



The Upper Triad Material

Commentaries VII

Edited by Peter Hamilton

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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:

December 2008

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 VII 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

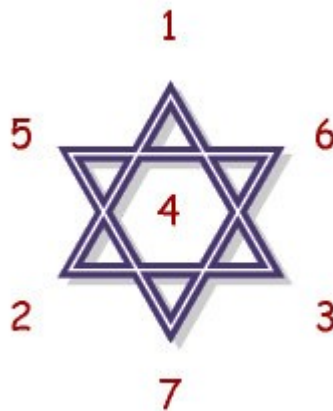
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There is a place, deep within the heart, where we touch God, and where God touches us, where human hearts achieve communion, with God, and with one another, there being no difference, no space between us.

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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Doctrine and Dogma

Doctrine is defined as “a principle or body of principles in a branch of knowledge or a system of belief” and implies that that principle or body of principles is accepted by some group of believers or adherents to a philosophy or school of thought. The quality of doctrine depends upon the quality of consciousness embraced in its formulation and presentation. Doctrine that depends on (intuitive) realization (soul impression) and spiritual maturity (wisdom) (sensibleness) is preferable to doctrine that depends largely on reasoning or emotional attachments. Similarly, doctrine that is relatively broad (inclusive) and relatively dynamic (able to be changed in light of further realization) is preferable to doctrine that is relatively narrow in its interpretation and rigid (inflexible) in its presentation.

In the positive sense, established doctrine (of spiritual quality) can provide valuable ideas or concepts for consideration, qualified by the (higher) consciousness of the formulators (who embrace the energy of the ideas concerned) and provided in the context of individual and group consideration. Conversely, in the negative sense, doctrine in the form of dogmatic assertions (imposed by presumed authorities) discourages the individual consideration (evaluation) necessary for intelligent acceptance and adherence (or rejection) (in whole or in part). Where doctrine is proclaimed or prescribed, rather than presented for consideration, then such doctrine constitutes dogma. Dogma implies established (prescribed) opinions without range (freedom) for open and honest consideration.

For the spiritual student in particular, it is important to honestly and openly consider and evaluate (intuitively if possible) every significant or relevant aspect of the esoteric (theosophical) (metaphysical) philosophy (and the entire field of relevant human knowledge), without arbitrary (imposed) constraints in thinking, believing, or adherence. This does not imply or require debate, advocacy, challenge, etc. (which are all inherently separative processes), but it does imply responsibility on the part of the student for the evaluation process and consequent adherence to what is actually accepted and understood.

The wise student has no opinions (for opinions imply attachments to beliefs and inherent inflexibility (inability to change, deepen, grow, etc.)) and looks to no authority save his or her own soul (external sources can still provide ideas for consideration, but the student should be careful not to accept external sources as authoritative as that tends to bias the process of consideration and tends to preclude soul qualification). The various esoteric and exoteric schools can still provide meaningful doctrine (for consideration), but the dogmatic assertions of the more typical religious (rather than spiritual) presentations are generally much less meaningful.

For the spiritual student (teacher) (facilitator), assertions (prescriptions) (proclamations) (arguments) should be avoided, with the principles (doctrine) presented conceptually (for consideration) and subject to refinement as understanding improves or as the proper context is realized. Rules (where needed) should be presented as guidelines rather than absolutes and although some measure of adherence may be necessary it should ever be with the understanding that such (necessary) adherence is preliminary and subject to consideration and (always tentative) conclusion. Blind acceptance and attachments (opinions) do not (easily) afford learning. The precepts (maxims) of the path (and the rules of the road) are intended as encouragement to afford learning.

† Commentary No. 602

Keyword Indexing

The body of esoteric (theosophical) (metaphysical) knowledge (principles) (doctrine) is quite vast, and although rich and diverse (and complex in practice) it is also relatively simply organized (in principle) along the lines of the seven rays (which naturally qualify everything in one way or another and of which everything can be definitely assigned or related (particularly and generally)) and simultaneously according to relatively few basic ideas or groups of ideas (concepts). Redundancy is widespread and affords different approaches (presentations) to given concepts (and demonstrates correlation or association). Each such approach should complement or supplement the basic concept and provide additional means of (paths for) understanding.

Language per se is quite a help and quite a hindrance to learning. Language facilitates the conveyance of information, particularly where intuitive faculties are not well-developed (in the sense of no alternative) and particularly where intuitive faculties are well-developed (in the sense that intuition complements language and provides (for) understanding (correlation)). The problem of language (in the context of a relatively large body of information) (for the concrete mind) is organization, association, and comprehension. Keyword indexing, properly implemented, is a means of correlation and association without need for (objectively) mentally embracing the entire body of information; i.e., it facilitates a narrowing of the (mental) focus within a field of information, and conveys symbolically (concisely) the philosophical content (essence) of the field, allowing the student to recognize patterns and paths through the material of the field.

Keyword indexing involves the assignment or derivation of a relatively small number of keywords for each unit of consideration. Those keywords then convey, by association, the content of each unit; those keywords also provide an additional (multiple) dimension to the body or field of information. Semantics are important in the sense that each keyword should represent some reasonably well-defined energy (concept), consistently, throughout the field in which each keyword (or keyword phrase) is used. Inconsistency (in this context) leads to ambiguities and confusion. The effectiveness of keyword indexing depends in part on the quality and consistency (validity) of the index per se, and in part on the manner and effectiveness of utilization of the index by the reader (spiritual student).

Those accustomed to linear thinking rather than matrix or symbolic thinking will prefer conventional indexing. But where keywords (and the keyword concept) are recognized and valued, then a keyword index becomes a valuable tool for any relatively large body (field) of knowledge (database), that cannot otherwise be objectively (wholly) embraced. Individual realizations (recognitions of keyword significance) can complement and personalize a given keyword index to make it more useful to particular views or interests. Potency in keyword indexing comes from a consistent hierarchy of keywords within keywords (linkage in several dimensions); but in the final analysis, it is the (relative) validity of keyword assignments, correlations, and associations that make a keyword index effective.

Keyword indexing (or some correspondence thereto) is ultimately necessary in comprehension and assimilation, of a field of information (the esoteric philosophy) and of the overall experience of each incarnation. All knowledge and experience must ultimately be reduced to symbolic form for abstraction and retention (while the bulk of (particular) knowledge and experience is released), on every respective level of manifestation.

† Commentary No. 603

The Sacred Word

In the highest (systemic) sense, the sacred word is the great word of power that the (solar) logos wields to invoke and evoke (produce and sustain) the entire solar manifestation, including the orchestration of numerous involutory and evolutionary lives and cycles. The (sacred) word is conceived and enunciated by the logos on its own level (i.e., corresponding to the first and second aspects rather than the third aspect (manifestation per se)), and is multidimensional, linking the seven planes of consciousness with the seven (sacred) planets, the seven rays of energy (qualification), and all of the various lives, lifewaves, kingdoms, and forms. The manifested solar system exists for as long as that sacred word is held in focus by the logos. As the sound is fulfilled, the lives are abstracted and the forms dissolve (and the solar system ceases to exist).

Since the (sacred) word is the basis of manifestation, it is spoken with full purpose, power, and will; and conveys the entire evolutionary qualification (intention) of the logos. Thus the sacred word is the linking factor in manifestation, joining matter (form), consciousness, and life (the three aspects or trinity). The sacred word is both septenary and triple, depending on perspective. The sacred word is also differentiable, meaning that it can be resolved into component words of more particular application or purpose. Each aspect (syllable) (dimension) of the sacred word is affected by its passage through (interaction with) its evoked consequences (manifestation) so that what is perceived of the (differentiated) sacred word on human levels is merely an echo or representation (shadow) of the underlying reality (i.e., the sacred word is real; the resulting (induced) manifestation is not real (relative to the sacred word and the logos on its level)).

The significance of the sacred word for human consideration is twofold; it serves as a key to understanding manifestation and the place of humanity within that scheme (and serves as a basis for much of the correlation or correspondences so key to understanding the esoteric philosophy) and it serves as a key to creative meditative (occult) work. Like the sacred word in the higher sense, the sacred word in its permutative (differentiated) (partial) form has both creative and destructive potential. The human being as a (positive) (active) worker with force (energy) (power) can utilize the (lesser) creative word (Aum) (Om) in meditation, specifically if the student has sufficient understanding, ability, and training; and generally for overall qualification and linkage.

The Aum is the human representation of the triple (creative) word (sound) that sustains manifestation and relates (essentially) to the (third) aspect of matter and manifestation per se. The Om is the human representation of the double (creative) word (sound) (of balance) that involves the soul and the (second) aspect of consciousness. While the third aspect (Aum) draws energy (life) into manifestation (the realm of glamour), the second aspect (Om) provides for release and liberation.

This second aspect can be utilized on all three levels of personality, for physical clarity and protection from discordant (environmental) factors; for emotional (astral) stability and refinement and awakening of the heart center; and for mental refinement (clarity), awakening of the head center, and linking (alignment) of mind and soul. The vibratory effect of the second aspect (Om) can be quite potent in facilitating group (occult) work (meditation), evoking currents of energy for particular and general purposes.

The Etheric Body and Prana 5

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division C) continues with its description of etheric processes and correspondences. The condition of the etheric body and the energy centers (chakras) reflects the overall condition in consciousness and place in evolution. The increasing clarity (purity) of the etheric form and the progressive dynamics of blending the various aspects of cosmic fire reflect the process (and progress) of the student (and logos) in evolution.

As the student progresses, the (increasingly more refined) personality (vibration) becomes more and more responsive to soul qualification. As the student progresses, the chakras “become wheels turning upon themselves, and from a purely rotary movement become fourth dimensional in action, and manifest as radiant whirling centers of living fire.” As the chakras are further developed (consequentially), they are progressively linked with fire which further works on the personality vehicles, accelerating the purification process. The manasic fire is intensified and ultimately (properly) blends the two fires of matter (one with the other) and then blends the resultant fire with that of itself. In so doing, the etheric web is (properly) destroyed and the esoteric student passes on to further work (service) in consciousness (i.e., upon the path of initiation).

The dangers of premature blending of the fires are considerable; if the body is not sufficiently pure and consciousness not sufficiently developed, then the individual “stands in danger of obsession, insanity, physical death, or of dire disease” (from literally “playing with fire”). Whenever such a straying occurs, the individual may lose up to several (or many) incarnations of experience (work) (progress), having to start anew from an earlier position (state of the personality (soul) matrix) and rebuild along more proper lines.

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire also deals with death and the etheric body. “The study of pralaya, or the withdrawal of the life from out of the etheric vehicle” for

human (planetary) (solar) processes is similar. From the perspective of the lower fires (the third aspect (of manifestation)), pralaya (death) (withdrawal from incarnation (manifestation)) is brought about by (1) "the cessation of desire" (fulfillment of the objectives of incarnation), (2) the dampening (slowing down and gradual cessation) of the cyclic rhythm as the triple motion (inertia, mobility, and rhythm) is fulfilled and "the adequate vibration is achieved," (3) "by the severing of the physical from the subtle body on the inner planes, through the shattering of the web," (4) by particular transmutation, and (5) "by the withdrawal of life." From the point of view of the soul, in each case, death (peace) (withdrawal) comes naturally, as the consequence of expired (resolved) (karmic) force (energy). Attachments (desire) can prolong the manifested period to some extent, but attachments tend to lead to less gentle forms of release.

The etheric body is properly considered the lowest vehicle of experience and expression, with the dense physical body being merely the material shell. As the life is withdrawn, the lesser (composite) lives (that organize and sustain the form) are released and the form is naturally dissolved (first the etheric, then the astral, and finally the (concrete) mental). This sequence holds for every level (human, planetary, solar, cosmic) and is the reverse of the procedural beginnings of manifestation (the first shall become last and the last shall become first). Pralaya is simply the time of peace (assimilation) between incarnations or cycles of manifestation.

† Commentary No. 605

Tri-Dimensional Feeling

Wundt's tri-dimensional theory discerns three dimensions in which feelings (emotional experience (expression)) may vary, namely between (1) pleasantness and unpleasantness, (2) quiescence and excitement, and (3) relaxation and tension. Although the emotional field (of the astral body) is rather complex and embraces more than these three dimensions, these do illustrate a simple range of emotional activity and expression.

The two polarities of pleasantness and unpleasantness constitute the hedonic tone of experience. Pleasantness taken to an extreme constitutes the absorption of pleasure as an end in itself. While pleasantness is inherently (generally)

attractive (pleasure being repulsive in the more subtle spiritual sense) and while unpleasantness is inherently (generally) repulsive (except in the sense that coarseness attracts coarseness), neither in extremis is spiritually conducive. More properly the extremes are (intense) (absorptive) pleasure and (intense) unpleasantness, with the (desired) balance being a (simple) pleasant disposition.

The two polarities of quiescence and excitement represent a dimension of emotional activity (passivity). More properly, the extremes of this dimension are excitement and depression, with (proper) quiescence being the desired balance. Both excitement and depression imply considerable loss of control (and considerable coarseness (loudness)). Emotional quiescence, if not merely coincidental (temporary), implies considerable balance and refinement (self-control) and positive quality of the astral (emotional) body. Similarly, the extremes of excitement (activity) and depression (passivity) are absorptive and therefore not spiritually conducive. The proper emotional disposition is quiescence, being neither active (entangled) nor passive, but reflective in the higher sense.

The two polarities of relaxation and tension represent a more subtle emotional dimension. Relaxed emotions in the non-quiescent extreme of uninhibited expression (release) and the extreme of emotional tension (repression) (oppressive inhibition or conditioning) are equally undesirable and neither are spiritually conducive. The desired balance is qualified (quiescent) relaxation (freedom from tension and freedom from independent expression). Thus the (spiritually) intended state of the emotional body is a combination of pleasantness, quiescence, and (qualified) relaxation. A more synthetic (more real) emotional quality or dimension is refinement, since none of the three Wundt dimensions can be achieved in balance (en rapport) without the overall elevation of the refined (clear, quiescent) emotions to the highest sub-planes of the astral. It is for this reason that alcoholic beverages and other drugs are verboten, since they either excite or depress the astral body and undermine the process of qualification and refinement (effectively preventing the integration of the personality and the alignment of the integrated personality with the soul). Continuous sobriety is therefore a prerequisite for entrance upon or readmittance to the path.

The astral (emotional) body (with its tri-dimensional (or more properly synthetic) range of emotional experience) should be cultivated as a quiescent and qualified (non-active) vehicle of consciousness. While the physical body, the mind, and the spiritual will (atma) are occultly positive (active) (properly under (occult) tension), the emotional body and the intuitional sheath are occultly negative (meaning intended to be without tension, being passive in the higher sense (only) and neither active nor passive in the lower sense).

† Commentary No. 606

Unity

There exists but one God, being simultaneously immanent and transcendent, within which is differentiated all lives and all forms. Every successive (higher) realization in human consciousness broadens and deepens the (inner and outer) sense of unity.

Unity is defined variously as singleness (the state of being one), the state (quality) (condition) of accord (concord), the union resulting from some unification (arrangement) of parts into a whole, and singleness (constancy) of purpose (continuity). The underlying unity of (all) life is all of this and more. The unity of life is a reality that transcends all perspectives to the contrary, differential existence notwithstanding. All lives and all forms exist (merely) within the context of differential (partial) perspective. From the higher (more real) perspective, no lives or forms exist or function without the underlying unity of life, consciousness, and material existence. As the human consciousness is refined and uplifted the sense of oneness begins to dominate the conscious and unconscious mind and all of the personality is qualified by that realization. The underlying unity exists whether or not it is realized or embraced, but the extent to which it (unity) is realized and embraced is the extent to which the wholeness and relatedness of the human being (and all other lives (forms)) can be properly manifested.

The process of unification (integration) (concordance) is actually a meaningful imitation or reflection of the underlying unity. All things (lives) (forms) are one; yet the act of conscious unification strengthens the qualification of the human

being by that underlying reality and brings the human being closer in consciousness to that higher life and improves the rapport with collateral consciousness. The sense of individuality is a false sense, for the individual exists only in the context of lesser reality (the illusion of separateness); in the higher reality, the individual is merely a differential extension (expression) of the one. The manifold is one. As the one in many achieves self-realization, the many is realized as one. The one can only be achieved (realized) as separative aspects are overcome or transformed (as the individual is refined, integrated, and aligned with higher consciousness) (as the ego is dissolved). Thus true unity does not result from unification. True unity is the precursor of differential existence; unification is a consequential process of realization of unity.

The one (individual) who is truly at peace has achieved conscious concordance (and continuity of consciousness beyond the one (self) to the one (all)). That continuity exists in all dimensions (as dimensionality is integrated (in perspective), the one is revealed). The five principal (obvious) dimensions are macroscopic or macrocosmic, collateral, microscopic, temporal, and spectral. No matter the extent of macroscopic or microscopic embrace, all is realized to be an integrated, wholly interdependent whole. No matter the extent of temporal or spectral embrace, the same is true. God (the one) does not exist here or there, then or now, but here and there (and everywhere), then and now (and every-when), simultaneously. One must become unattached to all partial perspectives in order to be free to realize (the) truth.

The collateral perspective (dimension) is (with the temporal dimension) the more difficult for the mind to embrace, but with perseverance the mind can let go of itself and simultaneously project (broaden) itself to embrace all collateral lives and forms, realizing that all such collateral energies are equally expressive of the one, and that the one lives through all.

Zeno's Arrow

Zeno's arrow is an argument to show the impossibility of motion. Attributed to the Greek philosopher Zeno was the assumption of discreteness in space and time. Given that assumption it follows that a flying arrow rests. Conversely if one assumes a spatial and temporal continuum, the flying arrow rests not, except in the reference frame of the arrow itself, in which case (from that self-centered point of view) motion is indeed impossible, since there is always a reference frame (attached to the object) (perspective) in which the associated object is at rest (i.e., in the reference frame of the flying arrow the arrow is at rest and the surroundings are "moving" (changing position relative to the arrow)). Thus it doesn't really matter if space and time are discrete or continuous (at least in this sense).

Motion is defined as the action or process of changing position. Since position is relative and only relative, motion is also a relative process (phenomenon) and depends entirely on perspective (point of view) (reference frame). Motion is also defined as the passage of a body or object from one place to another, but in this sense place (position) is still relative (and thus so is motion). This does not mean that one (an object) cannot change position, but it does mean that one (an object) can only change position relative to some external reference frame, that all sense of place (position) (motion) is merely relative. Being merely relative does not however convey or preclude significance, since significance is also relative. These arguments presume that absolute position is not conveyed to any aspect (life, consciousness, form) of (in) manifestation, but is reserved for the unmanifest. This is an interesting paradox, since the unmanifest has no external and therefore cannot be attributed any relativity.

Since no absolutes exist or are conveyed to the manifested universe, motion (in any absolute sense) is indeed not possible. A sense of motion is however quite common, as is a sense (perspective) of place or position (and change). One should therefore ever remember that all place (position) (motion) (change) is only relative and although progress (evolution) is nonetheless a noble goal (undertaking), one can never really properly measure such extent from any personal point of view. One can only properly measure such movement from the

impersonal (higher) reference frame in which spatial and temporal factors (the karmic manifold) are integrated over (and therefore dissolved). Perspective is necessarily differential in horizontal aspect (nature) and hierarchical in vertical aspect (nature).

Corollaries of Zeno's arrow include "a thrown stone never falls" (Newton's law of inertia) and "all objects are always in motion" (i.e., there is always (at least within manifestation) a reference frame in which some given object exhibits motion relative to that reference frame). Aside from the implications for Zen (Zeno), the impossibility of (necessity for) motion serves as a reminder of extensive (pervasive) relativity and serves to undermine one's preoccupation with self-centered (inertial) reference frames. As a useful exercise, one should be able to project the focus of consciousness to virtually any impersonal (external) (internal) reference frame, however absurd it may appear to be (appearance is more often than not deceiving).

This discourse begs the question of Zeno's original assumption of discreteness (which does really matter in another sense), since space and time constitute a rather elaborate illusion. The dilemma is solved (evaded) by integration (Zeno's paradox).

† Commentary No. 608

Kundalini and the Spine

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division D) addresses the subject of Kundalini in the context of the internal fires. Kundalini is the serpent power (mystic fire) (coiled (potential) power), or the "static form of the creative energy." The arousing (evocation) of Kundalini is a relatively dangerous endeavor, particularly for the unenlightened wherein the coarseness (and lack of balance) of the personality turns the force of Kundalini to destructive channels (i.e., raw power is inherently destructive, and unless all of the preliminary (spiritual) work (refinement) has been accomplished, the student will lack sufficient wisdom (understanding) (ability) for self-control (balance) (purity) and suffer physical (etheric) (astral) damage upon such evocation).

The subject of Kundalini (properly) concerns “the etheric channel (the etheric counterpart of the spine, not the physical spine per se), the fire that passes up that channel, the conjunction of that fire with the radiating energizing fire of the physical body at the point between the shoulder blades, their united ascension into the head, and their blending eventually with the manasic fire which energizes the three head centers.” The three head centers (one associated with the pineal gland, one associated with the pituitary body, and the alta major center) constitute an energized triangle. “The fire energizing the triangle in the head is the higher correspondence to the triangle of prana, midway in the (etheric) body, and its lower reflection at the base of the spine.” The triangle of prana links the center between the shoulders, the center above the diaphragm, and the center associated with the spleen. At the base of the spine are the three lower centers (also a triangle).

