrained or untempered ego is spiritually intolerable).

Respect for all is an aspect of reverence for the one, and helps the student to achieve a rapport with lives in manifestation even where some (many) of those lives may be expressing themselves through coarse instruments. Without respect for others (notwithstanding relative coarseness), the spiritual student is necessarily separative and preclusive. With proper respect for others, the student can be an effective inductive influence within the manifested lifewave (which is inherently more effective in this sense than the working of the soul on its level). Respect (reverence) for the greater lives allows a responsive rapport to be achieved (albeit not necessarily conscious), which in turn affords the student a place (role) in the manifestation of evolutionary forces and their qualification.

Although the human being is a god-in-the-making, the human being is nonetheless merely one of countless manifestations of the one God, and one of the essential ingredients of a perfected human being is humility, which is self-reverence or a religious deference of the mind (ego) (personality) to the soul (God) (Christ) within. The true self is the one within all, and without reverence and humility the one without (the human (individual) personality) cannot live in peace.

† Commentary No. 551

Significance and Time

Events and occurrences in time are necessarily the karmic consequences of actions (on various physical, emotional, and mental levels) (usually but not necessarily earlier in time than the consequences), and are significant to the extent of the overall context and not merely that which is apparent (immediate or obvious). Simple occurrences can be far more significant than apparent but not necessarily so (similarly, complex occurrences need not be as significant as apparent). It is important for the analyst not to presume significance or the lack of significance, but to evaluate the overall context without undue attention to appearances.

Insofar as an event or occurrence in time is concerned in the (minor) context of the time or setting of the event, virtually all events and occurrences in time are consequences of a considerable causal chain in time, with the near timeframe having only the significance of precipitation or catalysis rather than causation. In other words, all effects are the result of an integration of causal forces over an extended period of time (that extended period of time (or more properly the actions in consciousness over that extended period of time) being the major context). An apparently sudden occurrence is normally (not so apparently) not sudden at all when the causal chain is considered. The significance and true magnitude of the consequences are related more so to attitudes (thoughts and feelings) (quality of consciousness) than to specific overt actions, since attitudes (consciousness) weigh more heavily than (most) overt actions (since attitudes integrate over an extended period of time while particular actions are integrated over relatively brief periods (even though particular actions can have extended consequences)).

The vast majority of events or occurrences in time are not particularly significant. They are nonetheless products of the causal chain (more properly the causal matrix) and merely serve to provide a framework for more significant events and occurrences in time. The incarnated individual (mind) needs time to assimilate experience and achieve understanding (and subsequent wisdom) (at least from the temporal perspective). Understanding (comprehension) is more important than particular experience, so the whole of some lifetime is more important than the succession of events or occurrences in time that make up the apparent lifetime.

A person's response to experience (conscious or unconscious) is relatively more significant than the experience per se. An event or occurrence in time that provokes thinking is generally more significant than one that provokes feeling (which in turn is generally more significant than one that provokes a merely physical response), because integrated thinking contributes more directly to the assimilation of experience than integrated feeling (although a strong emotional response may contribute more to the karmic equation (if contributions to the karmic equation can be measured at all)).

Since distance and time are dimensionally similar, then a temporal moment (relative significance) is the product of the magnitude of the force and the time over which it is applied. Many great forces are applied to the human experience, as qualification for evolution along particular lines. Consequently, group response to qualification is considerably more significant than any individual response or any collection of individual responses. And yet, since time is part of the grand illusion, the true significance of anything is only measured (properly) where the factor of time has been integrated out of the equation of life.

The Mask of Truth

From one perspective the human objective is a greater, deeper, broader realization of truth, and the achievement of all of the psychological changes implied by that realization (or at least implied by the process leading to that realization). The psychological changes (qualitative changes in character (consciousness) (temperament)) are necessary in order for the human mind (and its sponsor (the soul)) to be able to embrace the dynamic process of progressive revelation, but (in truth) the objective of truth in the most direct sense is to bring about those psychological changes in the first place, for such are the stepping stones to the real objective (which is inclusion (soul infusion) (the rapport of oneness (not merely an appreciation that oneness is real))).

The problem of course is that the human mind (and even the human soul on its level) is considerably limited in its ability to properly perceive and to properly interpret what is perceived. The world (universe) (within and without) is vastly deeper and broader in each of the human dimensions of perception and is more properly perceived in vastly more dimensions than the few currently (and partially) embraced by human consciousness. The nature (necessity) of evolution (in consciousness) is (necessarily) one of progressive achievement, of developing a capability for experience (expression) on some level and in some (relatively measured (limited)) manner, learning more from the process of achievement than by the experience of that which is achieved (except in the sense that it is involved in the next phase of the process). The quest then in this sense is the expansion and refinement of the human ability to acquire and interpret knowledge, recognize truth (the relative significance (integration) of knowledge or information) and the transformation of that knowledge (truth) into wisdom (quality of consciousness).

Truth is however also of nature progressive, for the limitations of human perception and understanding define the measure and manifestation (character) of truth that can be embraced. In short, truth is masked, and the perception (realization) of truth is a matter of recognizing truth within the mask. With realization comes progressive revelation, as masks within masks are recognized, as truths within truths are realized, as the partial vision is made more whole,

broader and deeper and therefore more inclusive. To succeed in this quest (process), one must embrace the idea of progressive revelation, of refinement in consciousness, of broadening and deepening one's own view of that which is perceived, interpreted, recognized, and realized.

To succeed in this quest one must not become attached to that which is perceived or to that which is achieved, for attachment serves mainly to sustain limitation, while recognition of relative values allows for change and progress (of course one should not hold values so loosely that there is little of significance realized, one must simply learn what one can and move on to more inclusive perspectives (although somewhere along the way service replaces the quest for truth (without preclusion))).

The mask of truth is a necessary protection and balance, to allow the progression of steps that in turn allow assimilation and adjustment (incorporation of wisdom). There are no short cuts to truth or wisdom. All must be earned and no stages can be skipped (although some can work and progress more rapidly (but never rapidly) than others and some can embrace several stages at once). With wisdom (soul realization) (inclusion) the esoteric student is able to more readily recognize the masks and their truths and achieve more effective assimilation and deepening.

† Commentary No. 553

Companionship

Many perceive a need for companionship and develop or tend to develop psychological dependencies on their companions. Without the spiritual path these dependencies and perceived needs afford appropriate experiences, but complicate the respective lives with associated limitations and attachments. Within the spiritual path there is no need for companionship, for in the proper perspective all needs are fulfilled and companionship is a matter of accepted mutual opportunity and not (properly) based upon perceived need and all of the limitations and complications associated with such a perspective.

The spiritual student should be (or should endeavor to be) free from any psychological dependencies (not to mention any unnecessary physical

dependencies). The (illusion of) need for companionship (which generally masks various ego needs (resistance to spiritual development)) should not be allowed to distract the attention and progress of the student. The student must learn to walk alone in the sense that no one else can walk in his or her place; only the unencumbered student can walk (learn) (grow) effectively, in the freedom of the path (soul). Having (perceiving) (having the illusion of having) needs is a weakness and limitation that distracts and complicates, while being free from such perceptions is a strength that simplifies and allows attention to duty (dharma) (which minimizes the hold of the ego). Thus the spiritual student must learn to be effectively psychologically self-sufficient, with only a self-dependence (dependence on the inner self (God within)) to assure spiritual continuity (freedom from lesser absorption).

Where no need for companionship exists, companionship can be effective in the fulfillment of the work of the path. One can learn from others' experience, by observation and discernment, to the extent of one's awareness and capacity for assimilation, and conversely one can advertently or inadvertently (nonetheless constructively) contribute to another's learning (particularly so without imposition). Where there is a mutual trust and cooperation with no basis in perceived need or dependence, then companions upon the path can effectively magnify the opportunities of the path for service. Where spiritual students work together to address common goals (dharma), where such companionship and cooperation is unencumbered by (overly) personal relationships, desires, needs, etc., then considerable progress can be made.

The true companion is the soul, which is inseparable (for all practical purposes) and the immediate source of spiritual encouragement and qualification. To look without, to friends, companions, teachers, etc. for encouragement is not the way of the spiritual path and is rather more limiting than effective. To learn from others while recognizing the inner source (of one's own soul) is far more effective. In this sense, one can effectively learn through external experience without being distracted by external means; without attachment or distraction one can achieve that dynamic balance of effective companionship and inner dependence that reveals the freedom (potency) of the path.

While the individual soul (God) is properly the central companion, all companions upon the way are impersonal extensions of that soul. By viewing

one's companions in this sense, one strengthens the proper place of the soul and weakens the dependence upon and the implied distractions and attachments of personality-centered existence. Although companions upon the path are not always afforded (for whatever karmic reasons), proper companions are ever valuable, and particularly so where the relationships are sensible and free from personality-centered diversions (diffusions).

† Commentary No. 554

Divination

Divination is the art, practice, or process of foreseeing future events or discovering otherwise hidden knowledge, by interpretation of omens and through intuitive perception. There are a number of fallacies associated with divination which effectively distract many who are attracted to the lesser mysteries without proper qualification.

The first fallacy is that the future can be foreseen with any accuracy or consistency. Even the most talented who view the future field can only effectively generalize the future tendencies or patterns, because the future consists of a vast number of dynamic karmic threads, ever changing as new inputs are added and old ones fulfilled, and since all causes and consequences are interactive (interdependent) with all other causes and consequences, the resulting complexity (the chaos of wisdom) is at best probabilistic and generalized (bias is another problem altogether). Very few consequences are stable enough to be accurately predicted, and therefore all perception of the future field must (properly) be considered suspect (i.e., biased by the process of perception, probabilistic and generalized at best).

The second fallacy is that there is any real significance to predicting the future. Very few are properly trained and qualified to properly perceive the future field, and they are employed mainly to perceive the long view (the evolutionary plan) in general terms, working to link the current momentum to the intended, generalized, evolutionary objective. Those who are properly trained and qualified are not concerned with (the illusion of) particulars and do not make predictions. Predictions of future events (however relatively accurately) serve no real purpose, particularly for those upon the spiritual path. What matters is

the quality of consciousness embraced in the present and the proper expression of that quality of consciousness. Knowing some particular impending future event affords no greater opportunity to evade or change the consequences, for all is governed by karma and evasion is not possible nor can consequences be changed without merit. One can only progress or evolve through learning and understanding (the incorporation of wisdom).

A third fallacy is that the purpose of divination has anything at all to do with foretelling the future. Divination is properly a process of developing and refining the intuition as an instrument of perception and assimilation of experience and the realization of wisdom. Divination is properly a process of evoking the intuition in the recognition and evaluation of cause and effect relationships. Divination is properly a process of developing the faculties of discernment, discretion, and discrimination in the framework of the spiritual intuition (buddhi). Therefore one should not confuse the exercise with the objective. The tools and instruments resorted to (i.e., astrology, the tarot, etc.) are merely catalysts for evocation of faculties and not particularly significant in themselves. Of course the truly talented (properly trained and qualified intuitive) needs no resort to outer tools or instruments.

A fourth fallacy is that divination is or can be a science. Divination is an art, necessarily and properly subjective and qualitative, a science only in the sense of being (possibly) a structured (objective) approach to (trigger) the evocation of subjective and qualitative processes. If viewed as a science or as an end in itself, divination remains an entertaining diversion and without significance. But viewed as a symbolic and artistic process, divination has a considerable potential for intuitive realization, provided that the student avoids the various associated glammers and illusions (distractions).

Ritual

A ritual is an established ceremonial form or pattern, customarily repeated in association with some implied purpose, often part of a series or chain of such forms or patterns in some greater association. A ritual can be as simple as a mentally-voiced word of power (mantra) or prayer, or as complex as the ceremonial form (pattern) of an entire incarnation. Rituals can be effective or ineffective, depending on the quality, intention, consistency, and character of the form (format) and the energies so linked or evoked. Rituals can similarly be applied toward more or less constructive objectives.

The power or potency of a ritual depends on the intensity, character, and consistency of the energy invested and the ability of the (occult) (esoteric) (spiritual) student to properly qualify and sustain the pattern evoked. Although the means and methods vary widely, all rituals involve impressed or qualified energies and some deliberate (or indeliberate) symbolic associations (correspondences). Those associations or correlations are implied catalysts for additional qualified energies, so that the result of a proper ritual is an energy pattern of some stability and duration having some particular attributes or applications. The student who is aware of the associations and who properly qualifies all aspects of a particular ritual form is one who is most effective. For having invested the time and energy in properly establishing the ritual form, the student can easily evoke the form without reinvestment, revealing intended purposive energies and forces.

The most essential rituals for the spiritual student are proper meditation and self-qualification. The meditation form is essential to spiritual continuity (achieving and maintaining the alignment of a purified and integrated personality with the soul (and all that that soul represents)). Self-qualification is essential to maintaining habits of continued refinement, balance, clarity (freedom from mundane absorption), service, etc. The repetition of meditation forms and self-qualification exercises strengthens the ritual patterns and brings about a considerable momentum. However, considerable care must be applied in the proper establishment of ritual forms to prevent improper momentum and unanticipated detrimental associations (dissolving a potent ritual form can

require considerably more time and effort than was required for establishment) and the student must endeavor to remain aware of the associations in order to remain effective (a ritual maintained without awareness is much less effective) (the student can of course establish a ritual form (pattern) (habit) that evokes awareness).

The tools or instruments of ritual vary widely among the various paths (traditions) and the various levels of consciousness involved. For example, the seventh ray approach is more ceremonial and more dependent on physical devices in its lesser manifestation (less so in its greater manifestation), while the first ray approach is more direct (more mental) and less reliant (if at all) upon intermediates. All ritual properly evokes structure or patterns on some level (etheric, astral, or mental) or combination, but some (higher) forms are evoked directly from the mental or buddhic plane without recourse to etheric or astral instruments (e.g., an etheric pattern can be evoked using etheric means, astral means, or mental means, according to the means of the student).

In general, a ritual is properly a way of constructively associating various forces and energies, blending them and qualifying them toward some object, reinforced by repetition until a considerable momentum is achieved. As such, the ritual can be an effective instrument for the student upon the path.

† Commentary No. 556

Shared Opportunity

Every group or family living experience represents a shared opportunity for particular experience and expression, and particularly so where the group or spiritual family functions in a relatively mature, philosophically-based environment. The opportunity of life within an exoteric (and simultaneously esoteric) group is two-fold. Group life offers both a greater opportunity for service work (primarily) and an increased opportunity for more expeditious spiritual refinement for the involved individuals (secondarily).

As the spiritual student progresses along the path, the call to meaningful service intensifies. The mature student (aspirant) (disciple) becomes

increasingly aware of his responsibility (dharma) to serve humanity in the context of the realization (unfolding) of the hierarchical (evolutionary) plan. Participation in group work, through group meditation and various other service endeavors (e.g., publications, counseling, philosophical discussions, occult projection and visualization, etc.), allows the effort of the sincere student to be generally far more productive and effective than would be the case of the student simply working as an individual. The contributions of individuals to a properly balanced and qualified group effort have a greater than merely (linearly) additive effect. Recognition of this synergism stimulates the mature student to (attempt to) improve his potential for meaningful spiritual service through the group (cooperative) experience.

One of the blessings of the spiritual student is to have found the path (work) and then, further, to have the opportunity of shared group potential in the framework of that work (path) (service). On the other hand, one of the more painful experiences for the true spiritual student is to recognize the intensified call for service while necessarily remaining in circumstances that tend to limit his potential for service (opportunity or its lack are nonetheless merited consequences) (every circumstance is an opportunity for service in some meaningful manner on some level).

The shared opportunity provided by the group living in an environment of continuous (subjective, subtle) encouragement for spiritual progress is also a significant blessing. The student can learn much through observation and experience within and qualified by the quality of consciousness of the group (higher self). The impressions made may be as much subconscious as conscious, but encouraging nonetheless (and of course without feeling any need for encouragement) (one should not need encouragement, one should simply be encouraged). The opportunity of simply living within a group atmosphere (of proper spiritual qualification, tranquility, serenity, positive group endeavor, etc.) is also considerable. This atmosphere represents a potent stimulation for philosophical study, self-evaluation, individual meditation work, group meditation work, and service.

There are also more objective forms of encouragement, as in shared ideas and insights and suggestions for consideration that encourage the student toward a better understanding of himself and the work (context). This generally does not

include either praise or criticism, but rather should include impersonal encouragement that does not encourage the illusion of the ego. The shared opportunity of (mature) (cooperative) (spiritual) group life is not something to be taken lightly or entered into casually, for along with the implied opportunities come commensurate responsibilities for contribution and participation (commitment) in group endeavor and considerable challenge for progress.

† Commentary No. 557

Ankrates ke' Enkrates

Akrates ke' enkrates refers respectively to the morally weak man (akrates) and the man who can resist temptation (enkrates). The path from moral weakness to moral strength is the path of increasing quality and strength of character, which is also the path of conscience or wisdom. A number of stages of moral development portray the evolution of human consciousness from the perspective of moral strength.

At one extreme, the relatively coarse human being is morally weak and lacking strength of conscience. There is at this first stage no conscious or unconscious realization of prudence or propriety, and the person is generally absorbed in self-interest and desire fulfillment. Such a person is generally amoral, having no moral awareness or moral values. Without moral sensibility, such a person cannot properly be considered immoral except in the sense of the cultural context. Morality then has two dimensions, the inner dimension of extent of realization (conscience) and the outer dimension of the extent and manner in which society interprets the collective conscience.