The natural (uplifting) evocation of Kundalini is properly a consequence and not a method or means or objective in itself. It (naturally) has to do with refinement, evolution of consciousness, and a progressive blending of the three fires, all of which occurs more or less unconsciously. “The junction of the two fires of matter is the cause of the rude health that the clean-living, high-thinking man should normally enjoy.” The proper (safe, constructive) (progressive) passage of Kundalini occurs (noiselessly) as the centers are (naturally, consequentially) aligned and the various centers (triangles) (fires) become increasingly synthetic. “When the fires of matter have passed (united) still further along the etheric spinal channel they contact the fire of manas as it radiates from the throat center” (elevating and transforming the preliminary manasic triangle (throat center, pineal gland, pituitary body) into the more synthetic manasic triangle (where the throat center is replaced by the alta major center). This transformation thus links (synthetically) all three (associated) triangles and allows a significant vivification and strengthening of the manifestation of the higher nature.

“The higher centers then form a field of attraction for the down-flow of the third (electric) (spiritual) fire.” This blending of the fires completes the relative perfection of the human personality and the beginning of the path of (proper) (true) initiation. In all of this, the purity (clarity) (refinement) of matter (the bodies) and consciousness is essential.

The fire of Kundalini is among other things a cleansing fire, quite destructive wherever impeded by coarseness. Where the vision is forward and upward these concerns are safely (and unconsciously) dealt with, but he who plays with (these) fires shall be consumed (and destroyed) in some manner or another, effectively preventing further evolution until the lesser cycles (incarnations) have been relived and the learning is complete (to that point).

† Commentary No. 609

Recursive Experience 1

Every intended lesson (for any human being and for humanity as a whole) is a precursive force that results in recursive experience until eventually that force is resolved (fulfilled) in the assimilation of that experience (lesson). The primary or precursive force is imbedded in the teleological (evolutionary) framework for life and consciousness. The secondary or recursive (induced, recurring, consequential) forces are directly related to the primary, yet fully imbedded in the karmic manifold of action and consequence.

All significant (non-incidental) experience is thus both karmic and recursive, and generally requires many cycles of application (manifestation) (affordance) (insistence) to insure assimilation (fulfillment). Although particular experience is recurring, it is not redundant (as redundancy implies needlessness, while recursion implies needfulness). If it appears to be redundant, that implies either a more subtle dimension to the intended lesson or lack of true embrace (assimilation). It is not enough to merely recognize a lesson (intellectually); in fact such recognition may not even be necessary; but fulfillment does require true assimilation, which means the lesson is so embraced that a change or adjustment in consciousness (realization) (conscious or otherwise) results. That change (growth) must be enduring, not merely transient (albeit ever subject to further growth and adjustment). Consequently, every intended lesson must be assimilated, retained, and periodically reinforced (in accordance with its nature and relationships to subsequent growth in (depth, breadth, and quality of) consciousness.

In the case of individual experience, recursion is necessary in order to overcome the natural inertia (resistance to learning) and absorption (attachments) based upon material existence. The physical, emotional, and (lower) mental components of the human form (personality) are all material (formed predominantly by energy in its expression as matter rather than energy in its expression as spirit). Consequently, the material components of the human personality resist progressive motion (learning) and naturally form attachments (and have a strong preference for (physical, emotional, mental) mundane (personal) (material) absorption (depending on the level of polarization of consciousness, respectively)). Thus in order to learn a particular lesson (necessary for some qualification or growth in consciousness), a person will generally need to experience the forces (circumstances) (situation) associated with that lesson many times (or with considerable intensity) before the lesson is actually registered in consciousness.

The actual circumstances of a particular (recurring) lesson may vary considerably (in part because no particular lesson is faced independently of other experience (karma); in part because variety of circumstances are usually needed to overcome the particularities of inertia), but the underlying forces of a given lesson remain essentially unchanged because they constitute and represent an unfulfilled consequence of a single cause (the higher analogy of the intended lesson). Thus a person may face the same circumstances or different circumstances, over and over again (within a particular incarnation or within several or many successive incarnations), until the lesson is finally (fully) learned (and assimilated in consciousness).

That learning need not be conscious, for it is the assimilation of experience that truly matters, not whether or not the person is fully conscious (unless the particular lesson so requires), but the extent of consciousness and awareness certainly does make a difference in the learning process.

Recursive Experience 2

In general, as a person evolves in consciousness and is repolarized in consciousness on successively higher levels, learning per se becomes easier with respect to the natural (material) inertia (and more difficult in the sense that lessons become more and more subtle). Thus, in general, an intuitively (mentally) (emotionally) polarized person has a greater capacity (ability) for learning than a mentally (emotionally) (physically) polarized person (respectively), and the extent of recursiveness is generally less for persons of higher polarization (consciousness) (exceptions are due to particular attachments, which constitute greater (particular) resistance). Having (higher) conscious awareness is a great boon to learning and assimilation. If a lesson can be fully embraced (consciously) (honestly and openly) (with minimal bias or attachments), reinforcement may not be (as) necessary.

In the larger case (of human evolution (as a lifewave)), individual experience contributes to the whole as well as collective experience. Thus tremendous variabilities in the particulars of experience exist throughout the depth and breadth of experience for the human race as a whole. Diversity of experience within humanity (and to a lesser extent for an individual) is simply insurance toward the eventual (incremental) assimilation of experience and the overall evolution of human consciousness.

For humanity as a whole and for each individual (soul) within humanity, recursive experience is not merely recurring or repetitious; it is, rather, a matter of reinforcement and convergence. Each lesson is generally multidimensional (i.e., having a number of aspects, dimensions, or implications). With some variability in circumstances, the whole of a lesson is gradually and eventually afforded. The basic content is repeated nonetheless, but with each affordance comes an opportunity to realize the lesson in a different manner or aspect. This variability also helps to overcome the inherent inertia (selective blindness). Convergence may be afforded as the various aspects are realized and related (in the case of relatively subtle experience) or as the intensity and directness of the experience is increased in order to overcome more concerted resistance and to bring about the needed fulfillment.

Recursive experience implies considerable qualification based upon wisdom, in the sense that each recursive cycle is modified by the results of the previous affordance and subsequent (intervening) experience. In this sense, recursion (karma) is quite dynamic in bringing about fulfillment (closure) (resolution) (and release of the recursive (precursive) forces).

If a particular approach does not register successfully or appropriately in consciousness, then another (somewhat different or more intense) approach will generally result. Recursive experience is linked also to recapitulation (progressive periodic reinforcement) and conscience (the accumulated assimilated experience residing in the personality matrix as reflection (indication) of the accumulated wisdom of the soul (the actual unit of evolution (consciousness) (of which the personality is merely an instrument of experience and (eventually) expression))). Since the personality must be progressively reconstituted (and recapitulated) in each incarnation, recursive experience serves as refreshing reinforcement. Each incarnation poses new dangers of absorption and distraction (attachment), with an underlying balance of recursive forces to impel and encourage the individual (and humanity) onward and upward (as absorption and attachments are progressively (and repeatedly) overcome).

† Commentary No. 611

Polarization and Consciousness 3

The evolutionary force which impels the successive repolarization (re-stabilization) of human consciousness (from physical to emotional to mental to intuitive polarization (stabilization) of consciousness (and beyond)) is bipolar in the sense that it is a dual force, each aspect of which oscillates (progressively) in a complementary manner with respect to the other aspect, the sum of the two forces in manifestation being relatively constant. One force (aspect) dominates during the stage or cycle of physical polarization (for each person and for humanity as a whole) and again during the stage of mental polarization (and again after the stage of intuitive polarization), while the other force (aspect) dominates during the stage of emotional polarization and again during the stage or cycle of intuitive polarization (and so on).

When the first (occult) (head-centered) force is ascending (descending) (in this context of polarization of consciousness), the second (mystical) (heart-centered) force is descending (ascending) (respectively) in intensity (manifestation). Major crises in consciousness (repolarization) occur when both aspects of this evolutionary force are in substantial manifestation at the same time (albeit with neither actually dominating). The human consciousness is (relatively) stable during the periods of polarization (and (relatively) unstable during the (crisis) periods of repolarization). The bulk of humanity (and humanity as a whole) are emotionally polarized, with some (relatively few) being mentally polarized (and some (very few) being intuitively polarized), and with increasing numbers of people experiencing the crisis of repolarization from emotional to mental polarization.

This evolutionary (bipolar) force is qualified by the evolutionary plan and specifically for each incarnation by the soul (which (together with the general (karmic) qualification) determines the balance of forces acting upon and within the (particular (individual) (group)) consciousness). In (current) practice, the key to polarization of consciousness is the qualified mind, and in particular, its strength and quality (development), balance relative to the emotions, and balance relative to the soul.

In principle, the key to polarization of consciousness and consciousness relative to the whole is the relationship of the (bipolar) evolutionary force to the seven planes of consciousness, the seven rays, and the seven streams of life. All of evolution can be viewed as the internal dynamics of manifestation, where a single (underlying) force is manifested in many (complementary) ways, each with respect to and with qualified regard to the underlying purpose. Thus while in practice the seven planes (etc.) may be viewed as relatively independent, in principle (actuality), the underlying evolutionary force (and its induced fabric) provides fundamental relationships which mask (indicate) the unified force of manifestation (i.e., the seven planes are the result of a single underlying force (qualification) as are the seven rays and the seven streams of life). The differential and integral perspectives are both valid, but the integral perspective is more fundamental (the seven are three and the three are one).

Thus all septenary (triple) (dual) forces are merely convenient. The one is all, and each contributes to the one. However, the mind must eventually embrace both perspectives at once, the wholeness of inclusive (integrated) vision (realization) and the diversity and relationships and details (structure) of manifestation. Only then can the mind (and soul) balance the requisite forces and achieve self-mastery.

† Commentary No. 612

Physical and Astral Motion 1

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division E) addresses the subject of motion on the physical and astral planes (in the context of the internal fires). All activity is ultimately a consequence of one or another of the three aspects (logoi) of the trinity (Shiva-Vishnu-Brahma) (Father-Son-Holy Spirit) in its highest sense (from which all lesser sense (manifestation) is directly or indirectly (analogously) derived). Each of the three aspects has a goal, a function, and a mode of activity.

The third logos (ray) (the fire of matter) is characterized by active intelligence. The goal of the third logos (Brahma) is “the perfect blending of spirit and matter.” Its function is “the manipulation of prakriti, or matter, so as to make it fit, or equal to, the demands and needs of the spirit.” Its mode of activity is “rotary, or, by the revolution of matter, to increase activity and thereby make the material more pliable.” The third logos is “primarily activity and intelligence with the aim of adaptability,” working under the law of economy (adaptation in time and space). It is the third logos who governs the emergence and activation of matter, inducing within matter the basic rotary motion (movement) that affords the differentiation of matter and its seven-fold activity within the entire (systemic) ring-pass-not.

The second logos (ray) (solar fire or the fire of consciousness) is characterized by love-wisdom. The goal of the second logos (Vishnu) is “consciousness, to be achieved in cooperation with the third logos.” Its function is “the building of forms to be his instruments of experience.” Its mode of activity (action) is “cyclic and spiral, the revolution of the wheel of existence in ordered cycles for a

specific purpose, and the progression of these spheres of matter around a fixed center, within the solar periphery.”

The second logos is primarily love (wisdom), working under the law of attraction (dynamic interaction). It is the second logos who adds spiral cyclic motion to the basic rotary motion of matter (i.e., who produces (induces) consciousness within matter). By these means (spiral periodic movement and circulation) are forms produced from matter and consciousness developed on the five planes of human experience (i.e., on the physical, emotional (astral), and mental (manasic) levels of the personality (lower triad) and the atma-buddhi-manas of the soul (upper triad)). While Brahma governs (predominates (qualifies)) the involutory activities, Vishnu governs the evolutionary path (activity subsequent to individualization or inducement of self-consciousness). The point (crisis) of individualization marks the balance (blending) of the ascending second aspect with the descending third (first) aspect as the (bipolar) force of evolution begins its second major phase or cycle.

The first logos (ray) (electric fire or the fire of spirit) is characterized by the will-to-live (purpose). The goal of the first logos (Shiva) is “synthesis of the spirits who are gaining consciousness through manifestation, and who, by means of experience in matter, are gaining in quality.” Its function is “by means of will, to hold them in manifestation for the desired period, and later to abstract them, and blend them again with their spiritual source.” Its mode of action is “a driving forward” or the evolutionary will that “drives spirit onward through matter until it eventually emerges from matter.” The first logos is primarily will (power) (purpose), working under the law of synthesis (which includes abstraction and destruction (liberation)). Through the will-to-live, the first logos is the creator and ultimately the arbiter (architect) of the conscious liberation of life and consciousness.

Electricity and Magnetism

In the context of consciousness and the realm of human activity upon the physical, emotional, and mental planes, electricity and magnetism are related to occultism and mysticism (not necessarily respectively) and (indirectly) to polarization of consciousness.

Although electrical and magnetic phenomena (properties) can be considered separately (for convenience), they are more properly considered together, for electricity and magnetism are two aspects of electromagnetic phenomena and those two aspects are closely related and properly inseparable. In a practical application however, one or the other may predominate. In fact, in most applications of one, the other will be induced or evoked to some extent.

In general, electricity is a manifestation (in consciousness) of the odd-numbered or occult rays (first, third, fifth, and seventh) and correlates with the odd-numbered planes of consciousness (physical, mental, etc.) so that (1) physical and mental experience and activity, (2) occult or head-centered activity on whatever plane of consciousness, (3) people (personalities) that are physically or mentally polarized, and (4) men (or male expression) tend to be more electrical than magnetic. Similarly, in general, magnetism is a manifestation (in consciousness) of the even-numbered or mystical rays (second, fourth, and sixth) and correlates with the even-numbered planes of consciousness (emotional, intuitional, etc.), so that (1) emotional and intuitional experience and activity, (2) mystical or heart-centered activity on whatever plane of consciousness, (3) people (personalities) that are emotionally or intuitively polarized, and (4) women (or female expression) tend to be more magnetic than electrical. The actual situation depends on the relative balance of all of these aspects (e.g., a female personality working with second ray qualification may be mentally-polarized and working along occult lines).

Also, in general, electrical expression tends to be more direct, more active, more objective, and relatively narrowly focused, while magnetic expression tends to be more indirect, more passive, more subjective, and relatively broadly focused. Thus electrical (occult) applications are more suitable for specific adjustments

(energy manipulation) of limited duration (and greater intensity) while magnetic (mystical) applications are more suitable for more general qualification (energy manipulation) of extended duration (and lesser intensity). While an emotionally polarized person and the mystic will generally have a preponderance of magnetism, and while a mentally polarized person and the occultist will generally have a preponderance of electricity, this does not imply that the mystic is emotionally polarized or that the occultist is mentally polarized. The proper (true) mystic and the proper (true) occultist are both mentally polarized, since emotionally polarized people lack the stability and integrated personality required of either path to be (properly) effective, and since a prerequisite for intuitional polarization is a proper balance between the head nature and the heart nature so that all who are intuitively polarized are relatively equally adept (and balanced) with respect to electrical (occult) and magnetic (mystical) expression.

Thus while the integration of the personality can be achieved on either (mystical or occult) path of approach, the proper alignment of the integrated personality with the soul can only be achieved where the properly developed (cultivated) (refined) electrical and magnetic nature is balanced. Further advancement (service) occurs more rapidly (effectively) because electricity and magnetism are so complementary (yet do not represent a pair-of-opposites).

† Commentary No. 614

Physical Polarization

A physically polarized person (or lifeform) is one whose consciousness is stabilized (polarized) on one or another of the physical or etheric sub-planes of consciousness and whose experience and expression is predominantly physical. Physically polarized people may experience a range of consciousness into the emotional or astral plane, but because of the physical predomination, the emotional experience will be relatively dull and there will be little if any mental activity. A person who is physically polarized is predominately reactive, physically and instinctually. Any feelings are normally heavily biased (and subdued) by the physical awareness (inertia) (in such a case).

Physically polarized consciousness is sometimes referred to as Lemurian because the Lemurian root-race was primarily physically polarized. However, the Lemurian experience was more properly the crisis of transference of consciousness from the physical plane to the emotional plane (at least for the pioneers of the race), and therefore the Lemurian experience was largely a matter of developing the capabilities of physical and emotional experience and expression. Thus the root-races prior to the Lemurian experience (i.e., the Polarian and Hyperborean root-races) were more properly physically polarized. Of course, someone who is physically polarized is not (really) self-conscious, for there is little if any conscious awareness. Physical polarization implies the greatest (deepest) absorption in matter (material existence) and consequently the greatest (longest) timescales for experience (development) (i.e., due to the tremendous inertia of physical matter).

Physical polarization (human or otherwise) is characterized by very limited sensitivities, very limited range of experience or expression, and an almost overwhelming and impenetrable (wholly unconscious) attachment to (identification with) physical matter. If a person dwells on physical experience and activity he or she is probably emotionally polarized along relative coarse lines, so that it is the "feelings" of physical experience that matter. A physically polarized person has (virtually) no feelings per se, but simply dwells dreamlessly within physical consciousness. There are very few (if any) physically polarized people today, with the great bulk of humanity being emotionally polarized.

Experience on physical levels is markedly different for one who is physically polarized compared to one who is emotionally polarized (and similarly different for one who is emotionally polarized compared to one who is mentally polarized). For the physically polarized there is virtually no sensation in physical experience; for the emotionally polarized there are substantial sensations (absorption); for the mentally polarized there is relative detachment. Thus one (who is mentally polarized) who (merely) projects the consciousness upon (onto) physical and etheric levels can learn a great deal by observation and perform considerable (occult) work by manipulating physical and etheric matter; one who is emotionally absorbed in physical experience is merely dreaming (by comparison); and one who is truly physically polarized has no real activity at all.

The gap in consciousness between the soul and its reflection is greatest for the physically polarized person, quite considerable for the emotionally polarized person, and less considerable for the mentally polarized. In short, physically polarized experience is either strictly involutory (passive) or a matter of indirect assimilation (by the soul) in adapting to the physical world, learning to deal (indirectly) with physical forces (i.e., within the physical form), and overcoming (indirectly) the inertia of physical matter.

† Commentary No. 615

Parent Stars

All of the units of life (consciousness) within a solar system are the children of the solar logos (of which the solar system is the lower manifestation) in the sense that the substance of every form, soul, and monad within the solar system is the substance of the (form of the) solar logos, in the sense that the life and consciousness of every lifeform within the system is induced by and a reflection or qualification of the solar logos, and in the sense that each evolutionary unit has the potential to evolve into a solar logos (or some comparable lifeform).

Thus the three aspects of the human being (personality (form), soul (consciousness), and monad (spirit)) are all comprised or composed of the substance of the solar logos (all within the cosmic physical plane) and are subject to the (primary) qualification of the solar logos (directly, through the planetary logos, and through the human lifewave). The solar logos is the parent (protector) (preserver) of all of its reflected or induced lives (consciousness) (manifestation), in the sense of bringing forth offspring (from and within itself) and in the sense of providing (being) the material (substance) or source from which all lives (within the solar system) are derived or formed.

However, the solar logos (as all solar logoi) radiates energy beyond the solar ring-pass-not in sharing (qualification) and communication (interaction) (relation) with the entire field of solar logoi (and particularly those to whom (which) it is particularly related). And all forces external to the solar logos are applied through (moderated by) the solar logos and form part of the solar qualification of all that exists or is manifested within the solar ring-pass-not.

Thus major and minor (incidental) relationships exist between all solar logoi within the field of cosmic manifestation (much like major and minor relationships exist between all human beings within the human lifewave (and more so (radiatively) as humans evolve toward self-realization)). On the cosmic level, a manifold of solar logoi exists; while on the solar level, a manifold of human monads exists. Each respective manifold is a monadic (energy) field; so that while each monad is formed of the substance of the field of manifestation, the field itself is modulated in the sense that patterns or waves of energy impression are induced within the field.

Since every level of manifestation is in some sense a reflection or indication of something higher, relationships exist between individual (human) monads and the various stars or solar logoi that fill (subsist within) the cosmic manifold. The same pattern or wave that is induced within the cosmic manifold of solar logoi (each logos contributing some qualification) is transmitted through each solar logos, qualified particularly by that logos, and reflected in (induced within) the monadic field. In this sense, the (local) solar logos is the primary parental source for every human monad, while the various stars within the cosmic manifold are secondary parental sources (by induction and correspondence) for the monadic manifold.

Thus, incidentally (without particular or practical significance) each particular human being has a particular parent star, as the outer field of manifestation (beyond the solar lens) is reflected into and through the inner field of manifestation (within the solar ring-pass-not). The same principle is applied to the human being (monad) in reflecting and inducing the field of life of humanity into the field of composite lives which constitute the life, consciousness, and form of the human being. All of humanity are nonetheless (primarily) born of one star, the solar logos of our local system.