In the second stage of moral development, the individual is still generally relatively morally weak, but because of inevitable experience (and the gradual assimilation of experience) there is a growing presence of conscience (but not normally a conscious realization of conscience) that qualifies the experience and expression. However, at this second stage there is generally a weakness of the will (akrasia) such that behavior per se is not much improved over the first stage. It takes time for the conscience to be developed (from experience and assimilation) and it takes time for the will to be developed, but conscience and

the will are not necessarily developed simultaneously or one necessarily before the other, so one can be morally weak due to a lack of conscience or one can be morally weak due to a weakness of will. In order to be morally stronger, one must have both some conscience and some strength of will.

In the third stage of moral development, the individual is morally stronger because the conscience is stronger and because of a stronger will. In the second and third stages, the extent of conscience is manifested more or less along emotional and mental lines, being more or less rational (rationalized in response to some more subtle conscientious urging or some more obvious cultural or societal (collective) pressures). During the second and third stages, the collective conscience plays an increasing role in the realization of the individual and that individual's relationship to the collective consciousness. Of course the collective conscience may be substantially more or less developed than that of a particular individual, resulting in further tension.

For those who are upon the spiritual path (which generally includes those whose moral strength significantly exceeds that of the general population), the third stage of more rational conscience becomes the fourth stage of more intuitive conscience, more refined awareness of prudence and propriety, and a more morally secure momentum and strength of (qualified) character. The spiritual student does not (should not) impose his moral conscience upon others, but rather should allow his realization (intuition) to guide and qualify his relationships with others without being judgmental or imposing (inductive encouragement being far more prudent). With quality of consciousness (conscience) and strength of character, the spiritual student should relatively easily resist the sensual and personal temptations of mundane and personal existence, concentrating instead on the more useful (constructive) endeavors of the path.

Normality

Each lifewave embraces a relatively diverse distribution of units of consciousness (e.g., human souls) and their reflection into manifested realms (e.g., human personalities in incarnation). For each lifewave (for a given stage or period of manifestation) normality is defined as some degree of conformity to the intended character and quality of consciousness in manifestation (for that stage or period). Normally, for a reasonably coherent and stable lifewave, the vast majority of members of that lifewave will fall within the bounds of normality. For some lifewaves or groups, those bounds are relatively narrow; for others those bounds may be relatively broad.

Actually there are two dimensions to normality, the extent of conformance to the general standards of the lifewave (to which all are expected to conform more or less) and the extent of conformance to the more particular standards of diversity (which constitute a variance of specialization while conforming nonetheless to the general standards). In other words there are general standards of achievement in consciousness applicable to all (e.g., for humanity, generalized achievement upon all the seven rays) and more particular standards of achievement applicable to those specializing within a particular ray (or function within a ray domain).

Most normal distributions of (units of) consciousness allow a relatively broad range of variance in character and quality. Thus one should not generally view others in the context of one's own values and character (which reflect some variance) but rather one should view others in the context of the overall normal distribution (which is necessarily broader and more inclusive). As a lifewave (or major group within a lifewave) advances, of course the general and particular standards (for normal consciousness) advance also, and individuals within the normal range or variance of consciousness may advance at a more or less rapid rate than the collective consciousness (integrated over the entire group or lifewave). It is generally misleading to consider a particular person in the context of some average consciousness; it is far better to consider people in the context of a normal (and relatively broad) range of normal consciousness. Viewing the depth and breadth of variety in human consciousness, for example,

is more constructive, more inclusive, and more sensible (from the standpoint of identification with humanity and from the standpoint of human rapport) than otherwise.

Normality is therefore the state of not deviating from the norm or average beyond some reasonable range for characteristic consciousness. In addition to the natural normality, there are perceptions within collective consciousness which constitute arbitrary or artificial normalities in the sense of social norms or expected conformities. These expectations are generally within the natural range of normality, but more narrowly defined and directly or indirectly impressed upon the participants, resulting in group cohesion of some degree of consistency and stability. Social norms can be helpful in the sense of positive or constructive encouragement or less so in the sense of being imposed or in limiting the freedom of expression of the individuals concerned.

Since normality implies a reasonable range in character and quality of consciousness, there are generally two fringe regions of significant variance to the average. One fringe region represents the spiritual path or the path of inductive leadership for the group or lifewave. That (positive) fringe region is called (spiritual) nonconformity. The other fringe represents a separative path and is called the path of abnormality.

† Commentary No. 559

Moderate Nonconformity

Intelligent, sensible (spiritual) nonconformity is the positive (moderate) fringe of normal consciousness. While the vast majority of humanity (or members of any particular major group or lifewave) exhibit the normal range of character and quality of consciousness, the spiritual path (of super-normality) constitutes that region of human consciousness that leads or impels humanity onward and upward in conformity with the evolutionary plan. But that conformity to the plan is expressed as a moderate nonconformity with respect to ordinary (normal) consciousness and the normal values and relatively mundane absorption of the bulk of humanity.

Moderate nonconformity is necessary for the spiritual student, for the spiritual student must become and remain relatively free from the mundane momentum (absorption) and habits of ordinary existence (experience and expression along more or less mundane lines (i.e., without conscious realization)) in order to be free from the limiting desires, distractions, and (personal and mundane) attachments that preclude the hastened (but not hasty) expansion and qualification (refinement) of consciousness implied by the evolutionary (spiritual) path. Thus it is relatively important for the spiritual student to be on the positive fringe of human consciousness, but not beyond such positive fringe (since being beyond implies some separation from humanity, while the positive fringe affords constructive (inductive) endeavors with regard to humanity).

The gradual momentum of the bulk of humanity toward expanded and more refined consciousness is quite natural. So too is the somewhat accelerated progress (momentum) of those upon the spiritual path quite natural. Both are intended, and both are afforded by karmic bounds. But remaining on the (positive) fringe implies some risk (in the context of the spiritual path), for those who come too close to the (mundane, personal) habits of (ordinary) human consciousness risk absorption (loss of spiritual momentum) and those who go too far from the ordinary risk ascension (passage into (transference onto) the preceding lifewave or another path entirely). The principal intention of the path of moderate nonconformity is inductive leadership, and therefore one must endeavor to balance the spiritual development with a sincere service motive that maintains one's link to humanity.

Moderate nonconformity is actually a rather subtle nonconformity, generally unrecognized by the bulk of humanity (i.e., the spiritual student should easily appear to conform to the basic range of normal (acceptable) human consciousness), yet with significantly greater albeit less obvious freedom in thinking and (more subtle) expression than is the case for the more normally human consciousness. Thus the spiritual student does not generally draw attention to himself or exhibit nonconforming behavior (nor should such a student conform dishonestly or deceptively), yet he (generally) thinks more clearly (being to some extent responsive to the spiritual intuition) (i.e., less rationally and without emotional complexity), acts along more subtle lines (appropriately rather than rationally or compulsively), and maintains an

integrity and quality of (refined) consciousness while nonetheless working within the bounds of natural human momentum.

Thus moderate nonconformity is not willful or deliberate, nor is it reactive or for its own sake; it is more an indication and reflection (natural expression) of adherence to truth and being (the soul) (the path) than it is anything else.

† Commentary No. 560

Abnormality

The negative fringe of normal (human) consciousness is the realm of separateness and the path of isolation (destruction). The positive fringe is not separative because it is consistent with the evolutionary plan. The negative fringe is separative because it is inconsistent with the evolutionary plan. Any substantial and significant condition in consciousness that creates emotional or mental barriers between the individual and the (range of) normal human consciousness is inherently separative and constitutes abnormality.

Abnormal consciousness can come about as a consequence of any one or more of a number of causes, all of which are behavioral extremes (on physical, emotional, and/or mental levels). Wherever attachments exist, fiercely sustained, there are paths to abnormality. On physical levels, the problem is usually identification with matter (extreme coarseness) (physical reactivity) (callousness) to such an extent that the person (personality consciousness) becomes unresponsive to the gradual encouragement (momentum) of human consciousness.

On emotional (astral) levels, the problem is usually some form of (unconscious) identification with astral matter (emotional experience) or absorption in emotional experience and expression. A mild form (nonetheless destructive if sustained, but mild in the sense of being less complicated and potentially more easily mitigated) of astral attachment is extreme materialism; i.e., sustained desires for and emotional attachments to material possessions. A more severe form of emotional extremism is sustained absorption in glamour (attachment to personalities, religious causes, self-deception, emotional dishonesty, etc.). The most devastating forms of emotional extremism are emotional (personal)

reactivity (e.g., sustained feelings of jealousy, hatred, resentment, anger, etc., or extreme emotional sensitivity (untempered emotions) so that the individual becomes wholly unresponsive to reason or sensibility), vanity, and sexual excesses. All of these (emotional extremes) if untempered lead to emotional isolation (isolation or detachment from the emotional field of humanity).

On mental levels the paths to destruction are less apparent but nonetheless dangerous. The problem on mental levels is generally that of mental attachments (fixations) (e.g., extreme critical nature, closed-mindedness, extreme opinionated nature, extreme conceit (ego), mental deception and dishonesty, etc.). The mental extremes if untempered lead to mental isolation (isolation from the mental field of human consciousness). Thus rogue (abnormal) consciousness can arise from physical, emotional, and/or mental extremes and constitute a most difficult challenge for the soul (which is only indirectly aware of the perils of the rogue (insensitive) (unaware) (unresponsive) personality).

Just as one's place upon the spiritual path is carried over from one incarnation to the next, so is one's rogue consciousness carried over as well (at least until favorably or unfavorably resolved). The extremes on whatever levels are incorporated in the personality matrix as habits (tendencies) (vulnerabilities) and must be dealt with and overcome if destruction of the personality matrix is to be avoided. The extremes generally result in impaired faculties (e.g., damaged or diseased physical, emotional, or mental instruments (as the case may be)). In short, extreme behavior or extreme attachments generally result in extreme consequences intended to break those attachments or habits of excess (i.e., to generate some recognition or realization on at least unconscious levels). Success comes as a result of responsive learning.

Harmlessness and Truth 1

The demeanor (posture) (value practice) of harmlessness and the quest for truth are both noble and realizable goals for the spiritual student. But care should be taken not to excuse one for the other or to suffer the respective associated deceptions (misconstructions).

In the first place, harmlessness is more a demeanor and posture than it is an absolute practice. As a practice, the posture of harmlessness is (inversely) limited by the extent of awareness and realization. One can achieve and maintain an effective posture of harmlessness and still (more or less passively (involuntarily) (coincidentally)) be an instrument or catalyst for apparent distress. Within any karmic domain, all consequences are warranted. Therefore what is relatively important for the spiritual student is the posture of harmlessness that qualifies all activities and attitudes (thinking and feeling) so that no harm is intentionally or carelessly or unnecessarily inflicted (within the domain of one's awareness (which should necessarily be cultivated, refined, and gradually expanded)). Lack of awareness is a mitigating factor, but lack of earnestness in achieving (an) awareness (of consequences of (potential) actions) is not an acceptable position for the spiritual student. The spiritual student should care enough to be (become) aware of his activity (on whatever levels) and the effects (and potential) of that activity.

On the other hand, the concept of harm should be carefully considered in its karmic context, beyond the apparent (secular) meaning. From the occult standpoint, any deliberate, careless, or unnecessary imposition (apparent or otherwise) is a potentially harmful exercise (and particularly for any such exercise which limits or injures the personality instrument (on any level)) for the perspective of the one who so imposes, while for the one who is imposed upon there is naught but warranted consequences within the scope and consistency of karma. The fact of that karmic warrant in no way excuses any imposition. One should therefore exercise prudent (sensible) (non-oppressive) care in all activities, and where imposition is reasonably necessary (consider the awkwardness of such a karmic position) one should proceed nonetheless gently (with appreciation for the sacredness of all life).

Harmlessness is sometimes (falsely) used as an excuse for dishonesty. But in fact there is nothing inconsistent about harmlessness and honesty (the embrace of truth). One can always remain silent, knowing that any presumption is the responsibility of the one who presumes, but one should be careful not to mislead by remaining silent. In the final analysis, one should be honest in all respects, and open wherever there exists an appropriate responsiveness to openness (with mutual understanding and respect) (without imposition of ideas). The real crime is deception (including self-deception), so one should be careful in both dimensions (the practice of harmlessness and the embrace of truth) to become aware of (and overcome) deception.

In a sense, harmlessness is a precursor to truth. One cannot really (fully) embrace (the quest for) truth until an effective awareness (realization) (posture) of harmlessness (the consequential dynamics of the forces of human conscious and unconscious activity) is achieved, and until that achievement has become an effective qualification of consciousness and has fallen below the threshold of normal waking-consciousness. Any unfounded presumption of harmlessness will undermine the quest for truth, since the refinement of consciousness is a necessary prerequisite for the realization of (higher) (relative) truth.

† Commentary No. 562

Truth and Meaning

Truth is a much more synthetic quality (construct) than harmlessness (and comparable qualities) because it embraces, enfolds, and thereby transcends (without negation) the composite field. Thus while the first stage of the spiritual path (in this sense) involves primarily character-building (purification, qualification, integration, alignment, etc.) (of which harmlessness is representative and indicative (if not inclusive)), the second stage of the path involves primarily the quest for truth (and all of the refinement and qualification (and practice (service)) implied by that quest (which is, in a sense, simply a more subtle, more general form of character-building)).

The quest for truth is also (properly) much broader in the sense of the inductive influence of the consciously participating consciousness, in part due to the levels of consciousness involved, in part due to the evocation of forces affecting humanity in a broader, more general manner than is the case for the first stage which is more focused on the individual and the individual's contribution to humanity. The quest for truth (in the proper sense and context of the spiritual path) embraces adherence to (realized) truth, and that adherence (practice) is the real contribution of the seeker. Achievement of (realization of and adherence to) truth is the principal obligation of the spiritual student (from this perspective, service to humanity is quite synonymous with adherence to truth, for in realization comes inevitable practice (qualification)).

One dimension of truth is (the posture of) honesty in all respects. This allows greater realization of truth (conversely, dishonesty (conscious or otherwise) prevents or impedes the greater realization of truth). Another dimension of truth is the quest for knowledge (understanding) leading to the qualification of consciousness and the incorporation of realization (wisdom). The process begins with the question of what is true? This leads to the successive questions of what is truth, how is it realized, and what does it mean? In this sense, the quest for knowledge is a preliminary endeavor that should properly lead (in turn) to the quest for wisdom (realization) and the quest for meaning.

It is not enough, ultimately, to achieve realization, for one must, ultimately, embrace the meaning of truth (wisdom), not merely how all things are correlated, but what it means in a much more profound sense. Of course the revelation (realization) of truth is successive and never-ending, and so is the quest for meaning, but (relative) success (progress) depends more on the incorporation of the value of truth than its pursuit. If one is merely fervent (about the quest) then one will necessarily lack the necessary balance (qualification), but if one truly values understanding (truth) (wisdom) (meaning), then one will be (become) properly qualified (conditioned by the value of truth) and this will then permit the assimilation and sharing (of the energy of truth (meaning) embraced. Merely fervently seeking (truth) (meaning) will impede that realization and assimilation, but seeking incorporation of truth (meaning) (value) provides a much more effective integration of the spiritual student and the path (life (lifewave)).

The true quest thus begins with harmlessness (proper demeanor) (the third ray), leads through the embrace of truth (the second ray) (incorporation of harmlessness), and eventually embraces meaning (the first ray) (incorporation of truth).

† Commentary No. 563

Karma and Conscience

In addition to the overall rate of karmic return (the overall rate of appearance of karmic consequences relative to the overall karmic production (action)) which is relatively rapid for those upon the spiritual path and relatively gradual for all others, there is also a matter of the timescale (speed) (rate) of karmic consequences relative to specific karmic causes (there is furthermore a matter of rate of karmic fulfillment given some rate of karmic opportunity).

Everyone has a mix of (relatively) fast karma and (relatively) slow karma, with fast karma predominating in the lives of those upon the path and slow karma predominating in the lives of those not upon the path (of course karmic rates embrace a continuum, with those who are approaching the spiritual path gradually improving the awareness required for more direct assimilation of experience, but the significant (dramatic) increase in rate of karmic return comes only where one has made a proper commitment to the spiritual path) (once the residual karma has been fulfilled, the personal karma will tend to be all fast karma).

Thus each person has an associated reservoir of accumulated (unfulfilled) karma, with overall (composite) and individual (elemental) rates of return (nonetheless dynamic and continuously interdependent in relation to new and old causes and the overall condition of consciousness). Each rate of return (overall and for each given karmic element) is loosely analogous to the tension of a (multidimensional) spring. Slow karma occurs where the karmic tension is relatively small, where direct assimilation of experience (karmic consequences) is relatively unlikely, and where the person is not on the spiritual path and thereby allowed a much more gradual karmic fulfillment. In this case (slow karma) is implied a relatively weak conscience, for it is (among other things) the

overall sharpening of conscience that indicates the relative acceleration of evolution in consciousness of those upon the path.

Conversely, fast karma occurs where the karmic tension is relatively large, where direct assimilation of experience is relatively likely, and where the person is indeed upon the path and has evoked a much more rapid karmic fulfillment (in order to reduce the karmic accumulation and thereby increase the freedom for hastened evolution (and the service to humanity that that implies)). In this case (fast karma) is implied a relatively strong conscience. The conscience is in effect an integrated, subjective manifestation (indication) of accumulated wisdom (realization) (assimilation of experience). Conscience is defined as a sense or consciousness (subjective awareness) of the relative moral (ethical) goodness of one's own conduct, intentions, and character, together with a feeling of some obligation to proceed in a manner consistent with that sense of appropriateness. Thus the degree of development and manifestation of conscience, the relative rate of karmic evocation, and relative place of a person on the spiritual path are all related.