Physical and Astral Motion 2

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division E) continues with its consideration of motion on the physical and astral planes. "Every sphere in the body macrocosmic rotates." The effects of this rotary motion are separation (the repulsive effect), momentum (the interior effect), friction (the environal or encircling effect), and absorption (the receptive or attractive effect), at every level and dimension of (substantial) manifestation (including logoi, planes, rays, souls, atoms, etc.).

Separation is the process of differentiation and diversification, produced by the rotary motion of the various spheres, in particular the solar system (cosmic atom) (manifestation of the solar logos), the seven planes of consciousness (being "seven vast spheres rotating latitudinally within the solar periphery"), and the seven rays (being (locally) seven vast spheres rotating longitudinally within the solar periphery. The seven planes (rotating from east to west) and the seven rays (rotating from north to south) complement each other and form a "vast interlacing network" and "the totality of the solar system" in spheroidal form. The seven planes and the seven rays are the two principal dimensions of solar manifestation (and together with the solar sphere form the three dimensions of cosmic manifestation). Each plane (and each ray (color)) is a "vast sphere of matter, actuated by latent heat and progressing or rotating in one particular direction." The ray spheres rotate "in a direction opposite to that of the planes" and "produce by their mutual interaction a radiatory effect upon each other." The consequence of these interactions is the third dimension or the "fire by friction" (material manifestation). "The dual revolutions of planes and spheres" produce the various quaternaries. The seven planes are atomic lives and each manifests as seven rotating sub-planes (spheres) (wheels).

Momentum is also produced by rotary motion. Momentum in turn produces the progressive measure of balance between the (law of) attraction of spirit and the (law of) repulsion or separation (repulsion) of matter. All of the various atomic lives are kept in place (sustained) (balanced one with respect to every other) by (angular) momentum. In the early stages of manifestation, matter (repulsion) dominates, but in the later stages the attractive power of spirit overcomes the

inertia (resistance) of matter and spirit begins to dominate (and the forms eventually dissolve).

The rotary motion also produces frictional effects on all other atomic forms, producing atomic vitality, atomic coherence, the "ability to function," "heat supplied to the composite form," and ultimately the "final combustion or disintegration." Friction actually produces heat on whatever level the frictional forces are active (and to some extent beyond).

Absorption is another consequence of rotary motion. Rotation produces a depression or vortex within the radiatory (manifestive) field of "all whirling spheres of atomic matter at whatever surface in the sphere corresponds to the point called in a planet the North Pole." Through that depression the atomic sphere draws within itself the external forces (radiation received from other atomic lives) which (passed internally) "tend to increase the latent heat, to produce added momentum, and to give specific quality according to the source from which the radiation comes." Thus mutual absorption implies "the dependence of one sphere upon another, and has its correspondence in the cycling of a ray through any plane sphere." Every atom is "receptive or negative where the inflowing force is concerned, and positive or radiatory where its own emanations are concerned."

† Commentary No. 617

The Three Departments 1

The spiritual hierarchy of the planet is organized in accordance with the three aspects of the trinity (the three major rays) and the seven rays. The three aspects correlate on planetary and solar (logoc) levels as well as throughout planetary expression. Within (as) the spiritual (planetary) hierarchy, the three aspects demonstrate as the three departments of (subjective) government, presided over by the Manu, the Bodhisattva, and the Mahachohan, respectively.

The first department (the Manu) is concerned with the evolution of the root-races, developing the various racial forms through which spirit (and consciousness) is progressively manifested. There is a Manu for each root-race,

and occasionally, where two root-races overlap in manifestation, the Manu of the emerging root-race will take precedence as that root-race begins to dominate the overall (human) racial balance (in consciousness). The Manu (through the first department) embodies the first ray (will) (purpose) (power) of the planetary logos as it relates (primarily) to humanity (and to the particular root-race for which he is responsible). The Manu (of the present fifth or Aryan root-race) is the prototype (embodied archetype) for the racial form and its characteristics. As the ideal or objective for the race, the Manu qualifies all racial forms (within the root-race) and guides their development and eventual synthesis.

Although the Manu is not concerned primarily with consciousness, he is concerned with consciousness as it relates to racial forms (and as those racial forms relate to consciousness). The form is ever an instrument of consciousness and as such needs to be cultivated for its response to consciousness and its ability to express consciousness. This is as true for human forms as well as all other forms within the planetary scheme, and the first department (aspect) (Manu) works directly and indirectly with form (matter) and its relationships to consciousness. Even where two root-races are being manifested at the same time (one emerging, one becoming more obscure), the first department is properly integrated with regard to all of humanity and all of (planetary) manifestation (form-wise). Thus the first department works closely with the deva lives in manipulating matter, and closely with karmic forces as they relate to the various (general and particular) forms.

Thus the first aspect (department) properly involves the design, building, and manipulation of forms in response to evolutionary needs (and karmic considerations) and their eventual destruction (dissolution) as those forms have fulfilled their purpose (and as new, more advanced or more suitable forms become available for the progressing consciousness). This work involves both long-term and short-term forms, manipulating the earth's crust, the raising and lowering of continents, etc., on one hand, and the gradual cultivation and manipulation of particular forms for particular species on the other hand. In a sense, the Manu (and the workers within the first department) manipulate matter and (composite, material) forms so that the law (evolutionary plan) (karma) can be properly worked out (manifested) (fulfilled).

The Manu (the first department) works closely with the Bodhisattva (the second department) with regard to consciousness and the Mahachohan (the third department) with regard to expression (civilization) (culture) (evolutionary environment) (e.g., the first ray aspect demonstrating through government). Together, these three (or four (in the case of substantial manifestation of overlapping root-races)) provide the leadership and guidance for the entire spiritual hierarchy and all of its work.

† Commentary No. 618

The Three Departments 2

While the Manu and the first department are primarily concerned with the first aspect (the first ray and its reflection, the seventh ray), the Bodhisattva and the second department are primarily concerned with the second aspect (consciousness) (the second ray, its reflection via the sixth ray, and their balance or moderation via the fourth ray). The Bodhisattva or world teacher (Lord Maitreya) (Christ) is responsible for guiding the development (induction), growth (expansion), and moderation (deepening) of consciousness.

The Bodhisattva is the leader of the entire spiritual hierarchy and is related (via the second ray) directly to the solar logos. The Bodhisattva embodies the ideal of consciousness (love and wisdom) and expresses the love (wisdom) (consideration of consciousness) of both the solar logos and the planetary logos. As such embodiment, the Bodhisattva qualifies all consciousness within the planetary scheme and provides religious (spiritual) (philosophical) ideas for consideration of consciousness. While the first department is concerned more with manipulation (of matter and form) than qualification per se, the second department depends almost entirely upon qualification of consciousness (insofar as the units of consciousness are concerned) (although considerable manipulation of (external) energies generally precedes such qualification).

The evolution of consciousness involves all of the seven rays and all aspects of manifested life. The Bodhisattva and the workers of the second department work with the forms provided and qualified by the Manu to encourage progress in learning (i.e., experience leading to assimilation of experience, leading to growth (development) (evolution) in consciousness). The spiritual path

(approach, probation, discipleship, initiation) is primarily qualified by and orchestrated by the second department (and via the seven ray ashrams). While the assimilation of experience is the domain of the second department, the provision for experience is more properly the domain of the third aspect.

The Mahachohan is the Lord of Civilization, who oversees the work of the third ray and the four rays of attribute (the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh rays). The Mahachohan (and the third department) is concerned with civilization, culture, and active intelligence (i.e., the realm of experience and expression). Working within the law (evolution) (karma) and with the forms provided and qualified by the Manu and the consciousness induced and qualified by the Bodhisattva, the Mahachohan manipulates (qualifies) the forces and energies of manifestation as they constitute the experiential field (civilization) and orchestrates the vast panorama of experience (opportunity) (relationships in manifestation) that allows and encourages the evolution of consciousness. Thus the Mahachohan and his staff are concerned primarily with the circumstances and panorama for experience of the objective or mundane world (with preeminent consideration for the underlying purpose (evolution) of life (experience) in the lower worlds).

Although responsibilities are clearly assigned (realized) among and between the three departments (and the seven ray ashrams), virtually every hierarchical activity is collaborative (if not merely cooperative) and involves consideration of ends and (proper) means and consequences (direct and otherwise). The spiritual hierarchy is not a bureaucracy; it is well-organized, well-integrated, properly coordinated, and highly effective. The three departments (and the seven ray ashrams) work very well together, for the common good and in fulfillment of the logoc and karmic intentions and considerations.

Emotional Polarization

An emotionally polarized person (or lifeform) is one whose consciousness is stabilized (polarized) on one or another of the astral (emotional) sub-planes of consciousness and whose experience and expression is predominantly emotional (astral). Emotionally polarized people are generally active physically and emotionally (and to some extent mentally), but being emotionally polarized generally means that physical and mental activity (experience) tends mainly to stimulate the emotions. Thus emotionally polarized people are generally reactive (rather than responsive) to experience on any level.

Emotionally polarized people generally have a wider, more dynamic range (fluctuation) of focus of consciousness and are therefore, generally, less stable and less coherent (less sensible) than those who are physically or mentally polarized. Emotionally polarized people are generally enslaved by their biases and glammers (being heavily biased by their emotional temperament (feelings and attachments (values))) and therefore tending to be much less objective than (properly) mentally polarized people (although most mentally polarized people are comparably limited by their opinions). Emotionally polarized people tend to be vulnerable to external forces and impressions. Consequently, emotionally polarized people are relatively easily manipulated by the unscrupulous (who themselves may be emotionally or mentally polarized). Even for those emotionally polarized people who have well developed minds, it is difficult (for them) to actually think for themselves, since their mental activity is generally driven (biased) by emotional experience (feelings).

Emotionally polarized people are not integrated (do not have integrated personalities) and therefore suffer several (or numerous) centers of competing consciousness (within the form or personality). Only a person who is at least mentally polarized has the strength, clarity, and stability of mind to enable personality integration. In order to achieve such a state of consciousness (mental polarization), the mind must be cultivated as the dominant center of personality consciousness; the emotions must be subdued and overcome (disciplined and stabilized) (refined and elevated as well, if within the context of the spiritual path); and the personality must achieve a considerable ability for

detachment (since all emotional attachments must be overcome) (i.e., a considerable measure of self-control and self-discipline is necessary).

The emotions (the astral body) naturally seek further emotional (astral) stimulation. For as long as a person entertains the emotions (allows the emotions to dominate the personality consciousness) (by emotional indulgence), such a person cannot become mentally polarized or (subsequently) integrate the personality or (subsequently) align the personality with the soul. Many lifetimes are generally required to develop the mind, and many more lifetimes are generally required to overcome the emotional nature and achieve the measure of self-discipline that leads to mental polarization.

While the vast majority of humanity are emotionally polarized, the principal objectives of the present humanity are to successfully pass through the crisis of consciousness implied by transference of polarization from emotional to mental levels. The pioneers of the (human) race are mentally and intuitively polarized and provide a means of encouragement (induction) for people (and humanity as a whole) to achieve mental polarization. But that crisis (transference) (repolarization) is a rather formidable undertaking, and much (if not all) of the world turmoil (subtle and otherwise) is an indication and manifestation of (the crisis of) an emotionally polarized humanity.

† Commentary No. 620

Physical and Astral Motion 3

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 1, Division E) continues with its consideration of (1) the qualities of rotary motion and (2) rotary motion and symbolism. The three characteristics or qualities of rotary motion are inertia, mobility, and rhythm. "Inertia is the result of lack of activity and the relative quiescence of the fires of matter" and characterizes matter at the beginning of any cycle of manifestation. Stimulation (external force) is required to overcome this inertia and initially that stimulation comes from the activity of form building, subsequently from interactions of atoms within forms and between forms, yet subsequently from the induced consciousness. As activity (rotation) proceeds, momentum is accumulated and additional dynamics are evoked.

Mobility results from (and contributes further to) the various interactions (of force (energy) between atoms (forms)). While “the inherent fires of matter produce rotary movement” and while “this rotation results in radiation,” radiation provides means for interaction and interplay (repulsion and attraction) (sharing of energy) (response to receipt of energy and re-radiation of (self-qualified) energy) on all (cosmic, systemic (solar), human, atomic, etc.) levels of material existence (activity). These interactions (induced under law) actually produce coherence of form and “persist for the length (duration) of their greater or lesser cycles until the third quality (rhythm) is brought into definite recognition.”

Rhythm is “the attainment of the point of perfect balance and of equilibrium” which produces a number of effects, including the timely “disintegration of form, the liberation of the essence which the form confines, the separations of spirit and matter, the ends of cycles, the production (evocation) of obscuration (the end of objectivity or manifestation), the re-absorption of the essence, the end of time and space, the unification of the three fires and the bringing about of spontaneous combustion, and the synthetic activity of matter in the three types of movement.” In other words, cyclic activity (progressive experience) ultimately results in the achievement of rhythm which then constitutes the means of liberation and withdrawal from manifestation.

“Every rotating sphere of matter can be pictured by using the same general cosmic symbols as are used for the portrayal of evolution.” The circle symbolizes the first stage, the beginning (phase) (epoch) of manifestation (on some level) viewed etherically (i.e., the ring-pass-not of undifferentiated matter, the solar system as body logic, the human body, a single cell, and the atom). The circle with a point in its center symbolizes the second stage, the “production of heat in the heart of matter, the point of fire, the movement of the first rotary activity,” etc. The circle divided in two symbolizes the third stage of “active rotation and the beginning of mobility” and “the subsequent extension of influence” along a line of force until the periphery is reached. The circle divided in four symbolizes the fourth stage and the “true circle of matter, the equal armed cross of the Holy Spirit” (active intelligent matter). “This shows the fourth dimensional quality of matter and the penetration of the fire in four directions, its threefold radiation being symbolized by the triangles formed by the fourfold cross.”

Finally, the (ancient) swastika symbolizes the fifth stage of “fire extending not only from the periphery to the center in four directions, but gradually circulating and radiating from and around the entire periphery.” “This signifies activity in every department of matter.”

† Commentary No. 621

Adherence and the Path 1

The primary basis of commitment to the spiritual path is the extent to which the soul is committed. In this sense there are three categories or cases (conditions), (1) where the soul is not responsive to the call of the path (and where the soul is therefore content to evolve (for the time being) gradually according to basic (evolutionary) karma), (2) where the soul is not yet committed but is drawn to the path (being somewhat responsive to the call), and (3) where the soul is (fully) committed to the spiritual path.

The secondary basis of commitment to the spiritual path is the extent to which the personality is consciously aware of the soul’s commitment and the extent to which the personality is responsive to or interested in (or committed to) the spiritual path. Where the personality is characterized by buddhi-manas (the (spiritually-illuminated) intuitive mind) (i.e., where the personality is fully and properly integrated, refined, and en rapport (to some extent consciously) with the overshadowing (indwelling) soul), then the soul and personality are (necessarily) both fully committed to the spiritual path and the mind (and the entire personality) is consciously subordinated to (cooperating with) (qualified by) the soul, and (in this case) the wisdom (quality) of the soul is manifested through buddhi-manas to the mind and the personality.

In such a case (where the soul and the mind are both fully committed), the spiritual path is the first and foremost consideration; everything else falls naturally into place (proper perspective); everything else is subordinated and secondary to the path and viewed primarily in the context of the path. This in no way implies neglect of family or other obligations (opportunities), but only that the various domestic and mundane commitments are viewed in the context of the path and reconciled with the foremost priority of the path (which is

quality (of consciousness) (and service)). Thus the (serious) spiritual student's family and other considerations are viewed as being within the scope of the student's relationship to the path (which is (at least eventually) necessarily all embracing). Such considerations are intelligently embraced (balanced) without significant distraction (from the main focus (the path)).

In such a case there is no question of adherence to the discipline of the path appropriate to the level and quality of consciousness, for the path (and associated discipline) is fully embraced (not merely adhered to), without doubt or reservation (the various subtleties of ego (glamour) and relative absorption are always to be contended, but the power of the soul is felt and the intensity of karmic balance such that a serious spiritual student cannot stray far or for long (for the committed student, karmic considerations are intensified)). In such a case (of cooperative and responsive commitment) the ways of the world (desire, experience, etc.) have no serious hold or sway for the personality, for the ways of the world (sense-gratification, self-indulgence, personality-centeredness, etc.) are seen as emptiness (enslavement) relative to the richness and freedom (potency) of buddhi-manas (soul alignment and direct qualification of the mind and personality by the soul).

It is only in the case of conscious cooperation of a fully committed mind (heart) (personality) that the light (love) (power) of the soul blazes forth into and through the personality (and into the outer life (manifestation) (service) of the spiritual student). Where the soul is committed but the mind (personality) is not, the soul merely calls for the mind to awaken and respond (and upon awakening, the mind then consciously recognizes and accepts the soul's commitment and makes its own responsive commitment (to the soul and the path)).

Adherence and the Path 2

Each of the three soul conditions (soul (1) unresponsiveness, (2) responsive to the call of the path, (3) committed to the spiritual path) can be considered (in turn) in relation to (relative) polarization of consciousness ((1) kama-manas, (2) manas, (3) buddhi-manas (not respectively)).

In the first case (the soul that is unresponsive (deaf) to the call of the path), the consciousness is gradually evolved and naturally progresses from physical to emotional to mental polarization. As the soul evolves (and therefore as its personality progresses in its ability to express consciousness), the soul is relatively better able to hear the call of the path and respond appropriately (the call is such that if it is heard, the soul responds). From another perspective, the evolutionary pressure increases as the soul evolves and therefore, eventually, the call is heard; however, some souls are inherently more responsive than others (and hear (and respond to) the call of the path relatively earlier than others). Ultimately, all souls hear and heed the call, but some will do so only in the very far future, as the lifewave (humanity) as a whole is completing the human stage. Unresponsive souls can cultivate (in the personality instrument) consciousness up to and including mental polarization (for unresponsive souls, mental polarization is limited to concrete mental experience and expression) (for a soul that is unresponsive to the (call of the) path is simply unable to build the bridge of consciousness between the (abstract mind of the) soul and the (concrete mind of the) personality (at least for the present sequence of evolutionary cycles)).

In the second case (the soul that is not yet committed but is approaching the path (heeding the call)) the evolutionary factors are quickened (tightened) (but not necessarily hastened) and the soul generally becomes committed to the path when its momentum reaches an appropriate level. The only real difference between the first and second cases is that in the second case the soul is simply increasingly responsive to the call (at whatever levels of achievement) while in the first case (and at the same levels of achievement) the soul continues to be unresponsive.

The two great initiations of the soul occur at the transition points between the three cases (i.e., when a soul passes the threshold of responsiveness to the path and when a soul makes the ultimate commitment to the spiritual path (when a soul is absorbed by the path)) (a third, comparable initiation (of a distinctly different order) occurs when the soul individualizes (where the personality becomes self-conscious)) (individualization can occur (in principle) during any of the three stages relative to the spiritual path) (which accounts for the case of extremely rapid evolution of some souls from the point of individualization).

Thus in the third case (where the soul is committed to the spiritual path (at whatever point in the evolutionary cycle)), the soul exerts considerable pressure upon its personality at whatever polarization of consciousness is achieved, culminating in the breakthrough of (continuity of) consciousness as the bridge of buddhi-manas is completed. Yet, as above, so below; so the mind (and personality) passes similarly from unresponsiveness to responsiveness to conscious commitment (but not coincidentally with the soul). The soul is merely a (higher) instrument of qualification, while the personality is an instrument of experience and expression (activity) (which implies that the personality undergoes rather dynamic (dramatic) crises relative to the (impersonal) (impassive) soul). The soul is without struggle; the personality struggles relatively considerably until it becomes more and more responsive to the soul.

† Commentary No. 623

Adherence and the Path 3

From the soul's perspective, progressive (increasing) adherence to the discipline (quality) (character) of the path is expected of the personality in accordance with the soul's commitment. If the soul is committed to the path, the personality is expected to be (become) responsive to the soul (and the path), as the soul applies increasing qualitative pressure (qualification) upon its personality. That pressure ultimately breaks the will (sense of independence) of the mind (personality) and the mind (heart) (personality) becomes a cooperative, subordinated, and responsive instrument.

If the soul is not committed, but is responding to the call of the path, the mind (heart) (personality) will be drawn (almost casually) to the spiritual path on whatever level and with whatever means are available (e.g., kama-manas or manas). If the soul is not responsive to the call of the path, the mind (heart) (personality) may or may not be drawn to the path (philosophy) (spirituality), but if it is drawn, the interest will be relatively self-centered (e.g., through glamour or self-interest (the appeal of power)), since an unresponsive soul is relatively (generally) unable to qualify the personality directly. In the case of a responsive (uncommitted) soul, the relative interest of the personality (albeit relatively self-centered) will be qualified to some extent.