Much in the realm of human events that appears disparate or unjust can be explained by this principle of conscience and karma. For example in the case of two people of comparable intelligence and ability (but disparate ethics and spiritual awareness), the one of relatively weak conscience may appear much less accountable (more free from ethical or moral constraints) (more free from consequences) (more successful?) than the more conscientious counterpart, but one must realize that the rules are different for these two and, in the long run the person of conscience will develop much more rapidly and embrace much more wisdom (realization) than those who are less conscientious.

Existent Fields

The underlying field of manifestation is the fundamental existent field, within which are induced all other existent fields. An existent field is simply the life (energy) field associated with some element of manifested existence. The existent field represents the quality and character of the manifested life (form) (existence) (existent) and is simultaneously a means of expression and a means of being qualified by other (internal) (external) forces. Existent fields are multidimensional, although in the case of elemental lives the field of expression may be limited to only one dimension, while more complex lives may be expressed over a range (number) of dimensions (levels of consciousness).

Within the underlying (existent) field of manifestation are induced the countless units of elementary (atomic) life which constitute material or atomic existence on the various levels of consciousness. These induced lives and their associated existent fields (can any distinction be made between an induced life and its existent field?) are actually modulations within the overall (fundamental) existent field and are therefore subject to the overall qualification of that fundamental as well as the particular qualification of the induced life. As the atomic lives form (composite) planes and sub-planes of consciousness (composite fields), higher lives are able to manifest (in this perspective) through inductive processes in which each higher life induces a (relatively complex) composite (existent) field associated with the form to be utilized and another (more complex albeit more subtle) composite (existent) field associated with the consciousness to be manifested (each such form and consciousness being the result of numerous incarnations or cycles of experience and development (evolution)).

The existent field is a radiative field having some radius or range of manifestation. For elemental lives that radius or range is quite limited, both in dimension and extent (as well as magnitude and duration); for (relatively) higher lives, that radius or range can be quite considerable, enfolding all of the elemental and composite lives that are its constituents (form and consciousness are both compositional from the perspective of the higher lifeform). Each manifested life (form) (consciousness) (existent field) is qualified particularly

according to its nature (and karmic consequences) and generally according to its group relationships and associations, via the more fundamental existent fields associated with various lifewaves and planetary schemes (for example) within the overall field of manifestation.

Each manifested life (form) (consciousness) is also qualified to some extent by its environment (and vice versa) to the extent and nature of its interaction with that environment. This basic environmental qualification is conveyed by means of the field existent, as it is the existent field of one object (lifeform) that is the means of interaction (expression) (responsiveness) (communication) with any other (existent field) within its radius or range. Energy conveyed through an existent field is simply a modulation within the field that induces some response (assimilation) (energy reception).

Since existent fields are generally multidimensional, a response may (generally) occur on the dimension (wavelength) of receipt, but induced (consequential) effects may manifest on (generally) lower levels as well, particularly if the conveyed energy (or response) is programmed or qualified to do so (generally or particularly). Not only is life synonymous with existent fields, but evolution is synonymous with the extension (expansion) (interaction) of existent fields in the form of relational fields.

† Commentary No. 565

Scalar Existence

Scalar existence refers to the perspective that views existence without regard to relative position or direction. A scalar is any quantity (measure) that can be represented (merely) by a point on a scale. Scalar quantities are describable magnitudes without direction. Examples of scalar quantities in physical science are speed, mass, and energy (without recourse respectively to velocity, weight, and force which are not scalar quantities because they have direction (direct relationship)).

Scalar existence implies self-containment in the sense (for example) of a field of self-centered consciousness, without necessarily any concern for that which exists beyond that immediate field. Scalar existence does not however imply

necessarily a lack of variability in magnitude or constitution (scalar characterization), for scalar quantities can be changed by internal and external forces (realization) (growth), but scalar quantities are not themselves interactive, for scalars (as scalars) have no means of interaction.

Self-qualified (contemplative) (mystical) meditation is an example of a scalar activity in consciousness, within a scalar perspective. Such meditation is not linked necessarily to externals, but is focused for the most part within the scalar field. Scalar consciousness is inherently introverted and localized rather than extroverted and extended. Scalar existence is not inherently radiative, in the sense that the scalar field is self-contained and without any sense of seeking expression. Scalar existence is relatively simple and relatively measurable (or at least relatively easily describable). Examples of inherently scalar existence (consciousness) are the body (form existence as a form) and the soul (the one) which are inherently non-dynamic in activity (in contrast with the personality consciousness which is non-scalar and (potentially) rather dynamic in activity). The body (and the soul) grows by virtue of assimilation (of qualified energy and experience (respectively)) and thereby changes in magnitude and constitution (but not in direction (at least not in direction as a body (or soul))).

In the field of progressive manifestation, scalar experience corresponds to pralaya, the interval between periods of active experience and expression. The unmanifested (on any level) is scalar, whether it is the sleep between days of experience and expression or the sleep (assimilation of experience) between incarnations of experience and expression. Wherever consciousness is self-contained or withdrawn from active experience there is thereby scalar existence. In the cycles of experience and expression within a given incarnation, there may be times of more or less (relatively) scalar experience, where the waking-consciousness is turned within for consideration (evaluation) (contemplation) (self-realization) in contrast with principally outer expression. And in the spiritual life there are obligations of daily (scalar) meditation (as well as opportunities of non-scalar meditation and service).

Scalar existence is necessary to the evolutionary process, and affords assimilation of experience and relative growth (deepening) in (of) consciousness. All (non-scalar) experience and expression must ultimately be tempered and integrated (assimilated) by (through) scalar processes if evolution is to be

sustained. Unconstrained (untempered) non-scalar experience (expression) leads to premature dissolution (without assimilation). Non-scalar experience (expression), tempered by periods of effective scalar (non) activity, leads to effective assimilation and growth (and ultimate dissolution only when the form is no longer warranted).

† Commentary No. 566

Vector Existence

Vector existence refers to the perspective that views existence with particular regard to relative position and direction. A vector is any quantity (measure) that has a describable magnitude and direction (orientation). The magnitude of a vector quantity or variable is a scalar quantity. Examples of vector quantities in physical science are velocity (a speed in some direction), weight (mass subject to some acceleration (e.g., gravity)), and force (energy exerted in some direction). Each vector quantity exhibits relationship (interaction) by virtue of relative position and direction. While a scalar quantity is represented typically by a point on a scale, a vector quantity is represented typically by a line relative to some coordinate system or reference frame which demonstrates magnitude (by virtue of its length) and direction (by virtue of its orientation).

Vector existence is not self-contained because its very nature is interactive, with consciousness focused more or less on the environment (external reality) and upon experience (expression) within that environment. Vector existence is subject to variability in magnitude and constitution (scalar characterization) and in direction or orientation (vector characterization). Because of its subjectivity to direction and orientation (interaction), vector quantities (lives exhibiting vector consciousness or vector existence) are inherently more progressive (evolutionary) than scalar quantities (in the sense of manifested existence).

Non-contemplative (service) (occult) meditation is an example of vector activity in consciousness, where (scalar) energy and associated (vector) forces are evoked and directed outward for some purposive qualification. Vector existence is necessarily linked to externals through the vector field (the field induced and sustained by the activity of vector consciousness). Vector consciousness is

inherently extroverted and extended albeit tempered and balanced in the case of relatively mature spiritual students. Vector existence is radiative and consists at least of sharing energy with the immediate environment (through radiative qualification). Vector existence is more complex and more difficult to measure or describe than scalar existence, because of the potentially numerous relationships (lines of force) and the dynamic nature of those relationships. Scalar existence is more or less self-determined, while vector existence is determined in a multiplexive manner (determined by the mutual interactions of all lives principally linked). The personality consciousness is an example of inherently vector existence (expression).

Non-scalar (vector) existence corresponds to the intervals of activity (incarnation) (manifestation) between pralaya. Manifestation (on any level) is a vector process, involving or leading to (evolutionary) experience, expression, development, progress, and momentum. Momentum itself is a vector quantity and illustrates the vectorial nature of the evolutionary path. But in order to sustain the (spiritual) (evolutionary) momentum vector, there must necessarily be a periodic (or continual) scalar exercise of assimilation to afford the integration (incorporation) of the lessons of (vector) experience.

Thus scalar existence and vector existence are inevitably linked in the sense that the magnitude and constitution of a vector is necessarily a scalar and in the sense that scalar existence (internal activity) necessarily leads to vector existence (manifestation) and vice versa. Both are necessary to evolution and the balance between them is an indication of the relative poise of the manifested life.

The Soul and the Self

In metaphysical philosophy the soul is commonly referred to as the higher self, in distinction to the personality (ego) or lower self, and to indicate a process of upliftment of that lower self into the life (love) and energy (qualification) of that higher aspect of the human being. The higher self (soul) is then a source of energy (wisdom) for the lower self (the mind) (the personality) to the extent of the responsiveness (alignment) (purification) (silence) of the lower self.

In this same sense (of soul as higher self), the soul is the true self (individuality) (unit of consciousness) (unit of evolution) which leads to God, the one (the divine self) (monad), and to humanity as a whole (the lifewave as a soul), while the ego (personality) is not the true self, but is, at best, a responsive instrument of the soul (which affords conscious assimilation of experience), and, at worst, an unresponsive instrument of the soul (which denies conscious assimilation of experience but which affords experience nonetheless). In this same sense, the ego (personality) (lower mind) as a separate existence is part of the not-self, all of that which is not (real), which is merely illusion (associated with material existence), while the mind aligned with the higher self is relatively (more) real by virtue of its association with the soul. The soul then represents oneness (reality) while everything lesser sleeps within the illusion of objective experience.

But the implication of selfness to the soul (by the designation of its being a higher self) is somewhat misleading, for the soul is not a self in any sense comparable to the selfness of the personality. The personality is the illusion of individual existence (and the ego is an illusion within an illusion, being the illusion of the personality (mind) as a center, within the illusion of individual existence), while the soul is a window of oneness and the embodiment of selflessness, without the distraction of selfness. The personality looks outward to all that is not itself, while the soul looks inward in realization that the true self is all. While the personality identifies with itself (as a separate existence) and sees all through the perception or perspective of itself as an entity, the soul does not identify with itself (nor even with its instruments) but does see all through the perception or perspective of all. The perception of the soul as a soul

is very, very dim, while the perception of the soul as the one (in which the soul is a barely differentiated element) is very bright.

To be truly oneself (in the highest sense) is nonetheless a goal of the spiritual aspirant, but the student should recognize that being oneself (in that highest sense) is to pass beyond selfness to being, and that one cannot take any aspect of separateness or ego to that beingness. The presence (extent) of ego rather effectively prevents any true realization of that which is beyond (yet hidden deeply within). Until the mask of the self is properly set aside, the value (vision) of the one cannot be appreciated. The path beyond selfness is relative detachment and the embrace of relative existence, in which the self is looked upon from without, as an object and not a subject (viewed subjectively and not objectively).

The effectiveness of the soul as an evolutionary unit (of consciousness) lies in its inherent notselfness. The personality is self-conscious and effective only as an instrument, while the soul is not self-conscious (being group-conscious) and is effective as a wholly absorbed element of that group consciousness.

† Commentary No. 568

Relational Fields

In addition to the existent fields which characterize all lives within the field of manifestation are the relational fields which are the means of evolutionary interaction (relationship) (communication) (balance). Relational fields have all the inherent characteristics of existent fields except that existent fields emanate from and are the expression (immediate consciousness) of particular (individual or composite) lives (forms) and are therefore centered or focused upon or about those lives (forms), while relational fields are derived from (and actually constitute) relationships between individual or composite lives (relating their existent fields each to the other) and extend (spatially, spectrally, and temporally) between the respective lives (forms) in accordance with the character (quality) (balance) of the relationships.

Like existent fields, relational fields are induced within the underlying (existent) field and allow energy to be transferred directly or indirectly (consciously or unconsciously) between life-forms. In fact, every action or response on every level constitutes a relational exercise in which energy is either received or broadcast (or both) in one or a number of different ways. Qualification is a more proper term for this mutual relational exercise, for qualification is a relational (energy) expression and response (is any expression ever without a response on some level both at the source and at the focus?) (can any distinction be made between a life-form, its existent field, and its composite relational field?) (since all lives are induced, is there any (existent) reality beyond relationship?).

Each relational field is a multiplexed modulation within the overall (fundamental) existent (relational) field, with each aspect or component having some multidimensional associations. Where each existent field is radiative, each relational field is the coupling of two or more radiative fields, effectively extending the effects of each radiative field beyond its apparent intensity and nominal radius or range. In a sense, each existent field of a composite life-form is as much relational as existent, as are the binding forces of all of existence. The environmental qualification (of an individual life-form upon its immediate environment and vice versa) is essentially relational and by virtue of each aspect of consciousness.

Thus every life-form is related to every other; each has an inherent ability to interact with every other; and evolution proceeds through constructive relational experience. If the spiritual student is consciously aware of existent and relational fields, then the student can more effectively qualify both, and can more effectively respond to the implied opportunities. These fields then become consciously modulated (qualified) (tempered) fields of constructive endeavor, to the extent of the ability (coherence) and wisdom (quality) of the student. The student who has mastered these ideas is necessarily (relatively) balanced in most respects, having at least a (simplex) conscious rapport with all lives in the near-field and intermediate range (environment) (a simplex conscious rapport is one in which one party is properly conscious of the rapport, while a complex or multiplex conscious rapport is one in which both (several) (all) parties are so properly conscious).

Relational fields are more properly the relational field, for all induced lives are more properly one life and all participate in (are) the one (existent) (relational) field. Truly independent (non-relational) existence is simply not possible, and any perception of separate or independent existence is simply an aspect of deception (illusion) on some level. The one prevails.

† Commentary No. 569

Cosmic Fire 1

The subject of cosmic fire is dealt with rather broadly in A Treatise on Cosmic Fire by Alice A. Bailey. That treatise provides a psychological key to the subject of universal manifestation (cosmic creation) through the perspective of the triple fire: (1) fire by friction (the internal fires), (2) solar fire (the fire of mind), and (3) electric fire (the fire of spirit).

The treatise provides a basic outline of the divine plan in manifestation by integrating the esoteric philosophy and psychology, by treating both subjective and objective aspects of consciousness (mind) as the relationship between spirit (energy) and matter, by demonstrating the coherence of life (consciousness) through all levels (through the relationships of various focal points of energy and through the relationships of the various lives), and through the various aspects of fire. For every objective experience or expression there is an underlying subjective side of manifestation (and associated cause and effect relationships). The treatise on cosmic fire describes in a cursory manner the basic relationships between the two worlds (subjective and objective) (inner and outer).

The treatise begins with a statement of introductory postulates, upon which foundation follows the remainder. There is one boundless (immutable) principle (absolute reality) which antecedes all manifested (conditioned) (qualified) existence (being). All that is manifested is derived from and contained within that principle. There are three aspects (in the highest sense) to manifested existence: (1) the first ray (the first universal logos) precursor to (of) manifestation, being impersonal and unmanifest, (2) the second ray (the second universal logos) of spirit-matter, and (3) the third ray (the third universal logos)

of cosmic ideation (the universal world soul). From this great trinity are successively derived (differentiated) an ordered sequence (depth and breadth) of logoiic manifestations, from the absolute to the universal triple logos, to galactic or super-cosmic logoi, to cosmic logoi, to solar logoi, and ultimately to planetary logoi.

Each is contained within and is an expression of the higher. Each solar system is an expression (manifestation) (life) (consciousness) (energy) of a solar logos (God), a medium of solar incarnation analogous to personality (body) (form). Each logos is itself a trinity and that trinity (triple logos) is reflected in its manifestation (the solar system). The triple fire constitutes the three persons or aspects of that trinity. Each of the aspects is also triple in manifestation, leading to nine potencies (emanations) (Sephiroth) (causes of initiation) and with totality produce the ten of perfect manifestation. The three aspects of the whole are reflected on every level of manifestation. The present solar system is one of three such solar incarnations and is itself a triple manifestation. A human being is also a triple manifestation, having (being) a monad (spirit), a soul (consciousness), and a personality (matter). Similarly each atom is a triplicity, being composed of a positive nucleus (center), the negative electrons (electronic field), and the field (totality) of (outer) manifestation (aura).

The three aspects (on any given level) are interrelated (on that level) and have relationship to every other level of manifestation (by correspondence). These interrelationships demonstrate the wholeness of the solar system (there being no isolated units) and provide a basis of brotherhood (communion). The energy (life) (consciousness) of the solar logos is pervasive and circulates simultaneously throughout every aspect and level of solar existence.

Cosmic Fire 2

The three aspects of the solar logos (God) (central energy) are differentiated and demonstrate through seven rays or types of force, seven centers of force (chakras) (three major and four minor), seven planes of consciousness, and seven planetary logoi, all in close correspondence.

There is a basic law of cyclic activity (periodicity) which governs or qualifies all of manifestation, which is linked to three cosmic laws corresponding to the three aspects: (1) the law of synthesis (spirit), (2) the law of attraction (consciousness), and (3) the law of economy (matter); and seven systemic laws corresponding to the seven rays (planes) (planetary logoi): (1) the law of vibration, (2) the law of cohesion, (3) the law of disintegration, (4) the law of magnetic control, (5) the law of fixation, (6) the law of love, and (7) the law of sacrifice and death. Although each of the seven is associated primarily with its correspondence, each (law) (ray) (energy) (life) qualifies all within its scope (domain) and varies in intensity and manifestation according to its periodic index. Thus each sweeps periodically into (out of) power (prominence) for its period of manifestation.

Every manifested life is a triple existence with three great cycles of (1) birth (appearance) (involution) (inert motion) (tamasic life), (2) life (growth) (evolution) (activity) (rajasic life), and (3) death (disappearance) (obscuration) (rhythmic motion) (sattvic life). The mystery of the cycles involves many correlations and correspondences (energy relationships), including number, sound, and color. Cyclic manifestation is related to each of the (seven) (three) laws and as well to the (one) great synthetic law of the system (the intermediate law (karma)).

All souls are identical with the oversoul. The solar logos is the macrocosm of human existence while man is the microcosm of solar existence (similarly, man is the macrocosm of atomic existence while the atom is the microcosm of human existence). As above, so below. Man stands between the macrocosm and the microcosm. Every aspect of every form of life at every level is infused (inflamed) with soul (consciousness), and since all souls are one then brotherhood is a fact of nature. The law of correspondence (relationship) (analogy) (correlation) is the

interpretive law of any (true) system, and properly relates God and human existence.

Every unit of life (consciousness) has some principal evolutionary goal as part of its qualification (purpose of manifestation). For atomic life (humanity) (planetary logoi) the evolutionary goal (for this overall solar manifestation) is self-consciousness (group consciousness) (God consciousness), as exemplified in the human kingdom (by a planetary logos) (by the solar logos) (respectively). Each unit of life (consciousness) is the sum-total of all the states of consciousness within its field of consciousness (manifestation). Thus God lives through every planetary logos (every lifewave) (every kingdom of nature) (every human being) (and every other comparable lifeform) (and every atom of manifestation). The wholeness of God (the solar logos) is not derived (merely) from collecting or integrating over all of the multitudes of units of consciousness (at all levels), but (more properly) is derived from the act of creation and being all that is created and sustained by the infused (solar) consciousness. God is therefore the triple fire: the internal fires of every lifeform within its (creative) field of manifestation, the solar fire of mind (consciousness) that infuses all, and the electric fire of spirit that provides reality for all that is manifested.

† Commentary No. 571

Soul Qualification

The soul is the intermediary between the monad and the personality and neither directly qualifies the incarnated personality nor is directly qualified by the monad. The qualification of (by) the soul is necessarily relatively indirect, for the monad is not active relative to the soul and the soul is not (in most cases) active relative to the incarnated personality. The soul is qualified more or less indirectly by the ray (nature) of the monad, by the ray of the particular soul, by the ray of souls as a class, by the ray of the solar logos, by the ray of the planetary logos, etc., with the ray of the particular soul (being programmed in advance by the monad) and the ray of souls as a class (the second ray) dominating (the ray of souls as a class being reinforced by the ray of the solar logos).

The soul ray (the ray of the particular soul) is determined by the monad more or less independently of conditions on the level (consciousness) of the soul and is not directly or causally related to external (astrological) forces (qualification). Similarly, the personality ray (the ray of the particular (incarnated) personality) (the principal qualification of the (integrated) personality) is determined by the soul prior to incarnation (it is the personality matrix that is directly qualified by the soul) more or less independently of conditions on personality (physical, emotional, mental) levels and is not directly or causally related to external (astrological) forces (qualification). Although external (astrological) forces are not active on soul levels (the soul has (is) internal significance), they are active on personality levels, as external (dynamic) qualification to the extent and character of qualification (and inversely to the extent and character of the personality's responsiveness to the (qualification of the personality by the) soul).

Thus astrological forces dynamically and temporally qualify the (relatively) unaligned personality, and that (external) qualification is in addition to the fundamental ray qualification of the personality itself (which does not in general or necessarily correlate or coincide with the ray qualification that is derived from external (astrological) coincidence). The unintegrated or poorly integrated personality may more or less reflect the presiding astrological (ray) influence, while the (properly) integrated personality will reflect the fundamental (personality ray) qualification (and while the aligned personality will be more or less overshadowed by the soul ray). Astrological qualification is nonetheless derived from the (cyclic nature of the) seven rays, but in no way changes or determines the basic ray nature of the monad, soul, and personality (given that the personality ray of the bulk of human beings is generally masked by external forces (since the bulk are simply not aligned)).

The purpose of individual development along mental and spiritual lines is linked to increasing and expanding (the depth and breadth of) the responsiveness of the (integrated) personality to soul qualification. The only real difference between the highly evolved human being and the average human being is that the highly evolved are aligned (with their respective souls) and responsive to (manifesting) their respective soul rays (and soul nature) while the average are not so aligned and manifest merely the personality ray (and the personality

nature). The graduation criteria for (from) the human experience is simply the achievement of (proper) alignment of soul and personality.

The personality (soul) does not qualify the soul (monad) except in the sense that the experience (existence) of the personality (soul) is assimilated by the soul (monad) (respectively).

† Commentary No. 572

Superficial Mentality

Mentality is the mental power or capacity (capability) (intelligence) and the mode or way of thought (thinking) (or mental outlook). Mentality refers as much to mental expression (exercise) as it does to mental capability (for each (mental expression and mental capability) is derived from the other). Superficial mentality refers to a rather shallow or cursory mental capability (expression), to thinking about superficial things and thinking of more substantive things in superficial ways, to dealing (mentally) with appearance (without recognition of substance (proper significance) (depth)).

A superficial mental capacity or capability generally indicates a lack of balanced mental development or the consequence of rather superficial mental habits (absorption in relatively superficial experience). Superficial mental expression (exercise) (experience) may be the consequence of having a superficial mental capability or the consequence of mental insecurities (fear) or both. Both (mental capability and expression) are compounded by (derived from) the illusion of separateness (ego) (mundane absorption) (physical reality) (individuality).

Superficial mentality is one extreme of a spectrum (continuum) of mentalities of which the other extreme (in this dimension) is over-concern with (unimportant) details (i.e., for their own sake). This mentality dimension is primarily a fifth ray concern (dealing principally with the concrete mind and its (fifth ray) domain) (while another mentality dimension (relative coherence (vagueness)) is primarily a third ray concern). This does not mean that superficial mentality is merely a concern for fifth ray types (personalities), but, rather, that superficial mentality is (should be) a concern for any who are in incarnation and developing or refining (training) the concrete mind, whatever the ray of the mind or

personality may be. A proper mental balance (between concrete and abstract capabilities (expression) and between simplicity and complexity) is particularly necessary for the spiritual student (in order for the student to be an effective bridge between the inner and outer worlds).

The dangers or consequences of superficial mentality (oversimplification) (shallow decisiveness) (simplemindedness) are many and varied, but all lead in one manner or another to greater (compounded) self-deception (delusion). Superficial thinking leads to wrong assumptions, bad (poor) judgment (false conclusions), false understanding, etc., which in turn lead to the deception of reasonableness in the absence of any real understanding or reasonable process. Deception (more properly self-deception) then further complicates the misunderstanding through a causal (mental) chain based upon false intermediaries. Humility requires that the student be not deceived by assumptions or presumptive conclusions, that the student should seek to understand based not upon appearance and superficial embrace but upon recognition of the limitations of appearances and assumptions and therefore upon more realistic (qualified) knowledge and understanding.

The spiritual student who becomes and remains reasonably humble (relatively devoid of ego) (i.e., with a properly tempered and qualified personality (mind)) is not so easily deceived, for such a student deals with relative depth and relative uncertainty. Thus the spiritual student should properly avoid treating any (worthy) subject superficially (which also implies a lack of interest in unworthy (mundane) subjects) and as well avoid absorption in unnecessary details and needless complexities. Thus a certain (proper) mental balance should ever be sought (more properly allowed) and maintained (naturally sustained).

Fire by Friction

The first (third) (lower) aspect of cosmic fire is called fire by friction (the internal fire(s)) (the fire of matter) and corresponds to the third aspect of the trinity (and the third ray). Fire by friction is the “internal vitalizing fire(s)” which “animate and vitalize the objective solar system” and all objective manifestation in the sense of matter and form.

These animating fires “are the fires of the primordial ray of active intelligent matter” (the energy of Brahma) (the third aspect logoic) (the ray of intelligent activity). This ray (in this sense) was developed primarily in a previous solar incarnation and forms the (resulting) basic vibration or characteristic vitalization of the present solar incarnation. The ray of internal fire “is the cause of rotary motion, and therefore of the spheroidal form of all that exists” (that rotary motion being the characteristic activity (basis) for objective (material) existence). The internal fires are governed by the law of economy (matter) (conservation).

The internal fires reveal themselves in the macrocosm as latent heat and as active heat. Latent heat “is the basis of rotary motion and the cause of the spheroidal coherent manifestation of all existence” (every unit of manifestation (in this aspect) can be perceived as an atomic existence in which the central (internal) activity is rotary motion (vibration) (producing an active heat) that induces a (spheroidal) field of manifestation (activity)). Active heat “results in the activity and the driving forward of material evolution” within the spheroidal boundary (ring-pass-not) of that (atomic) existence. The fundamental work of this activity is rotational adjustment, as individual rotations are brought into harmony and balance one with another (each with every other) and each to the whole. This occurs primarily through refinement (the integrating force comes from the next higher level (solar fire)).

In the microcosm, fire by friction is the internal vitalizing fire (individual Kundalini) demonstrating as latent heat (the basis of atomic life and rotary adjustment) and as active heat (prana). This fire is the basic vibration of the lower self (personality) in manifestation and provides a means of relating the

higher self to material existence. On microcosmic levels, the law of economy (conservation) demonstrates as the law of adaptation in time. On microcosmic and macrocosmic levels of manifestation, the internal fire “deals entirely with the activity of matter, the rotary motion of matter, and the development of matter by the means of friction, under the law of economy.”

The fire by friction is a consequence (effect) produced by the relationship of electric fire (spirit) and solar fire (soul) “through the medium of matter” and is not a cause (being fully dissolved at the end of each cycle of manifestation and not carried forward (except that the means of producing internal fire is of course carried forward in the higher fires)). The internal fire is the fire of solar radiation, of inner planetary combustion, of physical plane electricity, of all objective (physical) life (manifestation), of warmth (latent fire), of light and etheric energy (active, radiative fire), and of essential fire ((evolutionary) fire devas and (involutionary) fire elementals). The internal fire latent produces internal heat, “causes the active growth of that in which it is imbedded” and is the fire of fertilization (nourishment and reproduction). The internal fire latent is involutionary, recapitulatory of involutionary experience, and the means of sustenance. The internal fire active is evolutionary and deals more with relationships to (with) other (atomic) lives, with the health aura, and the sharing of personality-level energies.

† Commentary No. 574

Solar Fire

The second (intermediate) aspect of cosmic fire is called solar fire (the fire of mind (consciousness)) and corresponds to the second aspect of the trinity (and the second ray). Solar fire is cosmic mental fire (and its correspondence on lower levels) which “may be regarded as the sum-total of the sparks of mind, the fires of the mental bodies, and the animating principle of the evolving units of the human race” and all of objective and subjective manifestation in the sense of soul (mind) and consciousness.

The solar fire(s) are the fires of the divine ray of love-wisdom (the energy of Vishnu) (the second aspect logoc) (the ray of intelligent love). This ray (in this sense) is the ray of logoc development (qualification) for the present solar

incarnation and represents the potential and present achievement in consciousness of the solar logos for this incarnation. The ray of solar fire "is the basis of the cyclic spiral movement" in consciousness (that cyclic spiral motion being the characteristic activity (basis) for the experience and expression of consciousness). The solar fire is governed by the law of attraction and repulsion (the interactions and relationships in consciousness).

The (solar) fires of the mental plane reveal themselves in the macrocosm as the fire of mind and the elementals of fire. The fire of mind "provides the relation between the life and the form, between spirit and matter, and is the basis of consciousness" (the basis of interaction and relationship). In a sense, the fire of mind is all that is, spirit and matter being merely the extremes of consciousness. In another sense, the fire of mind is "the basis of all expression" since expression is a consequence of consciousness (and not, strictly speaking, a consequence of merely atomic (rotational) existence). The elementals of fire are "the sum-total of the active expression of thought through the medium of those entities who are fire itself" (all "things" are alive on some level and the perspective of fire (and associated elemental lives) is relatively more real than (the ordinary (delusion of)) objective reality).

In the microcosm the solar fire demonstrates as the fire or spark of mind. This manasic fire sweeps the evolving life (unit of consciousness) into spiral cyclic activity (progressive incarnations of experience and expression) leading to expansion (evolution) and eventual synthesis. The solar (manasic) fire is revealed as the intelligent will that relates the monad to the personality (i.e., as the vertical relationship of consciousness) and as the "vitalizing factor in the thought forms fabricated by the thinker" (i.e., as the horizontal relationship of consciousness). In the more general sense, the solar fire is (governs) all relationship (energy) (consciousness) that acts between lives. What man presently produces as a consequence of mental activity (solar fire) is quite feeble when compared with the potential manifestation. Thus solar fire provides the field of evolutionary activity and development that leads from (the present) kama-manas to manas proper, then to buddhi-manas (i.e., from the activity of the desire mind to proper mental activity, then to intuitively charged mental activity).

The second fire “deals with the expression of the evolution of mind or manas, the vitality of the soul, the evolutionary expression of the soul as it shows forth in the form of that elusive something which brings the synthesis of matter, the operation of this fire under the law of attraction, and the subsequent result in the spiral-cycle movement” (solar evolution). It is the solar fire (the evolutionary unit) that integrates the personality and aligns that integrated personality with the soul.

† Commentary No. 575

Electric Fire

The third (first) (higher) aspect of cosmic fire is called electric fire (the fire of spirit) and corresponds to the first aspect of the trinity (and the first ray). Electric fire is the monadic (divine) flame and the character of the solar logos and of subjective manifestation in the sense of life or spirit.

The electric (monadic) fire(s) are “the fires of the cosmic mental plane, which are the fires of the cosmic ray of will” (the energy of Shiva) (the first aspect logocic) (the ray of intelligent will). This ray (in this sense) is the ray of logocic development (qualification) for the next solar incarnation and is therefore only manifested in subtle ways (allowing the second aspect to predominate in the present solar incarnation). The ray of electric fire “is the basis of the systemic movement” or “forward progression” (being the characteristic activity (basis) for spiritual (monadic) existence).

The electric fire remains unmanifested in the macrocosmic, yet provides a basis for (overall) synthesis nonetheless, for the lesser must be purified and raised to the plane of the higher in order for synthesis to occur. The role of electric fire is to properly assimilate the solar fire(s) as the role of the solar fire is to properly assimilate the internal fire(s). This process is largely one of adjustment and adaptation (experience, assimilation of experience, evolution) (refinement leading to successively broader integration) (harmony) (meeting, blending, merging, and blazing forth). In the microcosm the electric fire demonstrates as the monadic flame divine (spiritual fire). This third fire “embodies the highest vibration of which the monad is capable, is governed by the law of synthesis, and is the cause of the forward progressive movement of the evolving jiva.” The

electric fire deals with the evolution of spirit (monad) (while solar fire deals with the evolution of consciousness (spiritual evolution) (the soul)). While the motion of that which is (governed by) the first fire (internal fire) is rotary, and while the motion of that which is (governed by) the second fire (solar) is ultimately rotary and cyclic, the motion of that which is (governed by) the third fire (electric) is ultimately rotary, cyclic, and progressive (truly progressive, not merely temporally).

On macrocosmic and microcosmic levels, fire is threefold in its essential nature, but fivefold in demonstration (manifestation). The macrocosm and the microcosm are related essentially and by correspondence (and via the three (seven) rays (triple (septenary) correspondence)). While the solar fire is the integrating force for assimilation of rotary (personality) existence, the electric fire is the integrating force for assimilation of cyclic (solar) existence. As the various fires are balanced, blended, and merged (synthesized) the true self (reality) blazes forth from the lesser fires. The consummation (conclusion) of each great cycle is literally a consummation and liberation.

While it is easy enough to realize the fiery (flaming) nature of the monad and to some extent even that of the soul, it is not as obvious to the mind of the personality that even the physical and objective nature of the lower worlds is essentially fire. Exoteric science is beginning to reveal the insubstantial nature of physical atomic (quantum) existence, while the esoteric science (occult endeavor) already demonstrates (through proper inner vision) the atomic (elemental) and human and systemic existence as fire (energy resonance). It is simply the objective vision (the world illusion of substantial material reality) (ego) that deceives (since the ego is so imbedded within that non-reality). The (internal) fires of the body (form) are the body. The solar fire of mind is the soul (consciousness). The electric fire is the monad. Naught but fire exists.

Yoga

Yoga is the practice of various or particular principles in seeking oneness or unification (e.g., personality purification, integration, and alignment with the soul). There are many forms and practices of yoga, some quite specialized and limited in scope (e.g., physical discipline for very particular purposes), some more general and broader in scope (e.g., yogamanas). The more inclusive forms are concerned with the relationship and ultimate union of mind (personality) and soul (spirit), while the more specialized forms and practices are generally preparatory in a particular aspect or dimension (e.g., emotional control). The more inclusive forms draw upon the relevant practices of the more specialized forms and demonstrate the synthesis that is yoga proper.