From the personality's perspective, in the case of the unresponsive uncommitted soul, the soul cannot be perceived and therefore does not exist. In the case of the responding, uncommitted soul, there is potential appreciation of the soul's existence (at least unconsciously), while in the case of the committed soul, the reality of the soul is evident (at least unconsciously) (by relative qualification). For the soul upon the path whose personality has achieved buddhi-manas, the mind (integrated, qualified personality) consciously recognizes (realizes) (accepts) the commitment, and the path (discipline) (character) (quality) is fully embraced (and reflected).

For the soul upon the path whose personality is merely mentally-polarized (i.e., without intuitional insight), the mind (integrated personality) is more or less consciously drawn to the path, but without conscious appreciation (realization) of the soul's commitment (i.e., the personality's approach to the path is relatively merely intellectual) and adherence to the path's calling depends (positively) on the degree of conscious (unconscious) understanding and (negatively) on the degree of personality resistance (inertia) (ego) (self-centeredness). For the soul upon the path whose personality is emotionally-polarized (characterized by the desire-mind (kama-manas)), the personality is drawn to the path along emotional lines, with feelings of commitment without any real appreciation or understanding of the path or its commitment. In such a case, the call of the world (worldly ways) is likely to be relatively strong compared to the call of the path. But eventually, the (committed) soul overcomes the defensive barriers imposed by the personality.

For the personality seeking to embrace the soul (and the path), adherence to the preliminary discipline (of the path) is quite essential, for it is only in such conscientious adherence that the soul has a chance to qualify the personality (without adherence, the personality is simply too coarse and too noisy to be responsive to the soul). As the mind (heart) (personality) becomes more qualified (refined) (responsive), increased understanding (appreciation) is achieved and more intelligent responsiveness ensues (and adherence is gradually transformed into proper embrace) (and the preliminary work (discipline) (endeavors) leads to the intermediate discipline).

† Commentary No. 624

Adherence and the Path 4

In the context of the spiritual path, adherence means living in accordance with the character (discipline) (nature) (quality) of the path, according to the relative ability and understanding of the spiritual student (personality) and the extent to which the mind (heart) (personality) is responsive to the soul (and the path). Adherence is the process and condition of following closely (conscientiously) the discipline implied by the character (nature) (quality) of the path. Adherence is (properly) a continuous act of devotion, an indication (demonstration) of commitment to or consideration for the spiritual path.

In the most nominal sense, adherence is the sincere (un-resenting) willingness to live in accordance with the preliminary discipline (work) (endeavors) on the assumption that understanding and appreciation will thereby and eventually be realized. At maturity, it is the full and proper embrace of the (discipline of the) spiritual path by the self-realized adherent (spiritual student). Of course it is the nature of the self-interested personality (lower self) (ego) to resist adherence, until such time as realization (refinement) is sufficient to qualify and cultivate the personality and bring about its earnest cooperation in embracing the path and its guiding principles. In the meantime numerous and varied (rationalized or otherwise) excuses are generally evoked by the personality as a means of extending or sustaining the illusion of independent existence. But once the joy (freedom) of the path is fully realized, the personality resistance is overcome and the challenge then falls to the more subtle aspects of the personality.

The spiritual discipline implied by the nature (character) (quality) of the soul (path) cannot be adequately rationalized or fully explained. It is simply a matter of accord and recognition (realization) (appreciation) of that accord. And that accord actually tempers the personality and permits refinement and revitalization along spiritual lines (in place of living (blindly) according to the ways of the (mundane) world). Sincere adherence brings about (allows) refinement of the coarse nature of the personality and (through the aspect of self-discipline) brings about (allows) (promotes) the further responsiveness (subordination) of the mind (personality) to the soul (path).

But what constitutes adherence and what constitutes the preliminary work (discipline) (endeavors) (and subsequent intermediate discipline) is not a matter of rationalization or analysis of cause and effect; it is, rather a matter of recognition (realization) (conscious or otherwise) of the nature of the soul (and the nature of the spiritual path) and the concomitant urge to live as much in accordance with that nature as is possible.

As that realization broadens and deepens, so is the discipline (work) (service) enriched, as the adherent gradually embraces the nature (character) (quality) of the path so that the adherent becomes (absorbed in) the spiritual path (such that the energy (qualification) of the soul (path) flows unimpeded through the entire personality). There is though a critical mass or threshold for adherence such that any effort beneath that threshold (e.g., half-hearted (pretensive) adherence or rationalized exclusion of one or more of the basic elements of the preliminary discipline) is preclusion of any significant progress (from the soul's perspective), while effort at or beyond that threshold creates sufficient momentum for progress. One cannot live according to the (self-indulgent) (absorbing) ways of the world and expect to realize any spiritual results; one can (and should) live according to the nature of the soul and the ways of the path and still live (intelligently) in the world.

Mental Polarization

A mentally polarized person (or lifeform) is one whose consciousness is stabilized (polarized) on one or another of the mental sub-planes of consciousness and whose experience and expression are predominantly mental (manasic). Mentally polarized people are generally active physically and emotionally, but physical and emotional experience (activity) is generally overshadowed (and integrated) by the mental focus. A mentally polarized person can still experience and express himself (herself) with feeling (emotion) and can still have a desire nature, but these things simply do not dominate the consciousness or provide such a distraction as in the case of emotionally polarized people.

Mentally polarized people are generally more mature and relatively more stable (coherent) than physically or emotionally polarized people. They are far less vulnerable to external (astral) forces but may still be subject to (worldly) thought-impression. Mentally polarized people are (in almost every case) integrated personalities (the achievement of mental polarization implies the integration of the mind, the emotional nature, and the body under the central qualification of the concrete mind), and are therefore relatively stronger from the perspective of the soul (physically and emotionally polarized people can be just as loud or noisy, but lack the coherence on the mental plane to be perceived by the soul). Although a coarse personality cannot be properly integrated, being mentally polarized does not imply considerable refinement nor any particular spiritual sensitivity or responsiveness. In fact, most mentally polarized people are not spiritually responsive because the process of integration and polarization upon the mental plane tends to strengthen the ego (which is a measure of separation from the soul).

While emotionally polarized existence is rather dynamic, concrete mental existence (mental polarization upon concrete mental sub-planes) is relatively stable and therefore vulnerable to concretion (inflexibility) (rigidity) in thinking. The spiritual student must endeavor to preclude or overcome mental attachments and cultivate adaptability and flexibility in thinking. The cultivation of the matrix approach to thinking is necessary for effective

abstraction (joining of concrete and abstract minds). The mind must learn to be comfortable (in relativity and uncertainty) without attachments, that the utility of the trained and disciplined (refined) mind can be extended.

The challenge for the mentally polarized student is just as great as that of the emotionally polarized student; it is just different, and relatively more subtle. While the emotionally polarized student seeks to cultivate the mind and conquer the astral nature (and its various appetites) (without much being obvious to the waking-consciousness for the simple reason that it (the mind and the waking-consciousness) is imbedded in the (non-discerning) emotional nature), in addition to concretion, the mentally polarized student must contend with the more subtle problems of ego (and the strength of the mind).

The (concrete) mind naturally seeks to sustain itself as an independent entity (just as the emotional nature naturally seeks entertainment on its level) (without realizing its own transitory existence). But as refinement proceeds (largely through the discipline and qualification of meditation), the various subtleties are dealt with and overcome, the bridge to the abstract mind (and thence to the intuition) is cultivated, and the personality as a whole is gradually assimilated by the soul (becoming so infused by soul quality that the mind and the personality cease to function independently).

† Commentary No. 626

Physical and Astral Motion 4

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division E) continues with consideration of motion and the centers, including (1) the nature of the centers, (2) the centers and the seven rays, (3) the centers and Kundalini, (4) the centers and the senses, and (5) the centers and initiation. It is not the way of the spiritual (occult) (esoteric) student to consciously or directly (artificially) develop or vivify the various (psychic) (energy) centers (chakras); it is rather the way of the spiritual student to live the life of the spiritual path (refinement, study, and service) and allow the centers to be vivified naturally as an indirect consequence of living that spiritual life.

The human pilgrimage involves passage through the five kingdoms (mineral, plant, animal, human, and superhuman (spiritual)) to develop full consciousness on the five (non-respective) planes (physical, astral, mental, intuitional, and spiritual (atmic) (nirvanic)) "by means of the five senses" (hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell) (respectively) "and their correspondences on all the five planes." For any five-fold evolution (e.g., humanity) the sixth and seventh cycles and sub-cycles are synthetic (where the experience developed over the course of earlier cycles and sub-cycles is abstracted and assimilated). Human evolution is presently and principally concerned with the development and evolution of the subtle bodies and the psyche (mind and soul).

The five-fold correlation involves the five centers (two others are concerned with the etheric body and the astral plane) and their principal planar links (the centers associated with the (1) base of the spine, (2) solar plexus, (3) throat, (4) heart, and (5) crown) (having principal links or relations to the physical (astral) (mental) (buddhic) (atmic) plane(s) (respectively)). "The centers in the human being deal fundamentally with the fire aspect in man, or with his divine spirit." The energy centers are the actual force fields which link the lower self (mind) (body) (personality) with the higher self (soul) and the monad. The centers "are not connected with objectivity and manifestation, but with force, or the powers of the divine life."

Microcosmic correspondences abound, with the "will to live" in its various aspects focused and transmitted from one (higher) level to another (lower) (with corresponding reversion). "In the human being the centers are found on the mental plane (from which originates the will to incarnate) and can be traced to astral and etheric levels." "The centers are formed entirely of streams of force, ... and when functioning properly, form the body of fire." The three major centers correlate with "the three aspects of the threefold monad" ((1) the head center and the monad (will or power), (2) the heart center and the soul (love and wisdom), and (3) the throat center and the personality (activity or intelligence)). The work of the soul is conducted through and is indicated by the character and effectiveness of the centers. Many lines of force are threaded through the various centers in various patterns (ways) by the soul, according to the stage of evolution and the particular work to be done (conscious (unqualified) development of the centers is extremely dangerous in part because it undermines

and interferes with the work of the soul and in part because these forces can easily destroy or damage the vital organs of the body).

Of the seven principal centers, there are three major and four (relatively) minor centers (i.e., there are three (major) rays of aspect and four (minor) rays of attribute), with the highest being most synthetic and thereby inclusive of the seven centers. Depending on the stage of evolution the various centers are linked in one or more triangles of fire, with one predominating.

† Commentary No. 627

Physical and Astral Motion 5

“The evolution of the centers is a slow and gradual thing, and proceeds in ordered cycles varying according to the student’s soul and monadic rays.” There are three great periods or stages to the life of the pilgrim. In the first period, the student is influenced largely by the personality ray “and covers the vast progression of the centuries” of numerous developmental and experiential incarnations culminating in mental polarization and the beginnings of responsiveness to the soul. In the second period, the student comes more directly under the influence of the soul ray as the spiritual path is approached and embraced. In the third period, the student comes under the influence of the monadic ray and achieves liberation. Progress is more rapid in the later stages, as momentum is achieved or established in the first stage and accelerated during the second and third stages. Through the course of the three stages, there is a succession of triangles (linked by the circulation of fire in one dimension and a progression of fire (from triangle to triangle) in another (dimension)) that are evoked by the monad (which implies a “geometric rising of the fire”). The circulation of fire implies vivification. The progression of fire implies transmutation or transformation (of character and consciousness).

The first triangle is pranic and links the shoulder center, the center near the diaphragm, and the spleen (the vivification of which implies the achievement of physical polarization). The second triangle links the (centers associated with the) base of the spine, the solar plexus, and the heart (the vivification of which implies the achievement of emotional polarization (resulting in “man controlled

from the astral plane’’). The third triangle links the (centers associated with the) base of the spine, the heart, and the throat (the vivification of which implies the achievement of mental polarization (resulting in “man controlled from the mental plane’’)). The fourth triangle of the advanced man “partially controlled by the soul” links the (centers associated with the) heart, throat, and the head (“the four lesser centers and their synthesis, the alta center”) (the vivification of which implies the beginnings of intuitive polarization (buddhi-manas)).

The fifth triangle involves “spiritual man to the third initiation” and links the heart center, the throat center, and the seven head centers. The sixth triangle involves “the spiritual man to the fifth initiation” and links the heart center, the seven head centers, and the two many-petalled lotuses. The first period (personality ray) involves the first three triangles (progressively). The second period (soul ray) involves the vivification of the fourth and fifth triangles. The third period (monadic ray) involves the sixth and seventh (synthetic (synthetic)) triangles (i.e., each of the triangles is synthetic but the sixth and seventh represent synthetic processes as well).

Throughout the first period, the personality is cultivated along the lines of all seven rays (with one in particular serving to cultivate and integrate the entire personality). Similarly, the qualification of the soul during the second period is progressive and involves all seven rays to some extent (with some emphasis on the four rays of attribute and a gradual transference of emphasis to the three major rays (directly or via sub-ray relationships)).

The soul ray is necessarily a sub-ray of the monad, as the personality ray is necessarily a sub-ray of the soul (viewed in the context of the (rays of the) solar logos and planetary logos (and lesser (cyclical) qualifications)). The (particular) progressive development and vivification of the various centers and triangles thus depends on the particular rays of the monad and the soul.

Self-Evidence

As one progresses upon (or toward) the spiritual path, more and more of the ancient wisdom (esoteric philosophy) becomes self-evident, rather than being merely (intellectually) understandable (or not as the case may be). That which is self-evident requires no proof or explanation; it is simply recognized as true, comfortably accepted (if not understood), and (subconsciously) integrated within the student's value system. The objective of the spiritual student in this regard is two-fold: to naturally improve the capability for self-evidence, and to preclude or minimize the element of self-deception or presumption.

Self-evidence is, in a sense, simply the practical consequence of wisdom (insight) (understanding), the ability to perceive valid correlation or correspondence, to recognize the appropriateness of a particular teaching (or to recognize the limitation(s) of a particular teaching). Wisdom is the result of experience assimilated (by the soul) and incorporated as conscience and understanding. That wisdom (understanding) may or may not be directly or consciously drawn upon by the mind (personality), but is at least subconsciously available to the relatively refined and responsive mind. Self-evidence (proper perception of truth) is improved and deception (presumption) (distortion and misrepresentation of truth) is precluded or minimized to the extent that the various stumbling blocks of the personality are properly overcome.

For the spiritual student of buddhi-manas (intuitive polarization) there is conscious and verifiable self-evidence. Such a student has necessarily overcome the stumbling blocks of the personality and functions mentally and intuitively, unimpeded by attachments or personal bias. Such a person does not necessarily understand everything (for experience is generally not complete and the faculties may not be completely developed) but such a student will simply know the relative extent of understanding (i.e., self-honesty is paramount). For the mentally-polarized, the relative quality of consciousness (extent of refinement and self-mastery) determines the talent or ability for self-evidence. Such a student may or may not be able to bridge between the abstract and concrete mental faculties or respond to occasional intuition.

Such a student may or may not be (as the case may be) biased by opinions and other attachments that preclude or distort the perception of truth, and such a student may or may not have personal bias to contend with. All of these things (opinions, mental attachments, ego, dependence upon rationalization, self-interest, lack of humility, lack of discretion (discrimination), personal bias (interest), mundane or intellectual absorption, etc.) are all relatively detrimental to the clear perception and appreciation of truth.

While the self-evidence of the unrefined mentally polarized person is generally precluded or distorted by the self-interested mind, the self-evidence of the emotionally polarized person (refined or otherwise) is generally precluded by emotional bias (attachments), the lack of mental integration, and the lack of discernment. In the context of self-evidence, emotionally polarized and unrefined mentally polarized students generally suffer a considerable extent of self-deception and presumption of understanding. The solution is achieved through attention to conscious refinement (and adherence to the path) and the cultivation of relative humility. If the mind is not filled with preclusions (thoughts) and the emotions are clear and unassuming (without desire or attachment), then the student can achieve some essential degree of humility and freedom from personal bias such that intuitional insight and mental realization (self-evidence) can begin to dominate the waking-consciousness.



Commentary No. 629

The Group and External Environment

The mature (mentally polarized) spiritual group is an oasis of qualified (purified, refined) energy within the surrounding milieu of outer world experience. The group serves as an outer plane sanctuary that is conducive to the proper alignment of personality and soul leading to the real sanctuary on the inner planes. The external world (environment) is the arena of relatively coarse energies, glamour, illusion, loudness, and intense sensual experience. Although the external environment offers a broad spectrum of opportunity for experience (lessons), the members of a mature spiritual group must be vigilant in their effort to qualify their involvement in the external environment.

This qualification is necessary to minimize the disquieting impact an individual might have on the group environment. Most spiritual students find interactions with the outer world both appropriate (e.g., for sharing light energy) and compelling (e.g., to provide for physical support), but as the group member interacts with the outer world he needs to be wary of whatever negative influences these interactions might have on the quality of the aura and the maintenance of spiritual poise. Absorption in mundane relationships or activities can have a very negative effect. The coarseness (loudness, agitation, excitation, etc.) introduced into the group environment by a group member who has allowed himself to become absorbed (albeit only temporarily) in the outer world can have minimal to sometimes shattering effects on the group.

The group member (or any spiritual student) should attempt to minimize unnecessary external activities. Not only is an active outer life draining on the resources of time and energy, but it can introduce unsettling complications and confusion. Wherever possible the outer life should be simplified and all outer activities evaluated for relative merit in the context of the group good and the spiritual path. As well as simplifying and foregoing much external activity, the group member (spiritual student) should exercise discretion in relationships, deliberately choosing not to cultivate or pursue relationships that may prove unnecessarily distracting or absorbing.

Those relationships with significant emotional content are particularly to be avoided. This does not imply that the group member should eschew all relationships in the outer world, but merely that relationships be approached in a more impersonal (rather than personality-centered (attaching)) manner. Much pure heart quality (kindness, compassion, sympathy, etc.) can be shared with those around us without attachment or absorption.

The group member should be consistent in adherence to the preliminary discipline and values of the spiritual path. There really is no such thing as a "vacation from the spiritual path" once the student is committed. The student's conduct in both the outer environment and the sanctuary of the group should be relatively similar, and excuses should never be made for behavior that varies markedly from one environment to the other. In the earlier stages, the student may find himself facing the dilemma of being drawn to the group environment (and associated spiritual quality) while at the same time being

seduced and drawn away by the lure of the external world and mundane experience. Eventually, a point will be reached where the student must stop indulging in the milieu of outer world experience; this point is passed only as the inherent appropriateness of the inner life and concomitant inappropriateness of outer life indulgence is embraced. Thus, life within a mature spiritual group can provide valuable lessons (challenges) (stimulation) for the spiritual student in refining and balancing his interactions with the external environment.

† Commentary No. 630

Group Identification

As the spiritual student gains momentum along the spiritual path (or path of approach) there will ultimately come a time when he will feel impelled to associate himself with other like-minded students for participation in group work (endeavor) (assuming he has no compelling obligations that prohibit such close association). Quite often spiritual students express a need to “find their group” (the exoteric (outer, physical plane) group corresponding to an inner plane esoteric group (functioning under the auspices (sanction) of a Hierarchical (or peripheral) Ashram) to which they believe themselves to belong). Whether the student is indeed associated with a group depends to a large extent on his place on the spiritual path.

All individuals are members of particular groups on the inner planes. Each is associated (in a general sense) with the particular ray group by which his soul is qualified. Each is further associated with a particular soul group (based on a shared individualization experience) and probably one (or more) karmic groups (based on shared historical experience). Very few, however, are members of a proper esoteric group. A student must be at the level of a probationary disciple or beyond before his soul (not personality) can be considered affiliated with such an esoteric group. Those on the path of approach (aspirants) are generally in the process of gravitating toward a group (or groups) that may be appropriate to their later potential and ability, but are not considered members of such groups. Thus, for the majority of students, there is no specific group (as yet) for them to identify as “theirs.”

Once the recapitulatory process has reached a certain stage, a disciple will very naturally be drawn to the exoteric group (and corresponding esoteric group) to which he may be of most service in that incarnation. Generally, this group will be the exoteric instrument of the esoteric group to which he belongs. It is not uncommon, however, for a disciple to be called upon to work with a group other than his own for an incarnation, particularly if he has specific needed abilities (there is much cooperation between the Ashrams) or if other members of his esoteric group are not in incarnation at that time. In any event, the disciple will simply recognize the quality of the appropriate group, and gladly devote himself to the opportunity to be of service through group work.

Whereas the disciple is guided primarily by responsiveness to soul prompting (intuition), the aspirant (on the path of approach) will generally not find group identification such a natural (straightforward) process. There may indeed be much seeking (and time and effort spent) before an appropriate exoteric group is found. Unfortunately much of this seeking may be more a matter of glamorization of the path and the ego's desire for self-importance than a genuine product of a service motive. Where the aspirant has some degree of sensitivity, he may be attracted to certain groups based primarily on a recognition of shared experience (karmic) with other group members. This is not necessarily inappropriate, but the aspirant would do better to focus impersonally on the philosophy, character, and quality of the group (leaving predominately personality attractions as much out of the focus as possible).

In the matter of group identification, the spiritual student should exercise (learn) discretion. He should endeavor particularly to distinguish the glamours associated with each group (and the glamours of his own making). He should seek to honestly know his motive for seeking a group, and to refine and purify his own life, thus making himself a fit vehicle for service. With true aspiration and a sincere desire to serve, an appropriate opportunity will come.