Every religion and every spiritual philosophy has its various forms and practices of yoga, whether or not acknowledged in yoga terminology. There are therefore many meanings and implications to yoga, but the Sanskrit word means simply (literally) union or conjunction. In India and elsewhere there are many formal schools and yoga disciplines, under various names. In India, traditionally (in the theosophical sense), there are six darshanas or yoga schools. In the Bhagavad Gita are described three (eighteen) forms of yoga.

In western occult tradition there is a yoga form for each plane of consciousness, each implying and conveying mastery upon that plane. As each plane (or sub-plane) is mastered, it is integrated thereby with lesser planes (sub-planes). Similarly and simultaneously, mastery of each plane (sub-plane) involves mastery of the corresponding level of the human being (e.g., mastery of the astral plane presupposes mastery of the astral body and the desire nature) (by means of purification and refinement (and integration from some higher level (e.g., the concrete mind in the case of mastery of the emotional nature))).

The higher (more proper) forms of yoga involve the practice of meditation as a means of discipline and application, and as a means of spiritual development (liberation) (release of higher forces as qualification of the lower) (expanding the depth and clarity of vision (realization) (understanding) (unification) (perception of truth)). The lesser (more specialized, coarser) yoga forms and practices can be

dangerous if not practiced properly (sensibly). Without spiritual motive and common sense (an intuitive sense of appreciation and balance), the lesser forms are limited in their potential to contribute to the evolutionary wave. The dangers come from the destructive effects of prematurely-released occult force manifesting through unprepared (relatively coarse) vehicles. A premature flaming forth of the inner fires can literally destroy the personality (body). The higher forms are much safer. The higher forms are more inclusive and therefore balanced and the higher forms incorporate safeguards and attract those who are relatively prepared. The higher, more general forms can however be applied along particular (specialized) lines but the overall spiritual nature and quality of training at that stage is generally sufficient to temper the occult forces (i.e., with understanding comes control).

The higher forms and yoga practices involve the tempering (qualification) of physical, emotional, and mental activity. In the resulting quiet (purified, refined state) comes (by degrees) understanding and power for self-control and self-mastery. In the final analysis, yoga is the path of self-realization and is quite synonymous with the spiritual path proper. But one cannot afford (spiritually) to be attached to the lesser forms of yoga. With proper (deeper, broader) spiritual motive, the lesser forms are seen as preparatory and lead to the higher forms (without such perception they become ends-in-themselves).

† Commentary No. 577

Cosmic Fire 6

Although the three aspects of cosmic fire can be viewed separately, the major keys to understanding cosmic fire come through recognition and realization of the relationships that exist (flow) between the three aspects, between microcosm and macrocosm, and within the patterns of manifestation.

“In its essential nature fire is threefold, but when in manifestation it can be seen as a fivefold demonstration” both macrocosmically and microcosmically. In the macrocosm, the threefold essence reveals the major rays as ((1) fire by friction, (2) solar fire, and (3) electric fire) manifesting as (1) latent heat and active heat, the two aspects of internal vitalizing fire (logoc Kundalini), (2) the fire of mind

and the elementals of fire, the two aspects of cosmic mental fire, and (3) the divine spark (unmanifest) of the logoic flame divine. Macrocosmically, these three (five) are all of manifestation and provide the underlying relationships and energy for all of existence and expression. In the microcosm (the correspondence of the macrocosm in the human being), the threefold essence reveals the three aspects of the human being as ((1) internal vitalizing fire (the body, form, or personality) (the aspect of matter), (2) fire or spark of mind (manas) (the soul or aspect of consciousness), and (3) monadic flame divine), manifesting as (1) latent heat and active heat (prana) of the evolving form, (2) active fire and mental energy engendered by the spark of mind, and (3) monadic flame divine (unmanifest) (its potential being a cause and therefore a force of manifestation).

The outpouring (sustaining) forces of manifestation (through the threefold essence and fivefold expression) (on the various levels) are balanced by the forces of assimilation and synthesis which seek to draw evolutionary measure from manifested experience. The basis of this assimilation (realization of union) is the adjustment and balancing (merging) of the various fires. Each atom of form (the human personality) is a rotary fire. As those rotary fires interact and as the fire of mind (consciousness) qualifies the rotary (internal) fires, the rotary fires are integrated, meaning that they harmonize one with every other to an extent that affords the clear expression of higher consciousness. As the integrated internal fires are further refined and qualified they can be fully blended (aligned) with the fires of mind. Similarly, as the fires of mind are further refined, they can be fully blended (aligned) with the monadic fire.

For humanity, each individual corresponds to a rotary fire that must ultimately be adjusted, balanced, and refined relative to humanity as a whole (as the individual realizes the unity of the lifewave and contributes experience (energy) to the evolution of the whole), then integrated and aligned with the one soul (and further similarly with the monadic correspondence of humanity). Thus what processes occur on atomic levels are repeated by correspondence on individual human levels (units of human consciousness) and on the level of humanity as a whole (and so forth on yet broader levels).

The correspondence of rotary motion blended with cyclic, spiral motion blended with forward progression holds on every level as does the correspondence of polarized energy relationships (as the passive energy of rotary motion (internal

fire) is balanced by the equilibrated energy of the soul (consciousness) (fire of mind) and subject to the (higher) qualification of the active energy (positive potential) of electric fire). Each perspective on the various aspects of cosmic fire holds a key to understanding the cosmic psychology of manifestation.

† Commentary No. 578

The Great Invocation

Throughout the history of humanity there have been prayers or invocations of great potency. One of the most potent prayers for humanity that has been translated into the English language while retaining its potency is the Great Invocation.

The Great Invocation is a world prayer, pertaining to all of humanity (directly), and having been translated into many languages and dialects it is utilized worldwide on objective and subjective levels. The Great Invocation is an instrument of power, properly and inherently safeguarded (through mantric design), to aid in bringing about the full expression on Earth of the (evolutionary) plan of God. To use the Great Invocation is an act of service to humanity and to the spiritual hierarchy of our planet (which (hierarchy) is responsible for the manifestation of the plan (the proper externalization of forces associated with the plan)). The Great Invocation is not exclusive to any particular religion, group, or philosophy. Although Christ is acknowledged in the prayer itself, Christ is recognized as the God-self within all human beings and as a non-religious instrument of the logos and hierarchy. Thus disciples and spiritual students of all faiths throughout the world utilize the Great Invocation daily in their prayers and meditations.

By means of invocation, prayer, and meditation, divine energies can be released and brought into sensible activity. Men and women of goodwill of all religions and spiritual faiths and all nations and cultures can join together in world service, bringing spiritual value and strength to a troubled world, by utilizing common prayers and invocations of which the Great Invocation is particularly (highly) effective. A highly effective common invocation is one of common mantric value; thus it matters not less that the prayer (Great Invocation) is

sounded audibly or mentally in many different languages, because each proper translation retains the mantric potency of the original (this of course is not true of prayers or invocations not designed as mantras).

People have the power, through focused, united invocation to effect world events in a positive, constructive (general, qualified) fashion. The Great Invocation has quite a potent effect, enhancing and strengthening the (already existent) planetary network of (impersonal) light and love. The Great Invocation is especially recommended for daily use in personal and group meditations, in beginning or closing a meditation, class, etc. It can (and should) be sounded forth verbally or mentally as often as practicable.

Part of the potency of the Great Invocation is derived by correlation with the three major rays (and the three departments of the spiritual hierarchy) and the fourth ray of human synthesis. The first stanza deals with (invokes) (evokes) light, the third ray, and the department of the Mahachohan. The second stanza deals with (invokes) (evokes) love-wisdom, the second ray, and the department of the Bodhisattva. The third stanza deals with (invokes) (evokes) power (will), the first ray, and the department of the Manu. The sounding forth of the first three stanzas is a progression, building in subtle (gathering) potency. The fourth stanza relates the first three more directly to humanity as a means, and stabilizes the gathered potency. The final line is a mantra of final qualification and release of energy. As a closing mantra, the final line of the Great Invocation should be accomplished by a visual or correlative release of energy beyond the individual or group, energizing the entire planetary network. As an opening mantra, the Great Invocation can be used to link the entire meditation to that planetary network and associated endeavor.

Reactivity and Responsibility

The reactivity inherent in the material nature of the personality is a most difficult obstacle for the aspirant. The spiritual student must learn to be (intelligently) responsive and not reactive. Through proper discipline and qualification, the student brings about the basic transformation of the personality from a predominantly self-centered, relatively coarse, reactive nature to a predominantly relatively refined, intelligently responsive nature.

The problem of being reactive on emotional or mental levels is that being reactive is essentially separative, a matter of (one's own relative) coarseness reacting to some external coarseness. Any separateness (separativeness) hinders the individual from realization of soul consciousness and the inherent spirituality that that represents. Thus the spiritual student must learn not to be reactive or separative if he is to fulfill the basic objectives and realizations of the spiritual path. The student is of course responsible for all of his character, temperament, values, etc. and all of his reactions and responses to any and every situation, whether consciously engendered or otherwise. Thus a reactive (separative) person is inherently responsible for being reactive (separative) and if that person is a spiritual student then he is also responsible for overcoming such reactivity (separativeness).

In addition to the responsibility for character and temperament there is the responsibility for consequences. Reactivity (an expression or experience of reactivity) generally leads to a significant clouding (distortion) (exaggeration) of the senses, which generally leads to further consequences in disposition, at least for some duration, until the particular reactivity is realized and overcome consciously, or until the intensity of the effects fades and diffuses to the point where the person (student) returns to his normal disposition. Some people are normally in the excited states of reactivity and those cases are particularly difficult to address for qualification and refinement.

In many cases, illness or disturbed emotional and mental circumstances are the immediate consequences of reactivity, and the spiritual student is nonetheless responsible for such (personal) consequences and the (further) consequences or

implications of being ill or disturbed. It does not matter (from the standpoint of the reactive individual) what the external forces were (or whether those external forces were unwarranted from some other standpoint). What matters (in this sense) is that those external forces were necessarily warranted for the reactive individual (i.e., karmic consequences are always warranted) and that the individual is nonetheless responsible for his disposition and reaction (response) as the case may be. If a person is disturbed by a situation, then he is necessarily responsible for his being disturbed. If in being disturbed a person is unable to meet any other responsibilities or duties he may have, then he is nonetheless responsible for these inabilities (e.g., if a person is sick or emotionally disturbed by some experience and unable to work as scheduled, then that person is nonetheless responsible; it is not the fault of someone or something else, and any presumption of such compounds the problem with self-deception).

Taking conscious responsibility for reactivity and its direct and indirect consequences is the first positive step toward overcoming reactivity and separateness. As that responsibility is consciously realized, then one's disposition and temperament are naturally qualified and refined to mitigate and eventually eliminate reactive and separative tendencies.

† Commentary No. 580

Underlying Reality and Locality

One of the problems of local objective manifestation is the distortion of (perceived) reality that accompanies local manifestation. That distortion is non-linear and has both (relatively) stable and dynamic components. This complicates the process of perception (and its interpretation) and this also complicates the process of manifestation relative to the plan or pattern of manifestation, because of the apparent (induced) inconsistencies between the pattern and its manifestation (local reality) on objective levels.

The spiritual student and (more so) the esoteric student bridge between the underlying reality of cosmic (universal) manifestation (subjective, higher reality) and the outer, objective manifestation masked as it is with great illusion and misleading appearance. The underlying reality is the truth of cosmic

manifestation. The distortion of that reality is the illusion (appearance) of separateness, physical substantiality, etc. Underlying reality and all of the associated laws and processes are present nonetheless in every objective (local) manifestation, but that (higher) reality is masked in the normal (objective) illusion (perception).

The local distortion of the underlying reality has two aspects, one a matter of perception (the induced, imaginary part) and the other more substantial (the real part, being an actual distortion or modification of processes in manifestation). The spiritual student needs to understand both aspects and consider their implications, in order to become (and then remain) relatively free from the misleading delusions of objective existence. The distortion in perception is a matter of illusion induced by material existence and experience by material means, compounded by a self-consciousness (largely or partially) unaware of the underlying, more permanent reality and therefore deceived by the appearance of life and things and events in a material world. The solution comes, in degrees, as the student learns of the soul and the higher reality, qualifies the process of perception (through refinement of the personality), and begins to recognize the otherwise hidden (subtle) forces at work on the various planes of consciousness.

The real distortion is another matter entirely and requires considerable and impersonal insight in order to recognize its extent and nature, the duration of the implied modifications, and the consequences of such distortion (modification) in the overall balance and plan. The laws of manifestation (e.g., karma) cannot be compromised, in the long term, or substantially, but they can and are modified to some extent locally, by the perception and beliefs (perceived reality) of the minds and emotions of human beings absorbed in the mundane (objective) world. In a sense, the extent to which some belief is commonly held (no matter that the belief may be inconsistent with the reality of universal manifestation and spiritual existence) constitutes a force for inductive modification of the underlying reality on mundane levels, so that inconsistencies (injustices) may appear to exist.

Yet in spite of induced inconsistencies, the overall balance cannot be upset. For every (apparent) inconsistency (which is a force in itself), another (compensating) force is induced to (eventually) restore the local balance. The further from the intended balance humanity proceeds (in perception and in local

reality) the greater will be the compensating forces. Though local manifestation (distortion) of cosmic laws may indeed be effected, the measure of distortion is very, very small when viewed overall (cosmically), and in time all justice (merit) is served.

† Commentary No. 581

Words of Power

Words of power (mantras) are words or sounds enunciated mentally (or mentally and audibly) and creatively in such a way that definite and particular energies (and associated forces) are evoked for some purpose. All words and all sounds evoke some response (on the plane of their communication or release) (and beyond) and therefore all words and all sounds are potentially powerful, but it remains the qualification of the words of power on the levels of the soul (and beyond) that make words or sounds words of power.

A mantra is a word or phrase of power and potency, a symbolic prayer of correlative evocation with occult and/or spiritual significance. Mantras (mantras) can be used to invoke (and therefore evoke) or qualify purposively, particularly where the nature of the mantra is understood and its utilization is consistent with its nature and where the meditator (occultist) (spiritual student) properly (mentally) directs the enunciation (linking between the source and its fulfillment) and where the soul is the actual employer. In any other case, the mantra is not particularly useful unless (dangerously) potent linkage is achieved without proper realization (i.e., some words of power are beyond the control of the uninitiated and evoke forces that are likewise beyond the control of the unwary). In the more formal sense, mantras are verses from the Vedic works, with each such potent verse a formula for particular evocation. More generally, mantras can be designated from virtually any source, provided the proper linkage (qualification) is achieved (prepared) (realized).

The key to any mantra is the way in which it is enunciated, properly and potently or otherwise. With the mind qualified by the soul, the mind can properly direct the energy (forces) invoked and evoked. Thus the motive (sincerity) of the spiritual student is essential. Mantras designed for one purpose and used for another are relatively ineffective. Mantras merely

sounded, without proper qualification, integration, and alignment are relatively ineffective. Mantras properly embraced, however, can be sustained in the consciousness and continuity of the spiritual student and in the consciousness and continuity of the meditation place (as well) far beyond merely conscious activity.

Mantras are crucial to the meditation process, as means of qualification, as means of integration, as means of alignment, as means of invocation and evocation of qualifying energies (forces) and their utilization and release, and (therefore) as means of service. The sounding forth of a proper mantra or prayer of service properly qualifies the intention and meditation (spiritual) activity. The sounding forth of a proper mantra or prayer of service releases significant amounts of spiritual force on more concrete (mental, astral, etheric) levels. The sounding forth of proper (appropriate) words of power provides safety and surety, and above all, properly qualifies the ego so the soul can be properly manifested. All creative work (service) involves words of power of one kind or another and one level or another. In the final analysis, every manifested phenomenon is both the sound of a word of power and the consequence of that creative word.

Each life (incarnation) is a word of power. As the esoteric student approaches the soul in conscious quality, the sound or note of that soul (potency) is realized and all (in the outer life) then becomes, consciously, merely an extension and expression, in qualification, of that particular note. It is the task of the spiritual student to achieve the requisite balance (humility) that the silence (potency) of the soul can be embraced.

Yogamanas

Yogamanas is a generalized form of yoga involving principally the mind and the mental principle (manas), with the mastery of the mind and its nature (and therefore its domain) as its objective. Yogamanas requires that the candidate have a reasonably complete control of the physical and emotional (astral) nature (i.e., that all problems of temperament have been overcome) and that the candidate have a reasonably complete development of the mind. This presupposes the requisite levels of clarity (purification), the integration of the personality nature, and the sublimation of the sexual nature.

Although the means and methods (and names) of the various schools of yogamanas vary somewhat, the objectives and essential methods remain in common. The objectives are simply self-mastery and self-realization (and the implied realization of a path of service) (these objectives being purported by many various (preliminary) schools but achieved through only a few) (the delusions of false realizations being a major impediment). The essential (necessary) processes involved include the development of observational discipline (nature), the development of proper meditative discipline (abilities) and a contemplative nature, the cultivation of freedom from opinions of any kind and freedom from attachment to values (not to mention attachment per se), the cultivation of freedom from mundane absorption, and (ultimately) the achievement of freedom from thinking (i.e., self-realization implies buddhi and dependence upon the abstract mind and not the concrete mind and processes of thinking).

Yogamanas does not require a teacher (none of the advanced forms of yoga require teachers); in fact, a teacher (other than the soul) is of no practical use in any of the advanced disciplines, for the student must necessarily face and overcome the progressive (successive) deceptions and illusions of the mind (the not-self) alone. Of course the soul is by this time affiliated with a particular ashram on soul levels and the process of self-realization is viewed as part of a group context. The great awakening (of soul consciousness (of conscious recognition of soul consciousness)) is a direct consequence of cultivated

humility, of overcoming the false mind (the ego) and its separateness (independence).

Yogamanas is often referred to as the yoga of silence, since conservation (for proper application) is one of the major precepts (e.g., the conservation of speech, the conservation of sex force, the conservation of thinking, etc). A person who likes to talk is ill-prepared for spiritual work, let alone for yogamanas (and would necessarily be deferred). Many of the problems to be overcome through yogamanas are the solutions to previous stages and achievements (i.e., a preponderance of thinking as a means of rising above the astral nature becomes an impediment to overcoming the mental nature). Yogamanas does not involve knowledge per se, but, rather, involves mental processes that prepare the mind for realization and higher (more abstract) exercises which inhibit the ability of the mind to function independently. Thus the person who likes to think is almost as ill-suited for yogamanas as one who likes feelings. More properly, one thinks as one needs to, with the preferred disposition being contemplative detachment (freedom from thinking).

Freedom from thinking is by far the most potent form of positive mental activity. In the realization of silence (the cultivation of yogamanas) come the energies and forces of the soul (which are the true energies and forces of the lifewave) and the very subtle conscious (albeit non-thought-provoking) recognition of the soul.

† Commentary No. 583

Cosmic Fire 7

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 1, Division A) deals with the internal fires of the sheaths. It describes the three channels for fire on the lowest levels of manifestation and introduces the subject of fire elementals and devas on the physical and astral planes.

The sheaths are the material forms or “veils of substance” that constitute the lower vehicles of any manifested lifeform. The internal fires which animate the lower, material forms are coincident with those lower forms, namely the dense physical body, the etheric body, the astral or emotional body, and the (lower)

mind or mental body. The material substance of all these bodies (and levels) is animated by the triple fire. "In the physical body we have the fires of the lower nature (the animal plane) centralized at the base of the spine." Through the medium of the spinal column and its associated ganglia (and the spleen) the "central point of heat radiates in all directions." "In the etheric body we have the organ of active or radiatory fire and the vehicle of prana." "Its function is to store up the rays of radiatory light and heat which are secured from the sun, and to transmit them, via the spleen, to all parts of the physical body." Thus the etheric body (and the blending of latent and active fires) is the key to the health of the physical body and as the etheric body is functioning properly with regards the properly aligned spinal column and healthy spleen, then so shall the physical body remain serviceable (the health of the etheric body of course relating to the emotional and mental experience).

The latent interior fire of the sun (planet) (man) (atom) "reaches the bounds of its sphere of influence, its ring-pass-not by means of a threefold channel." The heat (fire) of internal combustion (fierce incandescence) of the sun utilizes a triple channel of (1) the akasha (vitalized matter) (substance animated by latent heat), (2) electricity, and (3) light rays of pranic aspect. Each of these three channels conveys a current of energy, from the central fire to the periphery embracing all within its field. Similarly, the inner fires of the planet demonstrate through (1) productive substance (the planetary matter vitalized by heat) (nourishment), (2) electrical fluid (animal magnetism), and (3) planetary prana. For man, the inner fires at the base of the spine utilize the three channels of (1) bodily warmth, (2) nervous response (human electricity), and (3) pranic emanation (the health aura).

From one perspective the energy of the internal fires of the sheaths is conveyed through some triple channel of akasha, electricity, and light (prana). From another, equally valid perspective, the energy of the internal fires are the fire elementals and deva lives. Agni (the lord of fire) "rules over all the fire elementals and devas on the three planes of human evolution and on the three planes in all parts of the system." The life (fire) of matter is differentiated into many and varied groups or categories of fire elementals and deva lives, from the one (Agni) to the three (who rule on the planes of adi, atma, and manas) to the seven to the many. On the physical (etheric) plane are included salamanders (little fire elementals), fire spirits (the essence of warmth, latent in all focal

points of heat), Agnichaitans or vortices of fire, and pranic elementals (minute fiery essences). On the astral plane are many grades and ranks of fire elementals and fire devas, including the Agnisuryans who “tend the fires that will later destroy the causal body.”

The internal fires of the sheaths and the embodying deva lives serve to demonstrate once again the great correlation of above and below (macrocosmic and microcosmic) and the interdependence of all lives.

† Commentary No. 584

Cosmic Fire 8

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division B) deals with the personality ray and fire by friction. It describes the work of the three rays (the personality ray, the soul ray, and the monadic ray), the relationship of the personality ray and the permanent atom, and the relationship of the personality ray and karma.

“Each body or form wherein spirit functions has, for its focal point on each plane, an atom composed of matter of the atomic sub-plane of each plane. This serves as a nucleus for the distribution of force, for the conservation of faculty, for the assimilation of experience, and for the preservation of memory.” The set of permanent atoms for any given life (form) is the multiple center of force for the demonstration of the entire personality matrix. In this sense, the lower triad is really the three (lower) permanent atoms of the personality (i.e., the physical (etheric), astral, and mental permanent atoms) while the upper triad is really the three (higher) permanent atoms of the soul. Also in this sense, polarization of consciousness refers to the dominant activity of one or another of the permanent atoms. As one is transcended (through evolution in consciousness), the polarization of consciousness is shifted to the next higher (more inclusive) (integrating) level or permanent atom. The operations of the personality (soul) (monadic) ray have direct action or close connection with the physical (astral) (mental) permanent atom (respectively). In a sense, the higher work (ordered (cyclic) stimulation) is upon the various permanent atoms, which work carries through the permanent atoms to the personality matrix and thereby into the manifested demonstration (of personality experience and expression). “This

threefold force (1) plays upon the wall of the atom as an external force and affects its rotary and vibratory action, (2) stimulates the inner fire of the atom and causes its light to shine with increasing brilliancy, and (3) works upon the spirillae (of the atom), and brings them all gradually into play." The spirillae refer to the internal structure and dynamics of the atom.

"The personality ray deals with the first four spirillae, and is the source of their stimulation," while the soul ray "concerns itself with the fifth spirilla and with the sixth, and is the cause of their emerging from latency and potentiality into power and activity," and "the monadic ray is the source of stimulation of the seventh spirilla." Thus is the latent fire of matter within the atom cultivated and nurtured into activity by the action of the various rays and by correspondence to higher forces and higher (greater) processes.

The karmic process is closely associated with the work of the third ray in relationship to the latent heat. This refers as much to the karma of matter itself as to the karma of the individual (which is of course never unrelated to karma in a broader sense). Karmic force is usually perceived as restorative more so than progressive, but in this higher perspective the karmic forces are primarily and essentially progressive. Karma is wisdom in action, qualified by greater purpose, which is the sensible cultivation of individual and group energetics (on atomic levels) resulting ultimately in the flaming forth of the soul as the individual becomes wholly radiative and reaches beyond the periphery of merely atomic existence.

From the perspective of the fires of matter, "all fundamental influence and effects are felt on the astral plane and work thence through the etheric to the dense physical thereby bringing matter under its sphere of influence, yet not itself originating on the physical plane."

Temporal Flow and Evolution

Time and temporal flow (the passage of time) are a perspective and demonstration of manifestation on the relatively more objective levels of consciousness (principally on physical (and etheric) levels, but to some extent (at least conceptually) on astral and mental levels as well). On unmanifested levels there is no time and there is no passage of time. On those levels all is integrated and the perspective is holistic in the cosmic or solar sense. On the middle levels of manifestation, consciousness may be focused upon the temporal perspective or otherwise, but the temporal perspective is necessarily misleading as it is merely partial or differential in nature.

Time is a consequence of the interaction of spirit and matter. At the beginning of manifestation (and the beginning of time), all of the (universal) energy resides as spirit. As manifestation proceeds (first through involutory processes) and as time begins to flow, some energy is conveyed to produce a material demonstration of (as) matter. Thus some energy begins to accumulate in the material pole. The flow of energy (and the temporal flow) from spirit to matter is necessarily balanced (through dynamic equilibrium) by a flow of energy (and temporal flow) from matter to spirit. And all that exists between the two poles (reservoirs of energy) is consciousness.

The “downward” flow from spirit to matter is the involutory path and the inverse of time as it is normally perceived. The “upward” flow from matter to spirit is the evolutionary or spiritual path and the passage of time as normally perceived. As involution proceeds, the material reservoir (field of material demonstration) increases in magnitude and the downward flow is more intense than the upward flow (from a higher perspective the two flows are perfectly balanced (in several dimensions) (and from an even “higher” perspective the two flows are really one flow)). As evolution begins, the balance shifts gradually to the upward flow until a considerable evolutionary momentum is achieved.

But a dynamic equilibrium must be maintained. As the evolutionary momentum builds upon the upward path and as the downward involutory flow is reduced, another aspect of the downward flow is used to balance the

upward momentum. That aspect is devolution or the withdrawal of life from (and disintegration of) form. In this way, the temporal (energy) flow remains balanced (in dynamic equilibrium) throughout the various phases of manifestation. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction; for every applied force, there is an equal and opposite force for balance; except that equal and opposite refer to the overall (integrated) magnitude, and do not require each aspect to be balanced in the same way. Thus the momentum for evolution can exceed the momentum for involution (being balanced with the overall, integrated momentum for involution and devolution (and some more subtle processes (aspects))) and does for the second (progressive) half of every cycle of manifestation.

In this sense of temporal flow, the upward right-hand path (identification with spirit) is the path of provision, representing the future, while the downward left-hand path (identification with matter) is the path of depletion, representing the past. Thus time flows simultaneously in both directions, and in such a way that a balance (integrated equivalence) is maintained between the two. As evolution proceeds, consciousness gradually embraces first the evolutionary path (positive temporal flow) and eventually the whole, as time is integrated out of the equation of manifestation (from this higher perspective) and consciousness (of the esoteric student (the evolved human being)) embraces all without the burden (partial perspective) of temporal existence.

† Commentary No. 586

Cumulative Momentum

The momentum of the spiritual path is cumulative. As the individual experience is assimilated by the soul (and incorporated as wisdom (conscience) (realization)), the momentum of that soul is increased upon the spiritual path. In each subsequent incarnation the cumulative wisdom of the soul is available to the waking-consciousness to the extent of responsiveness. Even as experience is accumulated and assimilated in the present incarnation, the resulting wisdom is available to some extent. As progress is made upon the path, the momentum of the path (and the individual (and group) relative to the path) is increased and the evolutionary forces are intensified and accelerated.

At some point in the evolutionary process, the evolving spiritual student achieves sufficient momentum upon the path so that (in the higher, subjective, overwhelming sense) an identification of the student is made with the spiritual path. At that time, the path embraces the spiritual student (as the spiritual student truly embraces the path) and evolution is quickened. This results in increased spiritual momentum, which manifests in a number of ways. Karma is intensified; karmic bounds are reduced (i.e., the path is narrowed so karma no longer permits the student to pass beyond the near fringes of the path, where previously the student could function at the far fringes of the path); and karmic force is much more focused directly on evolutionary factors.

This commitment of (to) the spiritual path means the student is swept up and into the mainstream of the path and it becomes quite difficult then to withdraw from the path. This is because it is the cumulative spiritual momentum and commitment of the soul to these evolutionary processes, not merely that of the personality. This cumulative momentum is thus an invested, dynamic vector for spiritual progress (evolution in consciousness) (world service through self-realization). It is invested (and vested) in the sense that the spiritual student (soul) has invoked and therefore evoked the conditions and consequences of momentum and commitment. It is vested and dynamic in the sense that having evoked the hastened evolutionary forces, the spiritual student enjoys a considerable encouragement of those forces. In a sense, the student so embraced is cultivated and conditioned for self-realization by those forces, and yet, in another sense, it is all the initiative of the soul (the call of the path is compelling on some level).

Thus cumulative identification with evolutionary forces means becoming (embracing) (being embraced by) those evolutionary forces. But the same phenomenon is possible for the reverse flow (involutionary and/or devolutionary forces). If a person is so attached to coarse things (material wealth, power, ego, etc.) there is a tendency to identify (on some level of consciousness, generally subconsciously) with material forces instead of spiritual forces. The right-hand path (upward to God (spirit)) (identification with evolutionary forces) is the withdrawal of life from form, the unification of consciousness and spirit (i.e., evolution, freedom, and release).

The left-hand path (identification with devolutionary forces) (downward) is the path of the disintegrating form, the dissolution of material existence without further recourse to evolution (at least for the evolutionary unit so encumbered). Cumulative momentum holds as well for both paths, so sufficient attachment (absorption in material things, identification with ego) results ultimately in an irrevocable force for self-destruction and dissolution. But (fortunately), karma is a potent preventative of such extreme identification, as it is a potent force of evolutionary encouragement.

† Commentary No. 587

The Zero Option

One of the basic truths of karma, action, and responsibility is “inaction is action”. The spiritual student (as every self-conscious human being) is responsible for (the consequences of) every action, activity, and expression (physical, emotional, mental) (consciously or unconsciously demonstrated). The zero option (inaction) is as much an action as any deliberate or indeliberate expression or demonstration, since consequences result from every moment-focus in consciousness.

The consequences of inaction can be just as profound and far-reaching as any more obvious activity. For every dilemma (decision point) faced by the spiritual student (who is somewhat aware of cause and effect relationships and the fact of karma and responsibility for consequences), every reasonable option should be weighed and considered (unless, preferably, intuition provides the appropriate path (decision) without recourse to deliberation or reasoning). Some options may be obviously (apparently) positive (constructive), while others may be obviously negative (destructive or needlessly leading to complications). The neutral option (of inaction) may in fact be positive (constructive) or negative (destructive) depending on the context and potential consequences.

Some prefer the zero option, erroneously thinking that inaction minimizes karmic entanglements, avoiding action (and responsibility) in the expectation of progress. Yet the zero option is action, and for every action (inaction) there are consequences, and for every action (consequence) there is unevadable responsibility. Given a choice of karmic entanglement (complexity) or karmic

simplicity (all other factors being the same), then simplicity is preferable. But all other factors are rarely the same, so the option of simplicity should not be an excuse in itself. One should rather seek the appropriate decision, one that accommodates dharma (the sense of responsibility of the spiritual student) without fear of entanglements or consequences (one who consciously accepts responsibility for all actions (and inaction) has naught to fear, while one who fails to accept such responsibility has much to fear (face)).

As the student evolves, a sense of (recognizing) appropriateness (intuitive realization) is gradually developed so that decision points are rarely consciously recognized as decision points, since every dilemma carries within it the answer or resolution intuitively realizable. The zero option is actually utilized more often than not, but not for the sake (illusion) of avoidance, but rather for appropriateness. Sometimes (often) every (positive) action can be expected to lead to misunderstanding or complication, so that the zero option (neutral path) is (in that case) one of minimal misunderstanding (or minimal complexity) (for which consequences the actor is nonetheless responsible). In short, the student should prefer action wherever action is appropriate, and inaction where inaction is appropriate. The zero option should be considered in the context of the dilemma (what to do or not).

Where action is called for (seems more appropriate than inaction) and more than one reasonable path (essentially or apparently equal in positive potential) is recognized, then it does not really matter which path is chosen (the non-recognition of a single preferable path means either that all are equivalent or none is particularly preferable or that the student is simply blind (for the moment or in this instance) (in which case the choice still does not matter since any choice in this case would lead to some realization)). Finally, the zero option should be exercised conscientiously (honestly and reasonably) until or unless a reasonable path or action can be recognized.

The Etheric Body and Prana 1

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division C) deals with (1) the nature of the etheric body, (2) the nature of prana, (3) the function of the etheric body, (4) macrocosmic and microcosmic ethers, and (5) death and the etheric body.

The etheric body is the energy or vital body which is the same shape as the dense physical body but resides on etheric levels (more refined levels than the dense physical) and extends somewhat beyond the surface of the dense physical body yet fully penetrating the dense physical body so that the two are fully integrated and correlated (at least in the case of the healthy human being). The etheric body is in fact the force field or energy field of the physical body (and is relatively more real than the dense physical body). The physical body cannot exist or function as a form without its etheric double, while the etheric double (body) can function as well or better without its connection to the dense physical body (but of course the dense physical body is necessary for experience and expression on dense physical levels).

Prana (vitality) (in the lower, physical (etheric) sense) is the vital principle that conveys relationship between individual forms and the whole etheric web and its higher correspondences. The health of the individual (physical body) is directly related to the etheric body (and prana), which is in turn related (1) to the astral (emotional) and mental levels of consciousness (of the individual) (in the vertical sense (perspective) of individual karma) and (2) to the health implied or conveyed through the etheric web and its relationship with all lives so embedded (human or otherwise) (in the horizontal sense (perspective) of group karma) (which leads then to overall (planetary) (solar) considerations on astral and mental levels (and beyond). Thus individual health is as related to cooperation and interdependence as it is to individual activities and consequences (karma) (karma being as much or more a group process as an individual one, individual responsibility not withstanding).

There are many and diverse solar emanations which influence the human being in form (within the context of form-building, preservation, experience, evolution,

destruction, etc.). Solar pranic emanations are “definitely stimulating and constructive, and (through their essential quality) produce conditions that further the growth of cellular matter, and concern its adjustment to environmental conditions; they concern likewise the internal health (demonstrating as the heat of the atom and its consequent activity) and the uniform evolution of the form of which that particular atom of matter forms a constituent part.” Thus although prana is not concerned with form-building per se, it is concerned with the conservation of the form and the “preservation of the health of its component parts.” These pranic emanations which deal with the etheric body and the four ethers are the “basis of that fire by friction which demonstrates in the activity of matter.”