Group Integration

There are many qualities that contribute to an individual's suitability for work with a mature spiritual group. Probably the most significant of these qualities relate to the expression of (development of) certain elements of the three rays of aspect and to the individual's polarization.

A necessary first ray quality for successful group association is a basic ability to utilize (focus) the will, particularly as it is reflected through the seventh ray in the form of discipline and, more specifically, self-discipline. When a candidate lacks self-discipline, there will be many problems in adherence to the various practices and principles of the path and group life. The other necessary first ray quality is humility, meaning the essential ability to see oneself honestly. Self-honesty (humility) is vital for establishing proper group relations (rapport) and for serious spiritual work. Second ray qualities needed for group work (group life) relate to truth and impersonal love.

The group member must love truth, fostering a sincere desire to know the truth despite whatever challenge that may pose to the ego. He must have such a reverence for truth that his words and actions are in harmony with the truth that he perceives (thus, in honesty he can be trusted by the group). The ability to understand and channel impersonal love is essential to mature service work. To love impersonally is the key to conquering self-centeredness and foregoing desire for individual development (while focusing on group good (the work to be done) (service to humanity and God)). The third ray qualities particularly required are a degree of intelligent understanding and adaptability (open-mindedness). Especially to be wary of is the tendency to narrow-mindedness and crystallization that can effectively impede learning.

The polarization of consciousness of the individual relative to the group is also quite significant. While there are many (philosophical, theosophical, metaphysical, etc.) groups for a spiritual student to work with, relatively few are mentally polarized. The majority of groups are composed (predominately) of emotionally polarized individuals whose collective consciousness (the group's consciousness) is therefore necessarily polarized on the astral (emotional) level.

Only those (outer) (exoteric) groups which are mentally polarized can be chartered by an esoteric group (thus the need to carefully qualify the core membership to protect the polarization of consciousness and the group's charter). Emotionally polarized groups (and individuals) are simply not stable enough to safely and effectively channel the occult energies involved, nor would such groups be able to bridge (align) successfully to the abstract mental or buddhic planes to respond to the guidance of an esoteric group. Appearance to the contrary is generally an indication of the ability of an emotionally polarized group (individual) to draw on the often deceptive contacts and energies from the astral plane.

The individual with mental (or buddhic) polarization can generally be assimilated into a mature mentally polarized group more rapidly than an emotionally polarized individual, but for the emotionally polarized there exist real opportunities for substantial encouragement and assistance in integration of the personality (the keynote of mental control) within the group environment. While it would be ideal for a spiritual student approaching a group to have already mastered much of the quality of the rays of aspect, in most cases there is much work (refinement) to be done toward mastery. In the final analysis, the student who succeeds in group integration is one who is steadfast (not merely casual or superficial) in his commitment to the spiritual path and service.

† Commentary No. 632

I Am

Sounded by the mind, the mantra "I Am" is the mantra of the integrated personality. It is the first part of the ancient biblical (triple) mantra for self-identification (I Am That I Am). This first part represents the integrated personality, and as such, naturally evokes a force for integration (if the personality is not yet integrated) (or a force to sustain and strengthen the already integrated personality). Thus it is the proper mantra of (for) the emotionally-polarized student (aspirant) seeking mental polarization and personality integration. The "I Am" is a potent unifying force for the personality that overcomes the various lesser centers of personality and brings them together under the single energy of the personality ray.

The mantra "I Am" can bring about or sustain the integration of the personality, and it can be used as needed for (integrated) strength of personality (i.e., whenever the forces of the personality are scattered or weakened, this mantra can be expediently used for restoration or strength). Thus the ordinary vulnerabilities of the non-integrated or poorly-integrated personality can be resisted or overcome by proper use of this mantra. The danger of this mantra is simply its potential for overly strengthening the personality as an independent (separative) entity, which makes such a personality less responsive to the soul and spiritual impression. However, used properly, it provides a powerful means of purification and qualification for spiritual responsiveness (and a potent force for stabilizing the emotions).

The mantra "I Am" evokes the focus of consciousness upon the personality. By centering that focus on the personality, whatever energy is evoked will come to bear on the personality. If the mantra is sounded (properly mentally) in conjunction with some specific qualification (e.g., integration, refinement, etc.), then as energy follows thought (qualification) so will the potency of the mantra be correlated with the particular qualification. One of the incidental objectives of the spiritual student is strength of character and health (balance) of form, both of which can be achieved utilizing the "I Am" mantra (with qualification and without the personality becoming too strong as a personality). The basis of spiritual strength (of character) is not the personality per se, but the properly conditioned and qualified personality.

The "I Am" mantra links the first and third rays by evoking strength (first ray) and a focus upon the personality (third ray or aspect). Thus this mantra is particularly potent and not particularly subtle (i.e., it functions without the moderating influence of the second ray unless such moderation is explicitly evoked). It can be applied beyond the personality to analogous levels (e.g., humanity, in the sense of "I Am" for humanity) or it can be used to link the personality with some external (e.g., "I Am Humanity" provides identification (on personality levels) with the race, while "I Am" for humanity merely strengthens humanity as humanity with the identification being implied). Potent variations include "I Am Light" and "I Am Love" which evoke light and love (respectively) through the focus of consciousness upon the personality. Similarly, "I Am Health" evokes healing energy (with implied sharing) (explicit

qualification for sharing healing energy (light) (love) is even better), and “I Am One” redundantly evokes unity (unification).

On a higher level, e.g., sounded by the soul, “I Am” is the evocation of the soul, with focus of consciousness upon the soul and its relationships, rather than the personality; and similarly, yet higher, the evocation of the monad on its own level with focus of consciousness upon itself (the monad).

† Commentary No. 633

I Am That

Sounded by the mind, the mantra “I Am That” is the mantra of the soul (and of the integrated, responsive personality that is aligned with the soul). It is the second part of the ancient triple mantra (I Am That I Am). This second part represents the soul, and as such, naturally evokes a force for alignment of personality with the soul, for subordination of the personality to the soul, and for spiritual strength (drawn properly from the soul, rather than from the inherent power of the personality itself). This “I Am That” is the proper mantra of (for) the mentally-polarized student (disciple) seeking intuitional polarization and alignment with the soul.

The potency of any affirmative mantra resides in the disparity between what is affirmed and what is, actually. Thus the mantra “I Am That” asserts that the personality (I Am) is the soul (That) and therefore energy (force) is naturally evoked which impels the personality toward the soul (in consciousness, affording alignment). The energy evoked is of the soul itself, and that energy then qualifies the personality according to the nature of the soul. If the personality is not integrated, then “I Am That” will evoke forces for integration, mental polarization, and subsequent alignment; however, the forces evoked thereby for integration and mental polarization will be weaker than those evoked by “I Am” and the process will be markedly slower. “I Am” is much more effective for integration, while “I Am That” is much more effective for alignment, because “I Am” focuses consciousness on the personality (which is where integration and mental polarization must be achieved) while “I Am

That” focuses consciousness on the soul (actually effecting a shift of focus of consciousness from the personality to the soul).

The mantra “I Am That” sounded by the unprepared (non-integrated) personality cannot draw the soul into “activity” prematurely because the sound will only be heard by the soul to the extent of the personality’s preparedness (i.e., if the disparity between mind (personality) and soul is great, then the soul will continue unhindered by its objective reflection, but if the personality is properly integrated (and mentally-polarized), then the mantra (I Am That) will evoke a channel for energy to pass directly from the soul to its reflection, resulting in further refinement, elevation in (focus of) consciousness, and eventual alignment with the soul). Once alignment is achieved, the mantra (I Am That) can be used for restoration (if the personality slips out of alignment by virtue of absorption in or distraction by mundane or personal matters) and evocation of spiritual strength.

The “I Am That” mantra links the second ray aspects of quality and soul (consciousness). Thus the mantra is potent by virtue of the soul’s participation and relatively subtle (subjective) in the sense of dealing primarily with consciousness (second aspect) rather than matter (third aspect). Yet matter (the personality) is effectively qualified by the soul (That), but by virtue of quality of consciousness. Extensions of “I Am That” are particularly potent and effective compared to extensions of “I Am” since the soul is depended upon rather than the personality per se (i.e., “I Am That Light” is vastly more potent for the aligned spiritual student than “I Am Light” is for the merely integrated) (yet unless the student is reasonably aligned, the “I Am That” extension is not particularly effective).

On a higher level, e.g., sounded by the soul, the “I Am That” is the evocation of the soul for its own purpose (on its level) (similarly (analogously) for the monad on its level).

I Am That I Am 2

Sounded by the mind, the mantra “I Am That I Am” is the mantra of the monad (and of the soul that is consciously responsive to the monad) (more properly (practically), the mantra of the integrated, responsive personality that is aligned with the soul that (That) is in turn consciously responsive to the monad). It is the third part of the ancient triple mantra for self-identification (I Am That I Am) and is the complete mantra. This third part (the whole) represents the monad and the soul that is closely identified with the monad, and as such, naturally evokes a subtle force for drawing the soul toward the monad (i.e., withdrawal from manifestation). Thus “I Am That I Am” is the proper mantra for the intuitively polarized student (initiate) seeking to work within the context of the monad.

The whole mantra (I Am That I Am) could be used to integrate the personality but is weaker for that purpose than is “I Am That” and much weaker for that purpose than is “I Am.” Similarly, it could be used to align the integrated personality with the soul, but is weaker and slower for that purpose than is “I Am That.” For the non-integrated personality it (I Am That I Am) has no effect at all for alignment (in fact, even for the integrated and aligned personalities (respectively), these mantras (I Am) (I Am That) (I Am That I Am) are only effective if they are (mentally) sounded correctly).

“I Am That I Am” shifts the focus of consciousness beyond the soul to the monad, yet cannot be used to draw the monad into “activity” (since the monad remains beyond manifestation or activity in the normal sense). While “I Am” is a single mantra involving the first and third rays, and while “I Am That” is a double mantra (“I Am” and “That”) involving primarily the second ray, “I Am That I Am” is a triple mantra (I Am) (That) (I Am) involving all three (major) rays. The first “I Am” is the personality and the third ray. “That” is the soul and the second ray. The second “I Am” is the monad and the first ray. The third ray aspect of the triple mantra is actually masked, as the soul and the monad are the principals.

Extensions to the triple mantra are not viable, as extensions imply manifestation, evocation, qualification, etc., while the triple mantra implies none of these things. The double mantra is useful during the lunar meditation cycle, while the triple mantra is comparably useful only during the solar meditation cycle (i.e., in the lunar cycle the keynotes are (practical) alignment with the hierarchy and service to humanity, while in the solar cycle the keynotes are esoteric detachment and (non-practical) alignment with the solar logos). Sounded properly by the (qualified) mind, "I Am That I Am" is a means of detachment. On a higher level, e.g., sounded by the soul, the triple mantra is a means of withdrawal from manifestation.

Exoterically, the triple mantra in its two dimensions ((I Am) (I Am That) (I Am That I Am) and (I Am) (That) (I Am)), respectively) is a most potent means of integration, alignment, evocation, qualification, etc., while esoterically the triple mantra reveals the path and places the spiritual student into context. For the spiritual student, the key to all this is properly the soul (That), for it is the soul that waits; it is the soul that listens (yet does not hear the personality); and it is the soul that calls forth the word of the path. The soul is the central aspect of the human being, the spiritual path, and the God-Christ within. The soul is active with respect to the monad, but inactive (not passive) with respect to the personality. In the final analysis, it is the triple mantra (in one form or another) that reveals the soul and the path.

† Commentary No. 635

Physical and Astral Motion 6

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division E) continues with consideration of the centers and Kundalini, the senses, and initiation. The development of the centers is not the objective; the objective is the strengthening of the spiritual momentum through the refinement of consciousness; the development of the centers is (properly) merely consequential to that refinement and responsiveness. If the development is deliberate (not merely (properly) (naturally) consequential), then it is not properly accompanied by refinement and proper circulation, and therefore it is temporary, dangerous (since the unrefined lack the requisite self-control), and misleading.

Proper spiritual development corresponds to the (inner) development of the causal body (the sheath or proper vehicle of the soul) and the permanent atoms contained therein. Thus are carefully linked the soul, its causal body, the permanent atoms, the personality matrix, the energy centers, the rays of the soul, and the proper (sequential) circulation of energy. This is as true for the solar logos (and its solar system) as it is for the human soul, planetary hierarchy, etc. Thus an energy (relational) (circulatory) triangle links together the (macro) centers that respectively represent the Manu, the Bodhisattva, and the Mahachohan (and their departments). Another energy triangle links together the seven Kumaras (and their centers and functions). Yet another links the Earth together with Mars and Mercury, while still another links the Earth together with Venus and Saturn. Each of the planets is an energy center within the manifestation of the solar logos. "Venus corresponds to the heart center" while "Saturn corresponds to the throat center." Relationships and correspondences within our system are also linked by analogy (and more subtle and particular connections) to other solar groupings.

Kundalini vitalizes the body (personality) at whatever level of manifestation. It is consequential and progressively links and blends (atones) the various lesser fires, increasing dimensionally and in intensity according to the relative purification and refinement of the body (centers). Kundalini is both repulsive and attractive in nature. It eliminates (repels) "all matter that is coarse and unsuitable" and "sweeps into its sphere of influence matter that is keyed to its own vibration." Kundalini is both a consequence of refinement and an intermediate cause (catalyst) of further refinement.

The seven senses form a septenate and correspond therefore to other pertinent septenates. Of the seven senses, five are basic "avenues of perception." These are (1) hearing, (2) touch, (3) sight, (4) taste, and (5) smell, and correspond (respectively) to the five (basic) planes of consciousness: (1) physical, (2) astral, (3) mental, (4) buddhic, and (5) atmic. Because of the multidimensional (matrix) nature of the senses, each sense demonstrates according to the various ray (plane) and sub-ray (sub-plane) relationships. The five senses are the organs (means) of awareness, the "media whereby the thinker comes in contact with his environment." The sixth and seventh senses, mind and understanding (respectively), are assimilative.

The first sense to be manifested is hearing. The spiritual student must learn to listen (which means to preclude the “noise” of speaking and thinking from preventing proper hearing). The student learns to listen progressively, as well as synthetically. Hearing on the five planes includes (1) physical hearing, (2) clairaudience, (3) higher clairaudience, (4) comprehension, and (5) beatitude, respectively. In each case, hearing refers to the reception (and relative recognition) of the sound or note of the form (matter) on some scale.

† Commentary No. 636

Physical and Astral Motion 7

The second sense is touch or feeling, “that innate recognition of contact through the exercise of manas or mind.” Touch on the five planes includes (1) physical feeling, (2) psychometry, (3) planetary psychometry, (4) healing, and (5) active service, respectively. As the sense of touch is elevated (progressively and more inclusively), it becomes more synthetic (more closely related to the other senses). Touch is particularly significant in the present (second) solar system, as touch is the second sense and as the basic consciousness of the (present) solar system is astral-buddhic (which implies the intended transmutation of astral (second plane) consciousness to buddhic (fourth plane) consciousness). While hearing provides recognition of the fact of extraneity, touch provides actual contact (on whatever level).

Sight is the third sense and builds upon the recognition and contact of hearing and touch to permit correlation (synthesis) (realization). Sight on the five planes includes (1) physical sight, (2) clairvoyance, (3) higher clairvoyance, (4) divine vision, and (5) realization, respectively. While hearing operates under the law of economy and touch operates under the law of attraction, sight operates under the law of synthesis. These three are the major senses, and lead to beatitude, active service, and realization.

The two minor senses are the fourth (taste) and fifth (smell), which play a more supportive role than the major senses. Taste on the five planes includes (1) physical taste, (2) imagination, (3) discrimination, (4) intuition, and (5) perfection, respectively; while smell on the five planes includes (1) physical

smell, (2) emotional idealism, (3) spiritual discernment (response to group vibration) (spiritual telepathy), (4) idealism, and (5) all knowledge, respectively. Taste is properly the great sense of discrimination or discernment, while smell "is the faculty of keen perception" or the homing faculty in the higher sense, the apprehension of the quality of the source, and the impelling return.

The senses concern primarily the material form rather than consciousness per se. The senses "for all purposes of present manifestation, have their focal point on the astral plane," and are gradually elevated to the mental plane. "Each of the five senses, when coupled with manas, develops within the subject a concept involving the past, the present, and the future." As a man transcends time, the senses are superseded by "full active consciousness." "But in time, and in the three worlds" (physical, emotional, and mental planes), "each sense on each plane is employed to convey some aspect of the not-self, and by the aid of mind" are the person's various relationships adjusted. Hearing provides "an idea of relative direction" and location. Touch provides "an idea of relative quantity." Sight provides "an idea of proportion" and adjustment. Taste provides "an idea of value." And smell provides "an idea of innate quality."

The five senses are closely related to the various centers. The progressive evolution of consciousness results in the progressive activity and linking of the centers, and in the development and elevation and synthetic correlation of the senses (and not vice versa). The centers (and the evolution of consciousness) are also closely related to the process of initiation or consummation. Initiation is ever the consequence of sufficient evolution and proper refinement in consciousness, and takes place when the student is properly prepared (cultivated) (and therefore when the centers are suitably (consequentially) vivified and the requisite circulation(s) of energy are properly (consequentially) evoked).

Humility and the Soul

The nature of the soul is impersonal love. On the level of the soul that sense of love is pure, wholly impersonal, and uncluttered by any of the concerns of the personality or ego. The soul lives reposed, without activity per se, merely assimilating the experience of its reflection (the incarnated personality) and serving (qualitatively and subjectively) (not passively) to receive, qualify, and direct (transmit) (focus) energies of various (appropriate) kinds and measures.

The soul is not humble in the sense of “human” humility, for the soul does not characterize the range of human attributes in any personal sense. But the soul is characterized by what is considered (in the context of spiritual endeavor) the humble state. It is thus called not because the soul is humble (it is not, but neither is it lacking humility in any sense), but because in order for the mind (or focus of waking-consciousness) of the personality to achieve alignment with the soul, that mind must first achieve “the humble state.” Or in other words, humility is a necessary prerequisite for alignment. The human personality cannot be aligned with the soul unless it has achieved (proper) (active) humility and has achieved (is functioning within) the humble state (the mind needs to approximate the character and quality of the soul).

Humility (in this, positive sense) cannot be achieved and the human personality cannot be aligned with the soul (the God-Christ within) for as long as the mind or personality is relatively coarse. Humility cannot be achieved and the human personality cannot be aligned with the soul for as long as the ego is allowed to persist in any role other than complete subservience to the soul (and the path). Humility cannot be achieved and the human personality cannot be aligned with the soul for as long as there are emotional or (concrete) mental attachments, or for as long as the mind is noisy with its own thoughts and ideas (i.e., unresponsive to the soul qualification).

The soul is neither active nor passive, but reposed in the (true) humility of being. Anything that is false cannot be uplifted into the state of consciousness of the soul. Since the ego is the false (not true) self, the presence of ego effectively prevents or inhibits the alignment of the soul and personality. The soul is not

even open (responsive) to the personality (mind) until that mind (personality) is properly integrated and refined, and until the ego is properly subsumed (sublimated) (neutralized). In order for the mind and the soul to be aligned, the ego (concrete mind) must be entirely quiescent. As soon as the ego (separate, concrete mental activity) is resumed, the alignment of mind and soul is dissolved. Almost every aspect of life (discipline) approaching and upon the spiritual path has to do with subsuming the ego and (preparation for or) active service.

Thus humility is the key to approaching the soul and the key to the nature of the soul. In the humble state, the power of the soul can flow unimpeded by the separative mind or personality (because in such state the separative mind is not apparent). It is only when the mind (and heart) routinely (continually) achieve the humble state that the soul begins to respond to the presence (quality) of the personality (until that point, the soul is not aware of the personality (for the focus of the soul does not extend to objective levels of manifestation) and even when that point is reached, the soul remains indifferent to anything other than the presence (quality) of the mind of the personality). The concerns of the personality simply cannot intrude upon the repose (humility) of the soul.

† Commentary No. 638

Active Humility

It is not enough for the serious spiritual student to be able to (and frequently) achieve the humble state, nor is it sufficient for the serious spiritual student to live in the humble state essentially all of the time (both accomplishments being nonetheless considerable (necessary) achievements and quite (particularly) conducive to spiritual qualification); it is, rather, sufficient for the serious spiritual student to live in the humble state essentially all of the time and simultaneously to apply that (proper) humility (the noiseless humility of spiritual (egoless) strength) to every aspect of the daily life (in both (inner and outer) worlds) of spiritual and (merely apparently) non-spiritual endeavor (no endeavor in the context of the spiritual path is non-spiritual or without some spiritual consideration).

In some very real sense (perspective), life on earth (for the present humanity) has only two objectives: (1) development of the ego (and its integrated personality) and (2) overcoming (sublimating) that ego (both are necessary, in turn, in order for humanity to contribute effectively to the fulfillment of the planetary plan (scheme)). This does not preclude the validity of other perspectives; to the contrary, it means that other (valid) perspectives can be considered nonetheless in relation to these two objectives (e.g., the development and worldwide manifestation of love and compassion (consideration), right human relations, wisdom, etc., is quite consistent with the underlying need for personality integration and continual refinement (humility)); but it does suggest that all other objectives (from this perspective), if real, are intermediate and intended to bring about (directly or otherwise) the fulfillment of the two fundamental objectives, in turn.

Integration (refinement) (synthesis) in the lower (personality) sense is a necessary prerequisite for proper humility and it leads (with proper subsequent qualification) (eventually) to every day in the life being (an embrace and) an expression of humility, which is not in any sense a passive experience. Proper (true) humility is active humility in the sense that every activity on each plane of (objective and subjective human (personality)) consciousness should be an expression of humility (which implies allowance of higher qualification); every thought, every feeling, every physical expression should be qualified by the consciousness (and associated awareness) and concomitant demeanor of repose (tranquility) (inner peace) (humility) (selflessness), which means in such a manner that the ego plays a strictly subservient role, so that every activity can be qualified by the higher self (spirituality) rather than (predominantly) by the lower self (personality).

Active humility implies a rather fine balance between having the personality refinement and strength to be free from external manipulation (e.g., the peer pressure of mass (lower) consciousness) and having the ability to function constructively and harmoniously in the outer (personality) world without being absorbed (in that outer world). Personality strength tends to encourage the strength, domination, and independent resourcefulness (energy) of the ego, so that additional ego (personality) qualification is necessary to prevent that strength (ego) from being detrimental.

With proper spiritual qualification, the ego (personality strength) can be utilized quite effectively (without attachment or absorption). Thus true personality strength is strength of quality and character (humility) in which the (subservient) ego is effectively neutralized as an independent or self-centered nature, where the soul can effectively qualify personality expression.

† Commentary No. 639

Emotional and Mental Attachment 1

The soul being humble has no emotional or concrete mental attachments. The soul is not absorbed in mundane or personal or objective matters, no matter how apparently worthy they may seem to be. Without attachments of any sort, the soul is free to be, one with all (souls).

The serious spiritual student, who necessarily seeks to approach the soul and be wholly qualified (energized) by the soul, must necessarily take leave of the various glammers and illusions of the outer (mundane) world, let go of the rather natural (personality) attachments in the form of feelings and thoughts (ideas), and approach the soul uncluttered by these lesser things. Lifetimes can be spent overcoming the various (emotional) glammers and (concrete mental) illusions (that were built up over lifetimes) and developing the habits (qualification) of personality endeavor that preclude emotional and concrete mental attachment. Lifetimes more can be spent overcoming the more subtle (ego) attachments and limiting habits of the personality.

Much of the work to be done in this regard (detachment) (continual qualification and refinement) is relatively obvious to the intelligent or reasonably well-trained seeker, but with the advent of a life of service, the sincere spiritual student may become or remain relatively blind to the more subtle or less obvious attachments. Two of the most significant problems in this regard are imposition and a sense of importance.

Generally, it is wrong for the spiritual student to impose upon others. Generally, it is wrong for one to preclude another from thinking for himself and reaching his own conclusions. A fine line may exist between unimposing

encouragement (of presentation of ideas for consideration) and the imposition of ideas. Part of the problem has to do with the relative susceptibility (passiveness) of the audience, and part has to do with the relative attachment of the presenter to the ideas being presented (imposed). Another (major) part of the problem is the ego which masks its own relationship to the ideas and methods utilized and the relative self-deception that that implies. Beliefs strongly held naturally separate the student (mind) (personality) from the soul. It is thus ever important to strive to be relatively free from opinions, strong beliefs, etc. and to be (actively not passively) (humbly) open to refinement of beliefs and relative understanding. On the latter stages of the spiritual path, the promotion (rather than mere presentation for consideration) of ideas is strictly forbidden (for such attachment precludes spiritual qualification, no matter how correct the ideas may be). No person in incarnation (or out for that matter) can speak with genuine authority. Every idea presented must be properly considered and weighed on its own merits.

The sense of importance is also rather preclusive of higher qualification. Recognizing (perceiving) (believing) a need and seeking to fulfill that need is a relatively worthy endeavor, but if one feels that such need or endeavor is important then (1) one is attached to it (which means that the ego is involved) and therefore (2) the endeavor (attachment) is preclusive and unwarranted. Spiritual qualification is vastly more important (significant) (worthwhile) than any particular idea, project, endeavor, etc. If a student thinks that something is urgent or important then the soul (the hierarchy) (esoteric group) is simply not interested, because that thinking implies attachment and attachment is preclusive. Besides, ideas come from above, not from below. It is only the perception (relative interpretation or misinterpretation) of ideas and what we do with them that occurs below (mentally and emotionally).

Emotional and Mental Attachment 2

Detached and humble (incidental) service effectively precludes attachment (and concomitant ego involvement). Without a sense of self-importance or superiority and without a sense of “this idea or project is important” the spiritual student is relatively free to serve with some measure of alignment with and qualification by the higher self (soul).

How a spiritual student conducts himself is much more important than what he does (the properly qualified “how” generally determines the effectiveness and relative appropriateness of “what” is done). Or in other words, the manner of service (the motive, qualification, disposition, demeanor, methods, etc.) is more important (significant) than the particular service activities or content thereof. This is because the proper means and methods permit proper (spiritual) qualification, while emotional and mental attachments to objects, objectives, ideas, opinions, needs, etc. are more preclusive and therefore less worthy.

If a sincere spiritual student (personality) approaches the soul (esoteric group) (service) in the wrong manner (with respect to the standards appropriate to or expected of that person), he is generally dismissed or ignored, even if the ideas brought forward by the student are very worthwhile and appropriate. Depending on the circumstances (relative consciousness), the reasons for such may or may not be revealed (self-reliance (i.e., reliance upon the soul rather than the mind (ego) (personality)) is ever necessary). Generally, ideas are considered only after the manner of presentation or approach is considered. The important aspect of this is that the spiritual student should let go of his own ideas, and being detached, approach the soul (in life and meditation) for qualification. Thereby shall the ideas worked with (and manners) be properly qualified and the involvement (distraction) of the ego minimized or eliminated.

Sometimes a student receives (perceives) (recognizes) an idea by virtue of higher impression and becomes attached to same, such attachment then precluding subsequent (proper) impression and responsiveness. The spiritual student should not be attached to ideas, should not be attached to the source of ideas (real or presumed), and should not be attached to the perceived relative

significance of same. For all these emotional and concrete mental attachments impair the effectiveness of the spiritual student and disrupt the natural flow of spiritual qualification (energy) from the soul (esoteric group), through the student (mind) (heart) (personality), and to the world (environment) (service endeavor).

Sometimes a student thinks some idea is important and the need for revelation (clarification) is great, only to subsequently realize that the depth and breadth of the problem or issue is greater than perceived and therefore subject to considerable qualification and particular methods (and broader timescales); the lesson to be learned is that the mind is relatively narrow-minded, limited in understanding, and not aware (or even capable of being aware) of all the implications associated with a given idea or project. The student who presumes understanding or significance may be sincere but is nonetheless wrong in the sense of being biased by ego and attachment. With proper humility (and dismissal of urgency or importance), the spiritual student can remain relatively free to serve effectively and appropriately, by spiritual (soul) qualification. On the other hand, in relative ignorance, the student should proceed with sincerity and open-mindedness (i.e., subject to further realization and clarification). One must proceed as best as one can, hopefully without significant distraction, without being absorbed in mundane or personal matters, and without significant emotional and mental attachments.

† Commentary No. 641

Memory of Past Lives

One of the incidental questions concerned with understanding the principle of reincarnation is, "Why don't we remember (in a state of waking-consciousness) our past lives?" The answer to this question requires an understanding of what it is that reincarnates and what it is that does not.

Essentially, it is the higher self (soul) that (as an entity) is (relatively) eternal. The higher self is the upper triad of atma, buddhi, and manas (the three aspects of the soul) (the jivatma). The upper triad is permanently linked (attached) to a triad of permanent atoms via a "thread of buddhic matter." This thread, called the sutratma (or thread-self), connects the three permanent atoms in a manner

analogous to beads threaded on a string. The permanent atoms of the soul are the matrices (energy patterns) from which the mind, the emotional, and the physical bodies (respectively) are created or recreated. The permanent atoms are essentially the storehouse (preserver) of the vibratory quality (not specific experience) abstracted from all of the experience through which they have passed during their numerous cycles of incarnation. Within the individual's permanent atoms (and genetic factors (factors inherent in the physical, emotional, and mental atoms and molecules of the parents)) is contained not only the record of consciousness of the individual but the history of the human (racial) form as well.

The lower self (personality) is not eternal (as an entity); it does not reincarnate. The lower self is also known as the lower triad (the physical emotional, and lower (concrete) mental bodies). It must be formed anew for each incarnation from the substance of each respective plane in response to the vibratory matrix preserved by the permanent atoms of the incarnating soul. The higher self utilizes a distinctly different personality vehicle (lower self) and corresponding physical brain for each incarnation. The human brain (at the current stage of evolution) is the instrument of the mind employed for waking-consciousness memory. "Brain-memory" can only maintain a record of those events with which it has had experience. Hence, there is no memory in the waking-consciousness of past lives because the brain of the current form is not the same brain that served as the instrument for memory in any previous life, having been created anew with the current incarnation.

For the most part possessing information about past lives is not necessary. The abstracted quality (lessons learned and experience assimilated in consciousness) is accessible to the student who seeks to know himself. The details of the specific experience from each incarnation that contributed to the quality are generally of little significance, for it is merely the quality that is of real import in the evolution of consciousness. There are many individuals, though, who are curious about specifics, and englamoured by the self-importance associated with their imaginings of specific personality lives. Much energy can be wasted along such distracting lines.

There are several disadvantages to having a complete memory in the waking-consciousness of past lives. Among them would be the burden associated with

having access to the input from hundreds of incarnations. Attempting to sort and recall information from such an immense data bank (given the current evolution of our instrument, the brain) would be clumsy, if not impossible. Further, there is much distracting physical and emotional content (desires, pain, suffering, excitations, passions, etc.) inherent in the specifics of experience. Dealing with the physical and emotional distractions of the current incarnation can be challenging enough.

† Commentary No. 642

Knowledge of Past Lives

While utilization of the normal waking-consciousness instrument of brain-memory is insufficient to provide knowledge of past lives, there are, nonetheless, two manners by which such knowledge can be acquired. The first and preferred manner is via the alignment of the personality and soul. The second is via the reading (interpretation) of the images imprinted in the akasha.

The soul, being (relatively) eternal, can recover information about its past lives (incarnations as personality) (but lacking interest, rarely does so, except unconsciously and incidentally). The soul is linked to the quality and specifics of its previous (incarnated) experience which is contained within the all-encompassing memory or consciousness of the logos. The personality, being transient, has access only to those memories (vibrations in the logic consciousness) generated by the current incarnation. When the personality becomes aligned with the soul, a bridge is thereby built which allows these vibrations (memories) to be brought down and impressed upon the vehicles of the personality. The information obtained via soul alignment (where unclouded by personality deception and attachment) can most closely approximate truth.

The second method of obtaining past life information, via interpretation of akashic impression, is more complex and subject to a greater potential for self-deception. The akasha can be defined as, "the subtle, spiritual essence which pervades all space." It may be viewed as the "cause of existence" in the sense that all that exists is derived from it through the primordial processes of separation and differentiation. There are seven planes of akasha. Among its properties on the lower planes is a reflective quality that records a "cosmic

picture-gallery" of all events and experience on the astral and physical planes. Various names have been applied to this lower plane akashic property, such as astral light, reflecting ether, memory of nature, and akashic record. On a higher plane, corresponding to the highest region of the concrete mental plane, thought-images are also recorded in akashic substance.

Only a trained, mentally or intuitively polarized occultist can see the thought-images stored in the higher (mental) region of the akasha. Those who are emotionally polarized and claim to see past life experiences of their own or others are reading in the lower region, the akashic record (astral light) (reflecting ether). Lacking the mind control to work on the higher level, they have access only to the lower levels. The life experience as well as the desire life of every human being throughout history and the experience of the entire animal kingdom are all contained within the akashic record. Only a trained occultist can readily discriminate between the pictures of actual experience and those astral pictures created as a result of intense desires or imaginings. Only a trained occultist can identify those records which are (1) planetary, (2) hierarchical, (3) imaginative, (4) historical, or (5) astrological in origin. Intelligently reading the akashic record is not a trivial matter given the inherent deception, complex matrices, and amount of information contained therein. Certainly the testimony (regarding past lives) given by emotionally polarized clairvoyants or the hypnotically entranced (artificially induced astral vision) should be considered cautiously since there is only a small probability that the experiences seen and described may be undistorted and related to the individual about whom information is sought.

There are few situations in which knowledge of past lives is necessary or appropriate. The spiritual student should look to the higher self in these matters, trusting that appropriate knowledge will come.

Cosmic Fire 22

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section I, Division F) discusses three major natural laws with emphasis on the law of economy and its relationship (role) to (in) matter. All of the manifested universe is alive in one manner or another. Each of the great cosmic beings incarnates from time to time as a cosmic, solar, or planetary logos; as a plane or sub-plane of consciousness; as one or another of the seven rays or sub-rays; or as one or another of the natural laws associated with universal manifestation and the evolution of consciousness; depending on its place in the greater scheme of things.

The three major natural laws are living beings induced into activity as a consequence of the grand plan (will) and operating over such a vast timescale and scope that these laws manifest primarily as underlying qualification for the three aspects. The law of economy relates primarily to (governs) the third aspect (logos) (Brahma) (matter and manifestation) and the “scattering of the atoms and their dissociation from one another, wide distribution, vibratory rhythm, heterogeneity and quality, and their inherent rotary action” (i.e., the work and role of matter). The law of attraction relates primarily to (governs) the second aspect (logos) (Vishnu) (building and evolution of consciousness) and “association, form building, adaptation of form to vibration, relative homogeneity of group unity, and cyclic spiraling movement” (i.e., the work and role of consciousness). The law of synthesis relates primarily to (governs) the first aspect (logos) (Shiva) (the will to exist) and “abstraction, spiritual liberation, destruction of form through the withdrawal of spirit, absolute homogeneity and absolute essential unity, and progressive forward motion” (i.e., the work and role of spirit).

The three laws are actually an interrelated triplicity (triad) (three-lives-in-one) (as all things are related directly or indirectly). Each has its characteristic methods of activity which contribute cooperatively and complementarily to the integrated whole. The law of economy “causes matter always to follow the line of least resistance, and is the basis of the separative action of atomic matter.” The law of attraction induces consciousness to attract matter to spirit, resulting in cohesion. “The line of least resistance is not the law for this (second) aspect.

The attractive power of spirit in form-building, and in the adaptation of the form to the need, is the secret of the pain and resistance in the world; pain is only caused by resistance, and is a necessary phase in the process of evolution."

Thus pain and suffering in the world have to do with the resistance (relationship) of consciousness to matter and the extent to which consciousness (e.g., the personality) is attached to the material aspect (form, desire, opinion, etc.) rather than the consciousness aspect (the soul). As the personality is refined and overcomes the natural self-centeredness of its material aspect, it becomes more properly aligned with the higher aspect (consciousness) and the human being achieves (relative) self-mastery (i.e., control over matter by virtue of sufficient qualification).

The true occultist is one who is adept in qualifying matter (and the material aspect of consciousness), utilizing the four subsidiary laws of economy (those of vibration, adaptation, repulsion, and friction), both with respect to qualifying himself (his own personality and aura) and his environment (service activities). The true esoteric student (higher initiate) (master) is one who is adept in qualifying consciousness, utilizing the law of attraction. A logos is one who is adept in analogously qualifying spirit.

† Commentary No. 644

Cosmic Fire 23

Working together, the three laws harmonize with the cosmic song of manifestation. The note of Brahma is "one letter (of the sacred word), with a sequence of four sounds (making five), and is the intelligence aspect dominant in matter." This five-fold (note of) Brahma relates to "the five planes of human evolution, the (fifth) principle of mind, the key to the true inwardness of matter and its control, and the (underlying) law of economy."

The note of Vishnu is seven-fold and allows for the "manipulation of matter" (form-building), etc. The note of Shiva is nine-fold and "produces spiritual synthesis and the dissociation of the spirit from the form." The triple word is thereby twenty-one sounds (from this perspective) of orchestration (of manifestation). The true occultist works with (within) these five (seven) (nine)

(twenty-one) sounds (and partial sequences) in working directly with matter (consciousness) (spirit) (the whole) according to his ability (sanction) and assignments.

From the standpoint of the fire of matter, it is the law of economy and its four subsidiary laws that "the initiate must master (understand and work with effectively) before he can achieve liberation (from matter (the lower world))." The law of vibration deals "with the key note or measure of the matter of each plane (since each atom vibrates to a certain measure)." The law of adaptation governs "the rotary movement of any atom on every plane and sub-plane (since each atom rotates at a certain speed)." The law of repulsion "governs that relationship between atoms, which results in their non-attachment and in their complete freedom from each other (since each atom acts and reacts upon its enviroining atoms)." And the law of friction "governs the heat aspect of any other atom, the radiation of an atom, and the effect of that radiation on any atom (since each atom contributes its quota to the general heat of the atomic system)."

The significance of the law of economy (and its subsidiaries) and the fires of friction (internal fires) (fires of matter) lies in the fundamental (underlying) place of matter on all of the seven planes of consciousness (i.e., consciousness as it relates to the seven planes of material manifestation) (atomic manifestation at all levels) and the necessity for the occultist (spiritual or esoteric student) to (eventually) understand himself (his material nature in context of his aspect of consciousness) and his environment in order to achieve self-mastery and freedom (for service in the greater context of the grand evolutionary plan). Matter on the seven planes provides the means of experience, of development, of evolution, and must therefore be properly embraced and utilized (i.e., eventually without absorption therein). In understanding the basis of his own inherent weakness (i.e., material (selfish) tendencies) and the laws governing the lower nature, the occult student can learn to adjust himself and his methods (through experience, training, and direct qualification) to work in the world and with matter without being enslaved therein and thereby.

Everything is related and interrelated, from the smallest atom of the dense physical plane to the great cosmic logoi and the highest planes of consciousness ever-to-be embraced. The fires of friction provide the fundamental basis of

manifestation and the keys to the evolution of consciousness. The solar and electric fires build upon this fundamental, and eventually bring about the (relatively perfect) products of cosmic manifestation, and fulfillment of the symphony of the spheres.

† Commentary No. 645

Energy and its Derivatives

The most fundamental concept in both physics and metaphysics is that of energy. All that is, is energy in one form or another. Matter is energy. Consciousness is energy. And spirit is energy. Life itself is simply a form of energy, albeit the highest (in the sense that life (spirit) is superior to consciousness, and consciousness is superior to matter). Energy in its various forms cannot be created or destroyed; energy is conserved in every transformation and in every activity. Matter can be destroyed, as matter, but the energy that matter represents persists. Similarly, consciousness can be destroyed, as consciousness, but the energy that consciousness represents persists. Matter (consciousness) (spirit) (life) (energy) can be transformed or converted from one form to another, but the essence (energy) is conserved.

Energy is defined (in physics) as the ability to do work and is acquired by some body or lifeform as a result of having work done on it. This (work) is equivalent, in more metaphysical terms, to qualification. In this sense, universal manifestation begins as life (energy) is induced in or conveyed to the primordial fabric of the manifested universe (i.e., some agency (God) performs work upon manifestation). Energy, force, work, and power are all related but distinctly different concepts. Energy (mass) is the fundamental concept from which force, work, and power are derived by virtue of application, activity, and accomplishment (respectively).

Energy is a characteristic, actually possessed or attributed to some object (matter) (consciousness) (lifeform) and conveyed by the fundamental creative process (manifestation or existence of God). Energy falls into three general categories (as well as numerous specific types): (1) internal energy, the energy of existence (state of matter or consciousness), not accounted for by virtue of position or motion (activity), (2) potential energy, the energy attributed by virtue

of position (in some external force field), and (3) kinetic energy, the energy attributed by virtue of motion. Actually internal energy is the sum of the internal kinetic energy (of vibration) and the (self-induced) potential energy. Energy is the fundamental ability of existence (presence).

Force is defined as any operating agency or application. Force is a vector quantity (quality) by virtue of directionality and is derived entirely from energy and will (or law). There can be energy without (applied) force, but there cannot be force without energy. Will (or law) provides the application of energy which constitutes force. There are numerous types of force (i.e., many ways of applying energy in its various forms) and force can even evoke energy transformations and induce respondent forces. Work is defined as the (process of) transfer of energy from one body (consciousness) (lifeform) to another and is equivalent to activity (e.g., radiation, exertion, the process of qualification, etc.). Work is derived from force (as force is derived from energy). Power (in this proper sense) is defined as the rate of doing work and is equivalent to accomplishment. Thus, strictly speaking, power is not possessed or expended (as energy is possessed or expended (shared) (transferred) (transformed)), although the term "power" is often confused with "energy" (and has commonly come to mean the reservoir of available energy).