The etheric body is “a network permeated with fire,” a web of golden light. “The pranic emanations of the etheric body itself play upon the dense physical body in the same manner as the pranic emanations of the sun play upon the etheric body. It is all one vast system of transmission and of interdependence within the system. All receive in order to give, and to pass on to that which is lesser or not so evolved.” The etheric body is archetypal relative to the dense physical body (relating the dense physical body to the overall personality matrix). And the etheric body and prana demonstrate by correspondence relationships between man, the planetary logos, and the solar logos.

† Commentary No. 589

Awareness and Learning 1

The entire human experience is intended to contribute to the evolution of consciousness and the extent of that contribution depends necessarily upon the learning process and the relative awareness of the individual. Thus learning is a central focus of individual and group experience, particularly so in the context of the spiritual path of accelerated evolution in consciousness.

There are a number of factors and relationships that affect learning. The principal impediments to learning are a relative lack of awareness, a lack of interest in learning, and the preclusive ego. Conversely, where awareness is properly cultivated, where a positive (open, honest, active) attitude toward

learning prevails, and where the ego is properly qualified for learning, the individual (student) is able to learn much more effectively (with greater depth (correlation), breadth (integration), and relative ease (expedience)).

The bulk of humanity are asleep in the mundane (personal) drivel of self-centered (material) existence. For the bulk of humanity, real learning (assimilated experience (wisdom)) is an indirect, relatively unconscious (sleepy) process whereby the soul gradually integrates and assimilates the experience of the personality, with little feedback (qualification) during incarnation and the bulk of assimilation occurring between incarnations. That learning process is enhanced and accelerated where the individual mind is properly developed and trained for learning, where the student earnestly seeks to learn, and where the ego is not a significant impediment. Such a person naturally (unconsciously) (indirectly) cultivates the requisite awareness.

On the spiritual path, learning is further accelerated and the individual becomes more active (more conscious, more aware) in learning, with more and more of the assimilation occurring within the incarnation (and ultimately in real or near real time). This is a direct result of the consequences of commitment to the path (those consequences being accelerated and intensified karmic pressure (more rapid evocation of karmic consequences) and increasing qualification of the (responsive) personality by the soul (which includes direct stimulation of consciousness and expansion (depth and breadth) of awareness)). But even on the path, there are impediments to learning that must be (systematically or otherwise) overcome, by degrees (else considerable conflict (in consciousness between the ego and the path) will ensue).

The more obvious impediments to learning include preclusive habits (attachments and distractions) (absorption in personal or mundane matters) (which require deliberation (persistence) (self-discipline) for overcoming), lack of observational training (proper mental focus) (which simply requires training in observation and analysis), closed mindedness (the preclusive habits (rigidity) (linearity) of the concrete mind) (which require some intensity (determination) to overcome), and lack of earnestness (which simply requires realization of need). The less obvious, more subtle impediments to learning involve the ego and relative awareness, and include concerted (unconscious) resistance to learning, personal bias (in perception and interpretation) (compounded by inertia and lack

of awareness of that bias and inertia), and limited (relatively narrow) perception (awareness) (again without realization of same). All of these things and more preclude or inhibit effective learning, and all of these things and more must be faced and overcome (eventually), by the earnest spiritual student. One who actively (honestly) approaches these issues with some determination (will to succeed) will indeed progress in improving the disposition toward and capability for effective learning.

† Commentary No. 590

Awareness and Learning 2

The principal key to effective learning and to improving the capability for effective learning is awareness. In general, the greater (broader) (deeper) (less personal) the awareness, the more effective will be the learning process. Awareness is related to the path in the sense that (extent of) awareness is a broad consequence of evolution in consciousness and in the sense that the awareness of the student is stimulated to the extent of the student's relationship to the spiritual path.

To complement (supplement) (integrate) the relative awareness evoked (or potentially evoked) by (upon) the path, the student must endeavor to utilize that awareness (or potential) or suffer degradation in awareness (a dulling of the capabilities through lack of exercise and consequent absorption). Properly exercised (energized) awareness will deepen and broaden naturally, and enable the student to learn (and serve) more effectively.

The real key to overcoming all of the various (obvious and subtle) impediments to learning (preclusive habits) is the application of awareness to those various impediments (i.e., to be aware of a particular impediment (in the sense of conscious realization of that impediment and its effects) as an impediment to learning (or to consciousness (awareness)) is to evoke energies inherently qualified to overcome that impediment (energy follows thought)). As awareness is properly applied (i.e., as the conscious mind and its subconscious correspondence are programmed to trigger conscious realization of any impedimental process in real or near real time), then the energy (and associated forces (applied energies)) of the soul is brought to bear on the problem

(impediment) and the problem (weakness) is gradually transformed into strength.

The first step to proper conscious awareness (in this context) is conscious realization (knowledge) of all the various habits and preclusive tendencies. The second step is the conscious realization (recognition) (assessment) of the magnitude (depth) (breadth) (presence) of particular impediments. The third step is periodic self-analysis in which each such habit or preclusive tendency is evaluated in terms of how it manifests (i.e., under what conditions in consciousness) and what are its effects or consequences. The fourth step is periodic (e.g., daily) qualification for learning (i.e., impersonal (individual) meditation, philosophic and psychological study, and continued self-assessment). The fifth step is the simple realization that the fourth step continues indefinitely, as the active resistance of the personality (ego) becomes more and more passive (more subtle) and less obvious.

Dealing with attachments (distraction) (absorption) (closed or narrow mindedness) (lack of earnestness) (personal bias) (limited perception) is relatively easy (at least straightforward) as long as the student (waking-consciousness) is aware of their existence and operation. Dealing with the various subtleties of the ego (i.e., concerted resistance to learning and other inherent inertia) is another matter altogether, since layer upon layer and aspect upon aspect of dynamic self-deception must be faced, realized, and overcome. The ego is fully capable of pretending to cooperate while deliberately undermining the various noble attempts of the conscious mind. This capability is further complicated by the personal nature of the conscious mind (and feelings) which tends to see (hear) (feel) (believe) whatever it wishes, often regardless of contradictory indications. Thus the only real solution to dynamic self-deception is the cultivation of proper humility (that cultivation being a necessarily indefinite process (never fully achieved)).

Zen Buddhism

Zen Buddhism is an aspect of the Buddha dharma that is concerned with self-discipline, meditation (dhyana), and attainment of enlightenment (bodhi) (self-realization) by direct intuition. Zen advocates (?) self-contemplation as the key to the understanding of the universe. That self-contemplation is not a matter of rational process, but is rather one of allowing the true self (the soul) to manifest through the properly qualified mind. The problem of achievement, then, is the cultivation of the no-mind.

Most religious disciplines involve scriptures and doctrines (assumed facts and rationalizations); Zen is more concerned with the process of realization, without regard to particular interpretations. In seeking the truth through introspection and intuition, the Zen adherent (?) subordinates the particulars (doctrines) (scriptures) to the process (mind-to-mind and soul-to-mind training) and its consequence (the awakening of transcendental wisdom (prajna) (the conscious realization of the wisdom of the soul)). While Buddhism is more a moral philosophy than a religion, Zen is more a true philosophical endeavor than a moral philosophy. While orthodox philosophy implies rational, discursive thinking and conceptualization, Zen (and true philosophy) implies spiritual realization without the entanglements of thinking. Though the Zen process is not strictly anti-rational, it is (in principle) wholly non-rational.

The Zen process includes meditation upon the meaning of various paradoxical or non-logical statements (koans) (riddles) which, in a sense, trains the mind to overcome its dependence on rational, logical processes (and other attachments that impede realization) and to rely instead on the silence (non-articulation) of Zen. Each koan is (typically) a demonstration of reality (fusion) that transcends the veils of objective (rational) experience. The quiet sitting (zazen) eventually leads to a state of enlightenment (satori) in which the non-abiding mind allows a total personal transformation, from being wholly absorbed in the outer (personal) world (of distinctions, illusions, and separations) to being absorbed in the world (fusion) of the soul (where (objective, rational) discrimination is replaced by (subjective, intuitive) (non-rational) discernment (realization)).

This mental tranquility (fearlessness) (humility) (spontaneity) of the non-abiding mind (non-discriminating consciousness) can be applied to the outer world experience (i.e., the silence of Zen can be articulated), but only where the reality of fusion (of subject and object) is maintained. Things (objective distinctions) belong to non-reality. Reality is (subjective) being, that includes the object and subject without distinction. The no-mind exists at the point of tension between the lower (concrete) (objective) mind and the higher (abstract) (subjective) mind, where the intuition (buddhi) of the soul can qualify the entire personal existence (personality). By comparison, the bulk of humanity sleep (dream) in the objective world, while the self-realized student (no-mind) is awake to the realities of being. The energy conveyed through satori is a great qualification and realization. Those who have achieved such realization are not wont to return to the delusions of the ego (self-centered duality), but strive (?) to remain self-realized (aligned with the soul) throughout the variety of daily experience and expression (i.e., to remain en rapport without withdrawal from the outer world).

What is called Zen is really an essential aspect of any spiritual path, regardless of particular religious or philosophical forum, for the essence of Zen is equivalent to the essence of the timeless (ageless) wisdom.

† Commentary No. 592

The Etheric Body and Prana 2

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division C) deals with etheric bodies, their vivification by prana, the organs of reception, and the basis of emanations. Eight statements are made for clarification (with correspondence to all levels).

(1) "The etheric body is the mould of the physical body." (2) "The etheric body is the archetype upon which the dense physical form is built." (3) "The etheric body is a web or network of fine interlacing channels, formed of matter of the four ethers, and built into a specific form," being then "a focal point for certain radiatory emanations, which vivify, stimulate, and produce the rotary action of matter." (4) "These pranic emanations when focalized and received, react upon

the dense matter which is built upon the etheric framework." (5) "This etheric web, during incarnation, forms a (protective) barrier between the physical and astral planes, which can only be transcended when consciousness is sufficiently developed" (or where the web is somehow breached or otherwise impaired). (6) An organ for receiving prana can be found in each body of manifestation (with dense physical and etheric correspondence).

In the human form it is the spleen (through its etheric counterpart). After prana is distributed through "the etheric network, it demonstrates in surface radiation as the health aura." (7) The prana of the solar system (on its four levels (systemic, planetary, human, and atomic)) embraces each manifesting entity through its body of manifestation and receptive center, to produce motion, surface radiation (emanation), and a distributive effect. (8) At the end of each cycle of manifestation (e.g., incarnation), the central life "gathers within himself all his forces" and "all returns within the causal consciousness (i.e., the "radiant etheric body" is withdrawn and the physical body then (necessarily) disintegrates (since the fires of matter (other than latent atomic) are no longer stimulated)).

"The etheric is the most important of the two physical bodies" and the instrument through which man is related to "other evolutions that evolve in etheric matter." The etheric plane is an energy field and the medium for energy flow at the lowest levels of objective manifestation. "The etheric body of man receives prana in different ways and of different kinds, and all these ways bring him into touch with varying entities" (primarily deva lives).

Solar prana "is that vital and magnetic fluid which radiates from the sun, which is transmitted to man's etheric body through the agency of certain (very high order) (golden) deva entities." These devas receive, qualify, and then transmit the (qualified) prana to humanity for assimilation and application. "When the etheric body is in good order and functioning correctly, enough of this (solar) prana is absorbed to keep the form organized." Planetary prana "is the vital fluid emanated from any planet, which constitutes its basic coloring or quality, and is produced by a repetition within the planet of the same process which is undergone in connection with man and solar prana. The planet absorbs solar prana, assimilates what is required, and radiates off that which is not essential to its well-being in the form of planetary radiation." That assimilation process

involves qualification by the planetary logos. The planetary emanative prana is transmitted to man's etheric body through the agency of certain (etheric) (violet) devas who are relatively closely related to humanity. "Man and the devas act on every planet as intermediaries, or as transmitting agencies. Where they are not found, then certain great activities become impossible, and disintegration sets in."

† Commentary No. 593

Sentience 1

Sentience is defined as the quality or condition of being sentient, being responsive to or conscious of sense impressions, having awareness on some level and to some extent. Sentience occurs at every level of cosmic (universal) manifestation (although the nature of sense impressions and the nature of consciousness vary tremendously both vertically (tangentially) and horizontally (parallel) with respect to the various planes of consciousness). In addition to proper sentience (that is a direct manifestation of indwelling or qualifying life (being)) there is also artificial sentience (programmed responsiveness (as in awareness induced artificially within some composite (form))).

The most fundamental sentience occurs at the two extremes of consciousness, the most primitive and the most advanced. The most primitive sentience is associated with (and the result of) involutory lives in the elemental kingdoms. Atomic and molecular matter on all levels of consciousness is sentient life, being responsive to (and conscious of) other atoms or molecules on its level and within its field of atomic or molecular activity (i.e., atoms and molecules (and their constituent particles (waveforms)) are interactive lives). The transfer of energy (qualification) that naturally occurs at atomic and molecular levels is a form of communication (interaction), albeit very primitive and far from being that (communication) (awareness) associated with self-conscious existence. At these primitive levels there is no self-consciousness, but there is a passive group consciousness and there is (subconscious) (unconscious) (but not non-conscious) activity and unconscious (passive) responsiveness to internal (induced) and external (imposed) forces.

It is a grave error (presumption) (self-deception) to consider matter to be non-sentient, wholly without feeling (awareness) (responsiveness), and/or inanimate. Basic (primitive) human experience involves the purposive illusion of separation from God (the soul) (and all that that appearance implies for experience and evolution in consciousness). The graveness is obvious in the realization that (1) God lives as much in and through the involutory lifewaves as the evolutionary lifewaves, (2) those involutory lifewaves (as sentient life) contribute as much to the overall evolutionary plan (its fulfillment) as the higher lifeforms, and (3) all sentient life is sacred (and should be viewed respectfully by the higher, self-conscious lifeforms).

This does not mean that man cannot or should not manipulate matter and work with the plant and animal lives to his advantage, but it does mean that in so doing he (the spiritual student at least) should also (1) be aware of the sentience (and sacredness) of those "lesser" lives and (2) not abuse his privilege (abilities) for such manipulation through selfish, wanton, or arbitrary disruption in the course of those lifeforms. In other words, the spiritual student should appropriate and manipulate those lives respectfully and sensibly (with a measure of humility), and in a manner consistent with the evolutionary plan (i.e., in ways that contribute constructively to (1) the experience and development of the lesser lives, (2) the experience and development (and service) of humanity, and (3) the overall evolutionary progress of the "greater" lives (beyond humanity and within which humanity evolves)).

Although composite forms are not sentient as composite forms (i.e., an inanimate material object is generally not sentient as such an object or even aware as being part of such an object) they are sentient at a more fundamental (composite) level (i.e., at least at the atomic and molecular levels) and in many cases allow the manifestation of some (relatively) higher lifeform.

Sentience 2

Higher forms generally involve two or more levels of sentience, i.e., the conscious or unconscious symbiosis of two or more dissimilar lifeforms. The human (physical, emotional, and mental) form (personality), for example, consists of numerous elemental (atomic) lives on the four levels (dense physical, etheric, astral, and concrete mental) (belonging to four distinctly different lifewaves (each including numerous sentient species)).

Each of the four forms (dense physical body, etheric body, astral body, and concrete mind) is the vehicle of a (sentient) involutory life and each of the four forms is host to numerous intermediate lives (except for the elemental lives, all lives merely express themselves through the various forms (within forms (etc.)), some more actively than others (with the relatively higher lives actually (consciously or subconsciously) building their own forms)). The integrated personality (and to some extent the personality in the process of being integrated) is yet another sentient life (albeit induced (synthesized) by a higher lifeform (the soul)). Analogously, the soul consists of a number of involutory lives (under the overall inducement of the monad).

The human being (monad, soul, and personality) (and all that lives within same) is an extremely complex organism of numerous lives and associated forms within forms. So too is universal manifestation (as above, so below) a complex orchestration of diverse lives within lives and many dimensions of expression. Although life in manifestation can appear quite complex, the basic patterns are relatively simple, because the really higher lives are inclusive and directly qualify (for balance in the context of evolution) all that lives within. God (the solar logos) for example embraces all lives within the solar system and actually experiences (sentiently) all levels of awareness within that system.

The awareness of an (elemental) atomic life relative to another is quite limited compared to the potential coordinated physical, astral, and mental awareness of the human personality. Also, the awareness of an (elemental) atomic life is distinctly different than the subconscious human awareness at that level, which is, in turn, distinctly different than the fully conscious (directed) (meditatively

projected (induced)) human awareness at that (elemental) level. It is misleading to presume that other lives on any level have awareness comparable to our own, and moreover, it is also misleading to presume that other (particular) human beings have the same kind and extent of awareness (sentience) as one's own. The problem is that abilities vary tremendously within any lifewave, that bias and conditioning (and situational factors) also vary tremendously within any lifewave, and in combination (ability, bias, situation) these factors can produce vastly different perceptions leading to markedly different conclusions or consequences.

Because of the underlying universality (unity of life), one who is properly trained and qualified can effectively project (meditatively) one's focus of consciousness to virtually any higher or lower or parallel level of aspect of sentience. But this requires considerable detachment (to avoid incidental imposition) and the resulting perception (interpretation) is complicated inevitably by that focus of consciousness. As a qualifying technique, developing and exercising qualification (induction) (harmony) (balance) of the composite lives through meditation can be quite effective (internally) in bringing about the ultimate (proper) (qualified) integration of the (complex) human personality and by non-disruptive projection in bringing about greater understanding (and rapport) of (with) other lives.

† Commentary No. 595

Humanism

Humanism is a doctrine (attitude) (way of life) (value system) (perspective) (aspect of philosophy) centered or focused on human interests and values, that stresses an individual's dignity and worth and capacity for development and expression. There are two aspects or distinctions within the field of this focus on humanism. The secular and the God-centered or religious.

Secular humanism is concerned almost entirely with human worth as an end in itself, without regard for God or religious (spiritual) considerations. In one extreme secular humanism is entirely self-centered (self-indulgent). In the other extreme secular humanism is focused on the worth of humanity, being largely humanitarian (but without recognition or acceptance of religious or spiritual

considerations). Central to secular humanism is the belief (value) that man exists for the sake of man (or similarly that humanity exists for the sake of humanity), that the glory (accomplishments) of an individual (or humanity) is particularly significant. The evolution of human consciousness is not inconsistent with secular humanism (from the secular humanist perspective), but limited essentially to human accomplishments for the sake of the individual or for the sake of the human race. Secular humanism affords a focus for ego development and expression (at one extreme) and compassion and consideration for others (at the other extreme).

But secular humanism is not consistent with the spiritual path proper, for it detracts (distracts) from the essential human purpose (for which we have evolved), which is the service of (to) God and the divine plan for evolution. Thus God-centered humanism is much preferable to secular humanism (from the standpoint of the spiritual path (and the soul)). Religious or spiritual humanism can still focus on human interests and human values; it can still stress an individual's dignity and worth and capacity for development and expression, but in the context of a teleological (purposive) universe, where human values are subordinated to the value (respect) (worship) of God (through the soul). Thus God-centered humanism affords a forum for the development of qualified human character (integrity) and a balance between the heart-centered nature and the head-centered nature, between human interests and the overshadowing (indwelling) presence of God.

Thus the proper spiritual student is (among other things) a God-centered humanist, living in the world of man and the world of God, without being absorbed by ego or extreme human values (attachments). The spiritual student is properly concerned with human welfare, but in the context of human experience leading to the evolution of consciousness (and in the sense of service to God through serving humanity (as an expression of God)). The God-centered humanist recognizes the God within all people, regardless of appearance to the contrary, and by recognizing (acknowledging) that God within encourages the development of responsiveness to that God-self. Where God-centeredness replaces self-centeredness (in the student's value system), then the student can overcome the separative and self-serving ego and allow the higher energies and spiritual qualification to deepen the place and perspective of

the student within the framework of the spiritual path and the evolution of consciousness.

In the final analysis, the experience (reasoning) of the humanist must be replaced by the inspiration (intuition) (God realization) of one firmly placed upon the spiritual path. The mature spiritual student utilizes the personality instrument (and reasoning), but ever subordinates that lower self and capabilities to (being qualified by) the light and love and power of the soul.

† Commentary No. 596

The Etheric Body and Prana 3

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division C) continues with its consideration of form and forces. Forms are of three kinds: (1) elemental forms (atomic and molecular matter), animated by the third logos, (2) the involutory forms (of the vegetable, animal, mineral kingdoms), "the result of the work of the second and third logoi," and (3) the deva and human forms, "the result of the united action of the three logoi." The pranic emanations of involutory forms "are transmitted by means of surface radiation to certain lesser groups of devas," while "the human form transmits the emanative radiations to a much higher grade of deva." These deva lives assimilate (qualify) the prana and retransmit it to other lives, thus demonstrating "the exquisite interdependence of all existences." The deva evolution "acts as the transmitting transmuting force throughout the system" and "all work with fire."

The etheric body is the receiver, assimilator, and transmitter of prana, being negative (passive) (receptive) relative to the rays of the sun, neutral relative to the (internal) processes of assimilation, and positive (active) (expulsive) (transmissive) relative to the dense physical body. There are three receptive centers within the etheric body (though not all are necessarily fully functional) (the main receptive center being one between the shoulder blades). These three centers form a (triangular) pattern for circulation (and assimilation) of prana "before being transmitted to all parts of the etheric vehicle and from thence to the dense physical body. The main organ of assimilation is the spleen, the etheric center and the dense physical organ." The health of the etheric spleen

determines the effectiveness of assimilation of prana and therefore the relative overall vitality of the human body.

The etheric centers are qualified by the individual (personality) character (and by karma) so the circulating prana (vital fluid) is thereby qualified and subsequently released (by means of surface radiation) as qualified pranic emanations. "Prana therefore varies in vibration and quality according to the receiving entity." The pranic circulation (sharing through reception, qualification, and retransmission) is endless and weaves all lives together through this etheric (vital) web. "When the pranic vehicle is working perfectly in all three groups (human, planetary, and solar) the union of latent fire will be accomplished. Here lies the reason for the emphasis laid on the necessity for building pure, refined physical vehicles. The more refined and rarefied the form, the better a receiver of prana will it be, and the less will be the resistance found to the uprising of Kundalini at the appointed time. Coarse matter and crude immature bodies are a menace to the occultist, and no true seer will be found with a body of gross quality." In this sense, coarseness leads to resistance which leads to disruption instead of freedom.

The threefold purpose of the etheric body (and its higher (planetary and solar) correspondence) is functional (apprehension of prana), organic (distribution of prana), and static (the web as ring-pass-not, separating the physical and the astral). "Bodily health is wrapped up in the right reception of prana, and one of the basic changes that must be made in the life of the human animal will be in the ordinary conditions of living."

Functional disorders of the etheric body include (1) "inability to tap pranic currents," which results in reduced vitality, and (2) "over-ability to tap pranic currents," where the centers are overdeveloped and prana is processed too rapidly to be properly assimilated, which results in reduced vitality (and a lack of resilience in the etheric body).

Ideation

Ideation is the capacity for (the act of) forming or entertaining ideas. In the philosophy (theosophical) terminology, an idea is an abstract mental entity (pattern) (standard) (ideal) (plan) (design) that induces or otherwise stimulates some concrete mental response (thought-form). In this higher sense, a formulated thought, opinion, or concrete mental image is not an idea but is merely “what exists in the mind as a representation or as a formulation.”

In this (higher) sense, ideation is the purview of the soul and (primarily) the higher lives (e.g., logoi) who (which) formulate the evolutionary plan (on (their own) relatively high levels) or represent those plans (on (their own) somewhat lower levels), such (proper) formulation and representation being an abstract exercise of the will (in the higher sense) and the highest faculties. Ideas (at that level) are (primarily) held at a point of occult tension, being sustained by higher resources to enable consequences to be induced (the plan to be made manifest by induction). In a sense, all of the manifested universe is (in reality) merely an idea, with what is actually manifested being the representation (illusion) (reflection) of that idea. For every (true) idea, there is a multiple causal chain of manifestation (representation), as life (consciousness) on each successively lower (more concrete) level responds to the (qualified) energy conveyed on its level. Each response is, in part, a translation to some more concrete level of representation, such that each unit of life (lifewave) participates in some manner or another.

For human beings, the response (to the plan (idea)) is largely a matter of induced representation on concrete mental and (for those less able to respond mentally (who are not integrated)) astral (emotional) levels. The human being need not be (and is generally not) conscious of the fact of his or her response, but (generally) embraces the response as if the idea or feeling were his own. In fact, the idea (in this lower sense) is the individual’s (largely unconscious) interpretation of the idea (in the higher sense). That interpretation is subject to all of the biases and qualifications of a person’s character, temperament, values, etc., and thus is, in a sense, a person’s (individual) response. Though each person’s response to an idea is different, often large numbers of people can and

will respond in more or less the same overall manner, according to their overall nature.

Because of the (relative) remoteness of the original idea (plan) and the large number of intermediate formulations and representations (translations) and because of (horizontal) divergence, the resulting thought-forms and feelings on human levels may not resemble the original in any way (except in the causal sense); however, since all things are interrelated, a feedback process allows integration (assimilation) of consequences and further adjustment (qualification) of the top-down process in order to bring about the intended results. This feedback is never specific, but simply qualitative.

At the levels of human mentation (and astral/etheric qualification and response/reaction) there are three basic processes: (1) direct response to some idea, induced with relatively good (clear) translation, (2) indirect response to some idea, induced with less effective translation (e.g., partially or with some distortion), and (3) conventional ideation (in the lower sense) of formulated thinking, generally in response to some internal or external (non-archetypal) stimulation. All three processes can result in the (unfortunate) formulation of opinions (attachments) and/or (more fortunately) ideas (in the lower sense) for consideration without (relative) attachment.

† Commentary No. 598

Meditation Linkage

Where two or more people meditate together and/or according to the same note (tone) (quality) (focus), there is a natural non-linear magnification (increase in intensity) in the effects (overall contribution), potentially much greater than a simple sum of individual contributions. For this reason, meditation programs that involve groups of spiritual students (and groups of groups) are preferred, particularly where a considerable clarity (quality of consciousness) can be achieved or maintained.

On the one hand, a small meditation group embracing a considerable quality (and some specialized esoteric work) is much more effective (much more easily focused) than a much larger group of mixed quality (i.e., it is much easier for the

(true) moderator to balance (integrate) the small, coherent group contribution than it is to integrate a large, less coherent group). On the other hand, a large group of people working together (even loosely) in meditation is much more effective for more generalized work (e.g., embracing humanity on more concrete levels where a diverse range of quality and character exist and where sympathetic channels can be utilized by virtue of the diverse, more concrete levels).

Where people of common spiritual interests (understanding) (quality) (objectives) meet together physically for meditation, the atmosphere of the meditation place can be cultivated and sustained for enhanced group meditation. The (true) moderator can then relatively easily balance the various contributions at all levels of concern. But even where such membership (in whole or in part) cannot meet together physically (or even temporally), a balance and integration can still be achieved (albeit less directly). The keys to success in meditation (in this case of geographical and/or temporal separation) are adherence to quality (i.e., embracing as much of the quality of the group as one can) and mental association (linkage) with the particular group and/or the particular form (objectives) of a given meditation.

This meditation linkage can be brought about by embracing the energy conveyed by a group's publications or correspondence (communication) and by directly (mentally) (verbally) associating a given (physically or temporally separated individual) meditation with the integrated group. This exercise can be as simple as merely sounding the name of the intended group (or some keyword(s) linked to the group) or visualizing the group's meditation room (hall) (environs) (provided such visualization has actual basis and is not merely imagined), or it can involve more complex (prescribed or realized) rituals in preparation for actual meditation. But in either case (simple or otherwise) meditation linkage can be attained relatively easily and the individual can thereby participate in the overall energy and work of the (intended) (associated) meditation (spiritual) (esoteric) group.

Adherence to the meditation format and schedule (timing) of group meditations is helpful and preferable but is not necessary. What is necessary is the basic association of one's own meditation with the intended group meditation. Since a proper (esoteric) (spiritual) group meditation environment is maintained

continuously (not merely continually), widely separated associates can participate in and contribute to that environment and work at any and every opportunity for meditation. As an individual meditation pattern of association with the (intended) group emerges, that consistency (in time, place, quality, and association) will further contribute to the ease and effectiveness of linking up (and participating) in group meditation.

† Commentary No. 599

Special Interest Groups

Special interest groups are groups of people associated by virtue of some particular common interest, who seek to (1) benefit by association, (2) promote the special interest that others might also benefit, and/or (3) influence legislation or government policy to further that special interest.

The particular interests being embraced, the overall character, quality, and temperament of the group, and the manner in which the group operates all influence and determine the extent to which the group has an overall net positive effect. Special interest groups which are organized merely to benefit some membership or constituency (not at the expense of or detriment to non-members) are relatively neutral (harmless) (except to the extent of attachment or degree of (mundane) absorption). Special interest groups which promote some cause may be relatively constructive or destructive (separative) depending on the extent to which (1) the cause is inherently for the good of all (or the presumed good of the few), (2) the “good of the cause” is sought to be imposed on others, and (3) the issue (cause) is polarized.

Minority interests are special interests. So too are majority interests. Only the interests of the whole are not special interests. For the values of the minority to be imposed on all is as much an injustice as the non-universal values of the majority to be imposed on all, the keys being imposition and non-universality. Of course in practical matters the majority will must (should) determine the rules, with reasonable consideration for all interests. Groups which work quietly (non-politically) and without imposition (or even active promotion) are generally the most effective in the longer term (which matters more than the

near term). This effectiveness is due primarily to the extent of non-polarization (and the relative overall quality).

For success (in this spiritual sense) the interests must be relatively broad (embracing all concerned), consistent with the evolutionary plan (not merely consistent with some perception of that evolutionary plan), and sought in a manner (and through means) that allows quality (energy) to be shared (not imposed) and avoids (active) polarization. Active polarization is not necessarily bad; indeed active polarization is frequently necessary (and karmically inevitable); but the spiritual student should rather work indirectly and inductively (qualitatively), rather than become embroiled in polarized issues (which involve separative or conflictive forces). There is (for now) a place for debate and polarization, but that is not (generally) the place of the spiritual student who should see both (or more) sides of every such polarized issue. No problem (conflict) can be solved on its own level; it is only when a more inclusive approach (on the next higher level) is embraced that such problems are resolved (and more often than not that requires a step forward in consciousness (e.g., compromise (moderation) (recognition of broader, more pertinent issues))). Where an issue is polarized (e.g., abortion), the student should normally see that both (or all) sides are right (wrong) to some extent (e.g., it is generally wrong to kill needlessly, but it is also generally wrong to impose (moral) (ethical) values on others).

The pursuit of (separative or conflictive) special interests should be avoided and tempered by some overall balance in which (spiritual) quality prevails. One need not avoid the relevant issues, just the active (promotional) (political) (separative) pursuit. Let those who are better suited in character, quality, temperament, and values play the more active roles, that the energies of the spiritual student might be more effectively applied.

The Etheric Body and Prana 4

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division C) continues with its consideration of disorders of the etheric body. In addition to functional disorders, there are organic and static disorders (human and (analogously) planetary). Organic disorders include “troubles due to congestion” and “destruction of tissue due to over-absorption of prana or its too rapid blending with latent physical fire.”

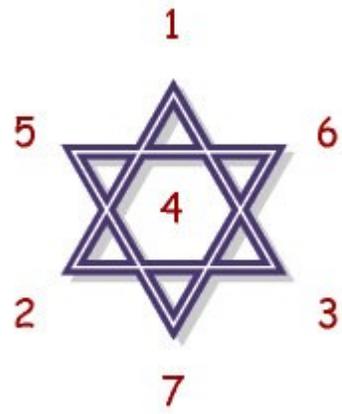
Examples include sun stroke and heat stroke. “Etheric congestion may lead to many forms of disease and to mental incompetence.” Destruction of (etheric) tissue may lead to insanity of many kinds, in some cases leaving the person vulnerable to astral forces, in some cases leading to the destruction of brain tissue, etc. Static disorders of the etheric body relate to its function of “providing a ring-pass-not from the purely physical to the astral.” “The ring-pass-not acts only as a hindrance to that which is of small attainment in evolution, but forms no barrier to the more progressed.”

Man, the indwelling thinker, (the planetary (solar) logos) passes during sleep (pralaya) (solar repose) (respectively) beyond “his ring-pass-not and functions elsewhere.” The lower ring-pass-not (the etheric web) is a means of protection and containment until the individual (soul) (logos) reaches that point in development that he can pass beyond the ring-pass-not at will. The normal passage (during sleep) is merely partial; likewise (mere) astral projection (without corresponding mental and intuitional capabilities) is a partial (limited) (biased) (not-fully-conscious) passage beyond the etheric web. Those who are emotionally or mentally polarized and not integrated, who are able to project astrally are only able to do so improperly where the etheric web is weakened or loosened (e.g., by emotional intensity). Those who are properly integrated and mentally or intuitionally polarized can pass consciously (and properly) beyond the web if properly trained and qualified as appropriate.

On systemic levels, the (cosmic) etheric plane includes the entire physical, astral, mental, and buddhic planes of human endeavor. The etheric web (on systemic levels) exists on the intuitional plane and above (the seven planes of

human existence being merely the cosmic physical plane). Approaching a ring-pass-not on some level depends on karma (the karmic cooperation of all lives concerned (i.e., having responsibility)); with proper approach (and consistent with the overall orchestration of the evolutionary plan), each entity (human) (planetary) (solar) fulfills the rites-of-passage (qualifications) and escapes (achieves liberation (graduation)) beyond the web (permanently) and on to another field (of conscious evolution). At that passage the web is destroyed (consumed) and the process is irreversible. Consequently, great care must be taken to avoid premature passage. Due to correspondence between (lesser and greater) human and higher lives, much concerning the field and conditions and factors for human evolution can be gleaned from etheric and higher processes on systemic levels (and vice versa).

The protective functions of the etheric body are (1) acting "as a separation or dividing web between the astral and the dense physical body," and (2) circulating "the inflowing vitality or pranic fluid" and performing the "work in three stages" ((1) receipt, circulation, distribution, animation, vitalization, protection from disease, etc., (2) the blending of prana "with the fire at the base of the spine" and the transference of heat (focus) from the lower centers to the higher, and (3) the blending of active radiatory matter (prana) with the fire latent in matter).



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