Thus, in this broader sense, power leads to energy which leads to force (the application of energy) which leads to work (the activity of some force) which leads to power (accomplishment). More importantly, energy provides the basis (perspective) for understanding the fundamental concepts of physics and metaphysics and their consistency.

Energy Levels 1

Every object (atom, molecule, composite form, lifeform, etc.) possesses (is) energy (life) in one form or another. Each object can exist (manifest) (operate) (live) over some range of energy states or levels which indicate the relative character and quality of life (consciousness). Each object is (more properly) a waveform having an associated wave-function which describes or indicates the range of energy states realizable by that object (waveform). As an object (waveform) (lifeform) develops (evolves), the wave-function is changed and the range of realizable energy states is adjusted.

There are two principal dimensions associated with analysis of energy levels. The first is that of increasing complexity from the material perspective, from simple atomic and molecular states to complex composite forms (organized aggregates of more elemental matter) to beings of consciousness who merely inhabit the composite forms, to beings who induce consciousness, etc. The second is that of the various planes and sub-planes of matter (consciousness), from dense physical levels to etheric levels to astral levels to concrete mental levels. Together, these two principal dimensions (and energy levels) provide a basis for analogy in understanding occult phenomena and human consciousness (in terms of energy levels), application of forces (qualification), occult activity (work accomplished by transference or transformation of energy), the role of the chakras, etc.

The material perspective of atoms and molecules (leading to composite forms) is useful in describing the basic building blocks of the physical, astral, and concrete mental planes (disregarding for the present the sub-atomic or more fundamental nature). The principal differences between physical and astral and mental atoms are polarization and behavior. The concept of energy levels holds for all three planes of consciousness and for all lives and forms found or functioning therein. An atom on any level can be depicted as having a nucleus (central focus of consciousness) and an electronic (energy) field (field of activity). Atoms of the various elements differ in magnitude (size) and complexity, but each can be described by a specific wave-function having

specific energy levels within its range of existence (manifestation). The same is true for molecules, being relatively simple combinations of atoms.

The basic or lowest energy level (energy state) (eigen-state) of an atom or molecule is its ground state, which represents the amount of energy required to create (induce) an atom or molecule of that particular element or substance. The ground state also represents the lowest (basic) vibration of that particular element or substance. As an atom or molecule receives energy, it is generally absorbed in its electronic or vibrational field, meaning that the atom or molecule undergoes excitation to an energy state above the ground state or above the previously achieved energy level (atoms and molecules can also receive or exhibit kinetic and potential energy). If the new energy level (state) is stable, the atom or molecule will remain in that state until something occurs to bring about a change.

If the new energy level (state) is unstable, then the atom or molecule will (relatively quickly) generally radiate (release) (transmit) sufficient energy to allow relaxation to a lower, more stable energy level. The wavelength (frequency) of the radiation depends upon the difference in energy levels (more complex interactions are possible, but the basic atomic and molecular dynamics involve transitions between energy levels, to higher levels by absorption of energy, to lower levels by emission (release or radiation) of energy).

† Commentary No. 647

Hypnosis 1

In orthodox psychology, hypnosis is defined as “an artificially induced sleep-like state characterized by increased suggestibility, decreased initiative and will to act on one’s own, recollection of events not remembered in the normal state, and often amnesia for that which has occurred while hypnotized.” Hypnotism is commonly used in modern psychology as an analysis technique and for effecting certain behavioral modifications. The spiritual student should, however, be aware of the metaphysical mechanisms and associated phenomena of hypnotism and realize that there are very real dangers inherent in allowing oneself to be hypnotized. These dangers relate to the importance of maintaining a positive

control over one's personality vehicle and the bodies (physical, etheric, emotional, and lower mental) of which it is composed.

From the theosophical (metaphysical) perspective, hypnosis is a trance state that results from the temporary (forced) withdrawal of the soul from its normal relationship to the personality (body). Thus, a person in a deep hypnotic trance is somewhat "unensouled." This temporary withdrawal of the soul is the result of the paralysis of the higher mind as the oscillations of the cerebral nervous centers attune themselves to a foreign rate of vibration. This foreign vibratory rate may be imposed in various ways (patterns of light or sound, gazing, direct etheric projection, etc.) (i.e., the various techniques of mesmerism and hypnotism) but regardless of the method, there is (in hypnosis) the imposition of another's will (beneficently or otherwise).

Hypnotic trance is similar to normal sleep in the sense that the higher vehicles (soul) are withdrawn from the dense body, but there is one important distinction that distinguishes the two states. In the normal sleep state, the etheric body (auric envelope) completely encompasses and permeates the dense physical body. In the hypnotic state the etheric body of the subject is displaced in the region of the head, and a part of the etheric body of the hypnotist is supplanted in that region. It is through this etheric implant that the hypnotist is able to control his subject.

The various phenomena (e.g., astral vision and increased mental faculty) associated with hypnosis may be explained by an understanding of what occurs when the outer senses are temporarily paralyzed (as is often the case in hypnosis). There are astral correspondences to the physical sense organs. These astral organs function partially through their physical counterparts, but when there is a paralysis of outer organs, the brain is compelled to report sensory information (energy) gathered by the inner organs. The silence imposed by the forced closure of the outer channels of sensory energy essentially allows "voices from other planes" to make themselves heard. Mental faculty, particularly memory, may be enhanced.

The normal barriers of strictly physical vision are gone and the apparently extraordinary experience of the astral plane may be viewed sometimes along with confused fragments from other planes. Hypnosis can thus open a door

unto the astral plane; yet where self-consciousness has not been developed on the higher planes, the subject remains essentially asleep in the astral and mental worlds, and the memory (imprint) of the hypnotic experience cannot be carried over upon awakening from the trance. On the other hand, a true raja yogi (in a self-willed trance state induced through meditation, intense concentration, or rapt contemplation) can be self-conscious on the higher planes, and is therefore able to imprint his experience on his more highly developed brain, thus having full memory upon withdrawal.

† Commentary No. 648

Hypnosis 2

The basic problem of hypnosis is related to the will of the subject and the imposition of the will of the hypnotist (operator). There is a wide spectrum of hypnotic imposition ranging from the subtle etheric and emotional appeal of the politician or salesman (who wields just enough force of will to impel the relatively weak-minded constituent or customer (believing themselves to be acting of their own will) to do his will) to the artificially induced trance state of "hypnotic sleep." While the ethics and appropriateness of the lesser forms of hypnotic imposition should certainly be questioned, the after-effects suffered from allowing oneself to be put into a hypnotic trance or sleep state are of greater concern. These after-effects are due to the introduction of a part of the hypnotist's etheric body (auric fluid) into that of the subject.

This etheric substance is not (cannot be) completely withdrawn upon awakening, and the part that remains forms a point of entry which makes it easier for the hypnotist, with each subsequent imposition, to subdue the will of the subject. Hypnosis places an individual out of control of himself, and to varying degrees, under the control of ideas or influences that are not his own. These influences (suggestions) may remain with the subject throughout his life, and the subject will only (generally) be released completely from their sway upon the death (and subsequent abstraction of the imposed auric fluid) of the hypnotist. Even when the hypnotist is benevolent and sincerely well-intended, his influence and the ensuing energy relationship that links his subjects to him is a rather serious matter.

All applications of hypnosis should be approached with caution. Even when employed for an apparently positive modification of behavior (e.g., breaking an unhealthy habit or addiction) hypnotism can actually have a negative effect in terms of the evolution of the subject. This is because hypnotism serves to weaken the will of the subject, who is to some degree "living on the thought-vitality" of the hypnotist. While an unhealthy habit, for instance, may be at least temporarily checked, the subject has not truly learned the lesson involved. Since karma cannot be circumvented, he must face the same crisis of self-control and mastery of his own will again whether in this lifetime or another. Where there is recognition that behavior must be modified, yet there is also a real inability (lack of development) of the will to effect such a modification, a more appropriate (positive) course of action would be to seek training in self-hypnosis as an interim step to developing self-discipline.

Hypnosis is also commonly employed by some metaphysical groups which encourage its use as a means of gaining entry to the astral plane to observe (experience) the phenomena (including supposed past life experiences preserved in the record portion of the astral light (akashic record)). The spiritual student should be well aware that simply gaining entry onto a particular plane by no means qualifies one as a trained seer on that plane. The trained seer must have a relatively complete knowledge and understanding of all of the forces at work on any of the planes to which he gains entry. It is only with such understanding that he can interpret with any meaningful degree of validity that which he encounters.

Thus, the spiritual student is cautioned to avoid involvement with hypnosis (it is relatively more important for the spiritual student to maintain self-control and personal stability than it is for others). The associated dangers are quite real, and whatever apparent benefits there are to be gained come anyway, in due course, with spiritual growth and self-discipline.

Interest in the Path 1

Interest in things metaphysical can cover a wide range of degrees and quality of interest in metaphysical matters, ranging from the entirely superficial to the very serious. At some point in a student's approach to or embrace of the spiritual path (and again, periodically), the student should carefully examine the degree and quality of his interest and consciously decide to what extent he (the personality) is determined (or not, as the case may be) to embrace the path (and what that embrace means).

That examination should produce a relatively conscious understanding or appreciation of the inner urging toward or within the path, even though that understanding may be heavily biased by the desire-mind and not necessarily consistent with the soul's relationship to the path (i.e., the non-serious student can hardly be expected to be able to honestly and correctly assess or realize the soul's commitment (or lack thereof) to the spiritual path).

Interest in things metaphysical generally falls into one or another of three broad categories, each (category) being governed or qualified by one of the three major rays. The first category includes casual or peripheral interest in metaphysics or metaphysical things (selectively or generally) and is qualified by the third ray of matter (and the strength of personality). The second category includes semi-casual or semi-peripheral (semi-serious) interest in metaphysics (more generally but not wholeheartedly) and is qualified by the second ray of consciousness (through its relationship to the fourth ray of balance (conflict)). The third category includes serious interest in metaphysics and the spiritual path and is qualified by the first ray of spirit. These ray assignments (realizations) do not correspond (generally) to personality, soul, or monadic rays (i.e., personal or particular rays should not be confused with categorical ray qualifications).

Casual interest in metaphysical matters is possessed by the vast majority of those people who are (casually) approaching the spiritual path but who have no real (proper) understanding of metaphysics or the path, but who are curious about some metaphysical things or metaphysics in general, who are emotionally or intellectually attracted to the superficial aspects of metaphysics (theosophy)

and/or the spiritual path, but who have no (real) concern for changing or improving themselves and who would not permit metaphysical interests to interfere with their mundane and personal pursuits (i.e., self-interest) (except to the extent that their metaphysical interests are mundane and superficial yet absorbing or stimulating in the sense of experience, sense-indulgence, or glamour). Thus casual or peripheral interest may be genuine (sincere) or otherwise, but merely superficial.

Serious interest in metaphysical matters (theosophy) and the spiritual path implies commitment to the path and a relatively whole-hearted embrace of the disciplines and (proper) practices of the path (to the extent that they are known and reasonably understood). In this sense, a person who has no (proper) conscious commitment to the path is not considered "serious." Serious interest (on the part of the serious student) means substantial focus of consciousness upon matters metaphysical in the constructive, spiritual sense and being substantially more committed to the spiritual path than to self-indulgence or personality endeavors (while the casual student is substantially more committed to personal experience and expression than to spiritual matters or the spiritual nature). The spiritual path is not the place for part-time endeavors; the path is a way of life that reaches into all aspects of the personality.

† Commentary No. 650

Interest in the Path 2

Semi-casual (semi-serious) interest in metaphysical and/or spiritual matters is the middle ground of not being fully or substantially committed to either the personal (personality-centeredness) (self-centeredness) (relative coarseness) or the spiritual (commitment to the soul and the spiritual path) (progressive refinement) (upliftment for service), which implies that both are attractive but cannot (at that stage) be reconciled, leading to some degree of confusion and inconsistency (i.e., the personality is still strong enough (in the sense of independence and separateness) to provide rationalizations for not proceeding toward the path).

The casual student makes no pretensions of commitment to the spiritual path (and the issue of such commitment is not even considered) (i.e., the concept is not understood by the casual student). Similarly, the serious student is not confused about his own commitment; it is clear and substantial, without appreciable reservation. The semi-casual or semi-serious student on the other hand is not clearly committed to the path, although such a student may believe that he is, but his demonstrated values will generally be contradictory (i.e., in some ways self-indulgent and in other ways relatively selfless).

The range of metaphysical interest (in this categorical sense) is broad and the three categories are merely generally defined. Likewise the (first) threshold between casual and semi-casual interest is merely generally (qualitatively) defined as is the (third) threshold between semi-serious and serious interest. The casual student has a merely superficial interest in metaphysical matters, while the semi-casual student is substantially (genuinely) interested in metaphysical matters, albeit without commitment and (generally) with some (considerable) glamour and illusion in effect. While the semi-serious student is definitely (consciously) approaching the spiritual path, the serious student is clearly upon the path, having made a conscious commitment to the path and all that it represents (that is understood).

A third (second proper) threshold is actually the more telling, that is the qualitative threshold between semi-casual interest and semi-serious interest. The semi-casual student has a balance of personal forces and values that favor the personality (self-interest, self-indulgence, personal experience and expression, the desire nature (kama-manas) predominating) while the semi-serious student has a balance of personal forces and values that favor the soul (and the spiritual path). In effect, the semi-casual student expects the path to accommodate the student (sacrifices are made to the extent that they are convenient), while the semi-serious student is willing to (or at least seeks to) accommodate the path as it is understood. The casual and semi-casual students work against the natural resistance of the personality self-interest, and gradually (eventually) (ultimately) cross the threshold to semi-serious involvement. From that point onward spiritual momentum is achieved and improved, as the balance of forces has shifted in favor of the soul and the resistance of the personality becomes relatively subtle.

The casual student may remain casual, remaining part of the mainstream of casual evolution, or become semi-casual. The semi-casual student will eventually choose one or the other (casual evolution or semi-serious participation in conscious evolution), while the semi-serious student will necessarily be drawn onto the spiritual path proper. The continuum (from casual interest to serious involvement) persists, for a flow of souls persists that represents the evolutionary momentum of humanity.

† Commentary No. 651

Solar Fire and the Son

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2) begins with consideration of nine introductory questions, the first of which deals with the relationship of the son to the sun. Prior to manifestation are spirit (purusha) and matter (prakriti), the male (father) and female (mother) principles (respectively) in quiescence. During manifestation these two principles are “approximated; they interact upon each other; activity supersedes quiescence; positivity replaces negativity; movement is seen in place of passivity, and the two primordial factors are no longer neutral to each other, but attract and repulse, interact and utilize.”

Only in manifestation (the dynamic interaction between spirit and matter) can form be “animated by life, and consciousness demonstrated.” Thus solar fire (consciousness) is produced by the interaction of “electric fire (spirit) (the father) and fire by friction (energized matter) (the mother).” The solar fire is “distinguished above all else by its evolutionary development, and by the gradual intensification of the heat to be felt, and of the light to be seen.” Thus the son of God is the solar logos on its own (soul) level and analogously (microcosmically), the human soul on its level (atma-buddhi-manas). It is the soul (of whatever lifeform being considered) that is “the product of the approximation of the two poles of spirit and of matter,” while the personality and the solar system are merely the lower reflection (appearance) of that respective soul being demonstrated (however imperfectly) in matter.

The human being is (analogously) (as a soul) “a miniature sun distinguished by the qualities of heat and light” (however much masked by the veil of matter).

As evolution proceeds the inner flame of the son (human soul) (the solar logos) will intensify, the fires will become balanced, each son of God will become perfected, the individualized selves will merge into "one flame with countless sparks," and the whole will thereby achieve perfection (completion). By virtue of the resulting radiation, the system (solar logos) "will link up with its cosmic center, and thus effect the liberation of the son, and His return to the far distant source from whence the primal impulse originated."

In each case (level), the soul (son) is "the radiant result of the union of spirit and matter, manifesting through its qualities of light and heat, the product (solar fire) of the electrical union of fire by friction and electric fire, and the middle manifestation" (aspect of consciousness). The causal body (the soul) of the solar logos (and analogously, of the human being) is in the process of evolution (completion). The greater (solar logos) depends upon the relative perfection of its units of consciousness (human souls) for its own advancement and further manifestation for experience and expression. When the critical mass is achieved (i.e., when sufficient numbers of individualized souls are merged in perfected flame (solar fire)), the whole will shine forth and transfer (radiate) its essence beyond the solar ring-pass-not.

The "relationship of the son to the sun is the same as man's relationship to the vehicle (personality) through which he functions." As life animates the form, the work of evolution proceeds on its various levels and through its various cycles. In this sense, spirit and matter are the cosmic precursors; life is spirit manifested; consciousness is the (intermediate) product or result of manifested life (induced by the interaction of spirit and matter); and radiation is the result (indication) of substantial evolutionary progress. Each nova, then, indicates a solar (cosmic) initiation, and the emergence of a fully functioning son of God.

Solar Fire and Evolution

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2) continues with its consideration of solar fire and a second introductory issue of evolution and its procedure. "The whole method of evolution is simply that of adjusting the matter aspect to the spirit aspect, so that the former proves entirely adequate as a body of expression for the latter." Evolution proceeds through various interrelated life cycles, has a number of specific objectives for, and involves a number of different (levels of) units of consciousness.

Each life cycle (incarnation) involves recapitulation, expression of achieved abilities, development and adjustment (evolution) (increased realization (on some level)), and (some) contribution to the greater (collective) unit of consciousness. In time, the individual becomes more and more conscious of the evolutionary process and inevitably begins to cooperate more and more fully with evolutionary objectives. This is as much true for the solar logos on its level as the atomic (elemental) lives on theirs. On each level, the objectives of the various lives are to "(1) radiate occult heat beyond their own individualized ring-pass-not, (2) occultly blaze forth and demonstrate light or fiery objectivity, (3) expand (in quality of consciousness) so as to embrace that which lies beyond their own immediate spheres, (4) fuse and blend the two fires so as to produce perfectly the central (solar) fire, (5) blend spirit and matter so that a body is produced that will adequately express spirit, (6) merge the essence within the form, which is occultly qualified during evolution, with the essence in all forms, (7) attain human, systemic, and cosmic maturity, and (8) achieve mastery on three planes of the solar system (in the case of humanity), on five planes of the solar system (in the case of planetary logoi), and on three cosmic planes (in the case of the solar logos)."

These objectives belong to the respective soul, not to the reflective (respective) personality. The objective of the personality (instrument) is to be more responsive to the soul thereby contributing to the soul's fulfillment. The soul is the (proper) unit of consciousness and evolution; the personality is artificial by comparison to the soul. The ultimate objective is a balancing of systemic magnetic opposites (of which our solar logos is one of two poles), once all of the

internals have been reconciled, merged, and blended in flaming harmony. Solar fire is the domain and the means of evolution and reconciliation. Solar fire is the middle ground between purusha and prakriti, between electric fire and fire by friction. All of the realm of the (internal) fires of matter constitutes an instrumentality for the work of solar fire.

The units of consciousness (evolution) are relatively few and wholly interrelated by the seven rays and associated qualification and correspondence. The principal unit of evolution (from the human perspective) is the son (the Grand Man of the Heavens) (the solar logos) who “manifests through the sun and the seven sacred planets, each of whom embodies one of His seven principles, just as He in His totality embodies one of the principles of a greater cosmic entity (logos).” The second level of evolution is composed of the seven planetary logoi (heavenly men) each manifesting (primarily) through a sacred planet. While the solar logos embodies the second ray (in the cosmic sense), the seven planetary logoi embody the seven sub-rays (respectively) of the second ray. The third level of evolution is the human being (humanity), who seeks to develop and manifest within himself (eventually) all seven rays (on his level).

The seven are ultimately and progressively unified, involving a number of synthetic planets or stages, until all (the one) is revealed.

† Commentary No. 653

Perspective and Orientation

Perspective is defined as the interrelation or context in which some object or subject or its parts are perceived (generally emotionally and to some extent mentally). Perspective is the point of view of the observer (perceiver) (thinker) and is very much subject to the bias, prejudice, and other habits of thinking and feeling that color the ways in which people see and evaluate observations and experience. Thus perception (and perspective) is subject to the influence (bias) of the personality, including the relative coarseness of the physical body, the relative health or vitality of the etheric double, the relative quality (stability) (clarity) of the astral body (aura), and the relative quality (stability) (clarity) of the concrete mind (mental body).

Perspective may be relatively good (positive) (constructive) or bad (negative) (destructive), broad (inclusive) or narrow (exclusive), brief or persistent, loosely-held (flexible) or closely-held (inflexible), lightly biased or heavily biased, subject to some maya (glamour) (illusion), etc. Perspective is heavily influenced by a person's character, quality, temperament, and values. Most people do not realize how biased they are in the way they perceive people, experience, the world, etc. The (qualified) esoteric student is less biased than ordinary humanity due to considerable refinement of the personality (vehicles) and considerable self-discipline resulting in relative clarity. The (qualified) esoteric student is also more aware of his (relatively limited) bias and therefore more able to compensate for and account for that bias. The (qualified) esoteric student is also more able to consciously utilize a number of different perspectives (to see things in different ways), to consciously realize his perspective (thereby being able to weigh his perception), and to integrate (correlate) data obtained from the various perspectives utilized.

For example, the (qualified) esoteric student is neither (exclusively) liberal nor conservative in his views, but able to perceive things from both points of view and recognize (integrate) the best (better) attributes (and observations) of both (or more). The (qualified) esoteric student is both able to view things in a narrow (closely-focused) perspective for detailed analysis and in a broad (widely-focused) perspective for correlation and inclusion. The bias of spiritual and esoteric students is largely a matter of having spiritual values, esoteric knowledge, and a relatively refined nature (i.e., a relatively constructive bias). Even so, the student must endeavor to remain open-minded, for the existence of or adherence to opinions is ever (at least partially) preclusive or inhibitive of further progress.

In this context (metaphysical psychology), a perspective is any one of a number of points of view, while an orientation is a relatively predominative (general or lasting) perspective (direction of thought, inclination, or interest). In this sense (for example), the (qualified) esoteric student may utilize various liberal, conservative, and progressive points of view, without having a liberal, conservative, or progressive orientation.

Spiritual and esoteric students (should) have spiritual and esoteric orientations (respectively), which incorporate their relative refinement; their relative depth and breadth of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom; and their relative quality and capability in consciousness. The spiritual and esoteric perspectives (orientations) (depending on whether relatively temporarily or generally held) are relatively broad and inclusive, appreciative of cause and effect relationships, somewhat eclectic relative to ordinary points of view, and relatively free from personal bias (prejudice) (opinion).

† Commentary No. 654

Event Orientation

An event is something that happens and is marked by a particular (relatively well-defined) location and (relatively short) duration (in space and time). Events may be or appear to be relatively significant or insignificant (depending on emotional appeal (glamour) or rationalization (illusion)).

An event orientation is the largely subconscious and predominating point of view of much of humanity, wherein (selected) events tend to be noticeable, noteworthy, significant, etc. A person's date (and circumstances) of birth, death, major injury or illness, marriage, divorce, graduation, change of address, employment, promotion, etc., are relatively (generally) considered significant (in the event orientation). Similarly, natural disasters, major accidents, crimes, conjunctions, transits, supernovae, etc., are generally perceived by the bulk of humanity as events and as being relatively significant.

The event perspective (and the event orientation) (focusing primarily on events (or succession of events)) is one of the products of the grand illusion of separate existence (physical reality) (ego). It is quite natural for people (personalities in incarnation) to focus on discrete events, for those events are much more noticeable (memorable) (recognizable) to the simple (physical) vision and experience than are the underlying processes that actually account for events. In the limited (event) (superficial) perspective (orientation), events are pretty much all there is, since, at least superficially, events happen and to some extent lead to other events. With only physical (sense) impressions and emotional (and mental) reactions to physical (sense) impressions, ordinary people have no

reason or ability to perceive anything (much) more. Thus it is also only natural that (particular) events should capture attention and that people should be attached to events (and anniversaries of events). This is all part of the intended experience (trial by matter) and not without its affordance of learning, for the forces that produce events lead to impressions and consequential motivations, changes in attitudes, etc. It hardly matters (at this stage of consciousness) that the event-oriented person thinks (incorrectly) that events per se are the catalysts for subsequent activity and events, whereas in actuality, the events are merely brief, superficial indications of the underlying, relatively longer-term karmic (causal and consequential) forces.

From the esoteric standpoint, events are not (in themselves) significant. The causal and consequential forces are significant. The underlying processes and associated relationships are significant. The measure of learning and understanding reflected as quality of consciousness is significant. The specifics and particulars of event-oriented experience are simply not important relative to the underlying processes and forces. Those (the bulk of humanity) who sleep through life in the physical world, being largely unaware of karmic processes, quality of consciousness, etc., are learning mainly incidentally and subconsciously. Those (few) who awaken to the underlying reality are simply consequently and subsequently relatively able to learn more directly, more consciously, and more effectively.

The problem of the event orientation is a matter of association of symbol with reality. Instead of recognizing events (and outer objects) as symbols and indications of underlying reality, they are more generally (and wrongly) considered to be real (and therefore relatively significant). In time, the spiritual student becomes less and less satisfied with the superficial (event orientation) and gradually adapts and transforms the focus and habits of waking-consciousness to the process orientation.

Process Orientation

A process is a natural phenomenon marked by gradual changes that lead toward a particular result. Processes are manifested over time (in the case of processes associated with objective (physical) manifestation) and are perceived by the bulk of humanity mainly by their associated events (or superficial indications). Processes are much more significant than events in the sense that (1) processes are heavily involved with causal forces, (2) processes lead to further (consequential and subsequent) processes (events do not lead to further events; processes and associated forces lead to further processes and associated forces, while events are merely superficial by comparison), and (3) events are merely indicative of the underlying processes (forces).

A process orientation is the relatively consciously embraced point of view of the bulk of (albeit few) serious spiritual students and disciples (esoteric students). In the process perspective (orientation) the emphasis (focus) is upon the causal chain of karmic (causative and consequential) forces in relation to the evolution of consciousness and the unfolding panorama of manifestation. Events are incidental consequences of processes and their associated forces. An event may be traumatic to those who are involved, but the precursive activities (behavior) (attitudes) and attachments of the involved people and the underlying evolutionary processes are more significant.

Those who have progressed to the process orientation but without particular spiritual qualification are simply those who realize that achievement and accomplishment are the result of (the process of applying) effort (e.g., hard work). With deeper (more subtle) understanding, the work motive is gradually transformed into service motive, as personal objectives are transformed into impersonal objectives in (relative) cooperation with the evolutionary plan. But this practice (transformation) (process) is actually a matter of identification with the spiritual path (on some level) which is a process and not an event. Conscious appreciation of processes allows more effective participation in processes, whereas (mere) appreciation of an event in itself leaves a person relatively unconnected with the processes and forces which incidentally produced the event in the first place.

The whole of (evolutionary) manifestation is process-oriented. The patterns of evolution (manifestation) are interrelated processes within processes, each with its objectives and characteristics (qualifications). Life (consciousness) (form) unfolds, grows, develops, progresses, and interrelates through a succession of cyclic processes and the manifold of associated karmic forces. For every apparently (but not really) significant event, there is a causal chain of significant processes and involvements over a relatively considerable period of time and there are further causal chains that emerge (largely) as a consequence (not of the event but) of those earlier processes. Thus major (?) cataclysmic events, with momentous and violent (overwhelming) upheavals, and major (?) cosmic alignments, with great correlation of forces and releases of energy (qualification), are not important compared to the quality of consciousness and evolutionary intentions (processes) that are in effect for considerable periods of time and bring about the events.

The problem of event orientation is that people are so easily distracted by (enamored with) superficial things and events, that the more significant relationships and processes are generally not recognized. But with increasing spiritual orientation, the spiritual student becomes relatively free from such distractions and more properly focused on the (processes of) spiritual work.

† Commentary No. 656

Sleep 1

Sleep, from the orthodox perspective, is defined as “the natural periodic suspension of consciousness during which the powers of the body are restored.” This definition is accurate for the physical body, since the consciousness which is suspended is only that of the waking consciousness. Sleep is a very active period from the standpoint of consciousness on the planes above the physical (particularly the astral).

“Going to sleep” is essentially the process whereby the higher principles withdraw from the dense physical and etheric (vital) bodies. Clairvoyantly, the higher principles are seen to hover near the physical body (and its etheric

counterpart), using the astral (and to some extent, depending on evolution, the mental) body as their vehicle. The processes of going to sleep and entering into transition (death) are similar in some aspects. In death, the soul withdraws from (association with) the dense physical body for the last time, and draws the etheric body out with it (severing the life thread). It is this separation of the etheric body from the dense physical which prevents any further vitalization by the life force (prana) of the body as a composite form (organism). Every night, during sleep, while a person is unconscious on the physical plane, he or she is still alive and active on other planes. Death is essentially only a longer period of suspension of physical plane consciousness.

The primary function of sleep is that of restoration, which is practicable only during the separation of the higher principles from the lower. During the hours of waking activity there is a constant struggle between the etheric and astral (mental) bodies whose desires (thoughts) have the effect of breaking down tissues in the dense physical body which the etheric labors to harmonize, cleanse, and restore. As the hours of waking activity lengthen, the etheric body gradually loses ground in the struggle, and there comes a point of fatigue wherein the etheric body's ability to properly process (channel) prana deteriorates. This deterioration results in a saturation with prana. Clairvoyantly, the aura of a well rested person would show "rhythmical vibrations" of "the electrical waves of life." The aura of one who is fatigued, however, would be "composed of atoms whirling with an almost incredible spasmodic rapidity" stemming from the over saturation with Life Force.

The astral and mental bodies are also in need of restoration at the end of a period of activity. The struggle that goes on between the various bodies has a deteriorating effect on the substance of each. The work of restoration during sleep begins with the mental plane and proceeds downward to the physical. The restoration process on mental and astral levels involves retrospection ((honestly) reviewing the events, feelings, and thoughts of the day in reverse order (generally proceeding from the effects to the causes)). The process serves to replace distorted perceptions, errors, and disharmonies with true impressions, wisdom, and harmonic tone. There are three ways of assimilating experience through retrospection: (1) consciously, during waking hours, (2) unconsciously, during sleep, and (3) in the period following death.

The more experience one can assimilate consciously, the less one needs to assimilate during sleep; the more one can assimilate during sleep (dependent upon the evolution and responsiveness of the astral and mental bodies), the less one needs to assimilate after death, and consequently, the less time that will be required between incarnations. Consciously adhering to a retrospective exercise each night before passing into sleep can greatly enhance spiritual growth and understanding.

† Commentary No. 657

Sleep 2

In addition to the active processes of restoration and assimilation, several other activities take place during sleep. Sleep provides a potent opportunity for the overcoming of attachments, and it allows much appropriate service work and learning to be done through the astral (and mental) vehicle, unencumbered by the limitations of the physical body. During sleep is also encountered a variety of dream activity.

During sleep, some of the weak attachments of the personality may be effectively overcome. There is some genuine wisdom behind the common concept of "sleeping on a problem." If there is a problem or concern for which an appropriate solution cannot be recognized in the waking consciousness, frequently an appropriate approach (direction) will be recognizable following an adequate period of sleep, or it may be realized, through the cleansed and restored vehicles, that a problem really does not (did not) exist at all. Before going to sleep, one should simply pose their concern, and then deliberately let go of it (consciously detach oneself from it). Where there are strong attachments or concerns borne in the emotional body or mind prior to sleep, there will be an incomplete separation of the bodies, and the restorative (retrospective) (assimilation) (learning) processes cannot take place. The individual will feel no more rested (probably more fatigued) upon awakening than he or she did prior to sleep.

Sleep is also the time during which many spiritual students perform varied service activities on the astral plane (mental plane for some more advanced disciples), and during which they may receive teaching in the "hall of learning"

on the highest level of the astral plane, and in the "hall of wisdom" on the mental plane. For the most part, when consciousness on the astral or mental planes is not fully developed, these activities will not sufficiently impress the physical brain for there to be any memory of them upon awakening (except occasionally in the form of a dream). Eventually, the spiritual student reaches a point in development at which he can maintain a continuity of consciousness as his astral body slips out of the physical upon going to sleep, and he is able to work in full consciousness on the astral plane as he works in an analogous manner on the physical plane while awake. While deliberate attempts at prematurely cultivating this continuity of consciousness are not advised, the spiritual student can (should) constructively qualify his pre-sleep thoughts. An appropriate qualification would first encourage the completion of the restoration work on his own bodies. From there he might proceed to a qualification for generalized service, that he might be of help wherever needed. He would maintain an attitude (energy) of goodwill, possibly mentally sounding a service-oriented mantra as part of the qualification.

There is a wide spectrum of dream activity and quality occurring during sleep. The most common (confused) dreams of average humanity are merely the result of the incomplete separation of the bodies (the astral body remaining closely identified with the physical body (often due to strong mundane attachments)). This abnormal condition results in the varied phenomena of the astral plane being mixed in a confused and incongruous way with the vague and agitated impressions still playing upon the brain cells from the subconsciousness and conscious thoughts and emotions.

These dreams are most common in the first hours after going to sleep and in the hour before the astral body completely re-enters and awakens the physical body. No importance should be ascribed to such dreams.

Duality and Consciousness

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2) continues with its consideration of solar fire and introductory issues of duality and consciousness. It is apparent to qualified occult investigators that our particular solar system is evolving along the lines of duality, but why this should be so is not so apparent (it is also not so apparent what alternatives there may be). One of the keys to duality is consciousness and its place in the scheme of things.

The problem of (understanding) duality is the problem of existence, and is resolved (partially) when the (qualified) esoteric student can recognize for himself that (1) "the entire solar system embodies the consciousness of an entity who originates on planes (of consciousness) entirely without (beyond) the solar ring-pass-not" and (2) "manifestation is periodical and the law of rebirth (karma) (consequence) is the method that evolution takes in dealing with a human being, a planetary logos, and a solar logos." But underlying these two facts is the basic fabric of evolutionary manifestation in which (1) spirit exists, (2) spirit is reflected into matter, and (3) consciousness is born of the interaction of spirit and matter. Or in ray terminology, (1) the first ray (logos) (spirit) pre-exists, (2) the third ray is spirit (the first ray) reflected into matter, and (3) the second ray (the son) emerges as a consequence of interaction between the first ray (father) and the third ray (mother).

All lives (as lives) belong to one or another of these three primary rays. There are lesser and greater lives (predominately) of spirit, who dwell and evolve in the realm of spirit. There are lesser and greater lives (predominately) of matter, who dwell and evolve in the realm of matter. And there are lesser and greater lives (predominately) of consciousness, who dwell and evolve in the realm of consciousness. Human (and many greater) lives are lives of consciousness, standing midway between spirit and matter, being not predominately one or the other but having a spiritual nature (the monad) masked by a material nature (the personality and its bodies). The human being (in manifestation) is primarily the soul (consciousness aspect) and the soul (the Christ aspect) is the "meeting place of matter or active intelligent substance and of spirit or the basic will." Man (the human being) (soul) "assumes objectivity in order to express that

which is in each of the two opposites (spirit and matter), plus the result of their merging in himself.”

From the standpoint of cosmic fire, the work of evolution leads to the fire by friction (the fires of matter) “producing heat and radiation and calling forth a reaction from its opposite electric fire” (the fire of spirit). The blending of the fires of matter (heat) and the electric fire produces solar fire (the son) (consciousness) (light). “Man blends the pairs of opposites, and the three fires meet in him. He is the place of atonement for all the three aspects.” Thus man (the Christ-self) is relatively important, in principle (meaning that individuals and particulars are not important, but that humanity as a whole contributes to the consciousness of the logos). But humanity (the manifold of human souls) merely constitute the cells of consciousness (at some level) of the logos.

The planet (earth) “is regarded as the turning point or the battle ground between spirit and matter” with man corresponding to the planetary and solar logoi and reflecting (microcosmically) their struggle. Thus are duality and consciousness accounted for (consciousness being the field of interaction between spirit and matter) (during manifestation). The three aspects of the logos “seek full development by means of each other.”

† Commentary No. 659

Atoms and Logoi 1

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2) continues with its consideration of solar fire and the introductory issue of “direct analogy between the development of a system, a planet, a man, and an atom.” Broad correspondences exist between these four levels of existence, each upon its own turn of the spiral.

An atom is distinguished by (1) its spheroidal form (shape) and definite ring-pass-not, (2) its “internal arrangement which comprises its sphere of influence,” (3) its life-activity and qualities of rotary motion, discrimination, and ability to develop, (4) its threefold and “sevenfold inner economy in process of evolution” and vitalization, (5) its being “governed by the law of economy, coming slowly under the law of attraction, and eventually coming under the law of synthesis,”

(6) its "group relation" or "its place within all forms," and (7) its "development of consciousness or responsiveness" to "electrical stimulation, affecting its objective form; magnetic stimulation, acting upon its subjective life; and the united effort of the two stimulations, producing consequent internal growth and development."

A man (human being) is similarly distinguished by (1) his spheroidal form (causal body) and definite ring-pass-not, (2) his internal arrangement and developing sphere of influence and range of activity (all within is qualified by his nature and consciousness), (3) his life-activity or extent of self-consciousness, including the qualities of rotary motion (the wheel of life), discrimination (free will), and "ability to evolve, to increase vibration, and to make contact," (4) his threefold and "sevenfold inner economy and development of his seven principles" (four active, with the fifth (mental) under development), (5) his being "governed by the law of attraction, having evolved through the law of economy, and coming (albeit slowly) under the law of synthesis," (6) his "group relation" and "place within the group form" (soul groups and planetary logoi "are formed by the aggregate of human and deva units)," and (7) his "development of consciousness, responsiveness to contact (electrical stimulation (pranic response), magnetic stimulation (from his soul group), and united effect), and growth of awareness."

A planetary logos (heavenly man) is comparably distinguished by (1) his spheroidal shape and ring-pass-not (the entire planetary scheme), (2) his "internal arrangement and sphere of influence (activity animating the planetary chain)," (3) his "spiritual life control, the power whereby he animates his sevenfold nature" (seven chains), his "activity on one or other of the triadal planes" (atma-buddhi-manas), and qualities of rotary motion (his life wheel is a planetary scheme of seven chains), discrimination (on a higher turn of the spiral but analogous to that of the atom and of man), and the ability to evolve (similarly higher), (4) his "eventual ultimate synthesis from the seven into the three and from thence into one (i.e., the obscuration of the globes and the blending into unity of the seven principles which each globe is evolving)," (5) his being "governed (on his level) by the law of attraction, having transcended the law of economy, and rapidly coming under the law of synthesis," (6) his "group relation" or "finding his place within the logoi groups," and (7) his "development of consciousness" and responsiveness "(electrical stimulation

(response to solar radiation and parallel planetary radiation) and magnetic stimulation from sources outside the system altogether)."

A progression in order of magnitude thus leads inevitably from the atom to man (the human being), from man to the planetary logos, and from the planetary logos to the solar logos.

† Commentary No. 660

Atoms and Logoi 2

A solar logos (grand man of the heavens) is analogously distinguished by (1) his spheroidal shape and ring-pass-not, comprising "the entire circumference of the solar system, the seven planetary schemes (and three synthetic), and all that is included within the sphere of influence of the sun," (2) the "activity of the life animating the ten schemes," the embracing of all lives on all levels within the system, his steadily increasing vibration and qualification, and the systemic rotation, (3) the "extent of logoi control exerted at any given period," his sevenfold vibration, and qualities of rotary motion (the wheel of the ten schemes and a day of Brahma), discrimination (on his level), and the "ability to progress, to increase vibration, and to gain full self-consciousness on cosmic levels," (4) the "ultimate synthesis of the seven schemes into three and thence to one, including the obscuration of the schemes and the unification of the seven principles which they (planetary logoi) embody," (5) his "subjection to the law of his being" (he is "governed by the law of synthesis, while his subjective life is governed by the law of attraction and his material form is governed by the law of economy"), (6) his "group relation" or his seeking to find himself and the "position and place of his polar opposite, and to merge and blend with that polar opposite," and (7) his "unfoldment of consciousness through the unfolding of all the conscious units in his body" and his responsiveness "(electrical stimulation (response to electrical fohatic force from other stellar centers), magnetic stimulation (emanating from certain cosmic centers), and their united effect)."

There are of course two great patterns of evolution within the solar sphere, necessarily interdependent and complementary, but nonetheless distinctly different. The active pattern includes the progression from atoms to men to planetary logoi to solar logoi (and beyond). The passive pattern includes the

deva (angelic) lives comparable to atoms, men, planetary logoi, and solar logoi, but necessarily distinctly different in their fundamental (passive) nature.

Thus analogy and correspondence (in this context) is two-dimensional: in one dimension the various orders and levels of active and passive lives are quite comparable (in magnitude and position in the evolutionary scheme) but not similar in nature or in the laws under which the two great patterns evolve, while in the other dimension, the various active orders are comparable (one to another) in many respects (and in their fundamental nature), differing only in details particular to their turn of the spiral, and the various passive orders are comparable (one to another) (but not (in that dimension) to the active orders).

Thus the seven measures of comparability (analogy) for the four active orders (atomic, human, planetary, and solar) do not apply to the passive orders (which have their own measures) (although some measures are apparently similar but fundamentally different). The difference is principally the matter of intelligent activity and intelligent passivity (these are two fundamentally different kinds of intelligence, born of different processes and developed under different rules (forces)).

Even occultly, the active lives are more apparent (to the perception and understanding of active intelligence (human consciousness)) than are the passive (deva) lives, but the deva lives play a nonetheless equally significant role in evolutionary manifestation, for every active force there must be a passive counterpart, for every active life there is a passive complement, and for every action there is a consequence.

Coarseness 1

For the incarnated student seeking to live a proper spiritual life within the noise and confusion of the external, mundane world, there is a problem of relative coarseness. In this context, coarseness refers to the relatively crude matter on physical, etheric, emotional (astral), and concrete mental levels that may be incorporated into or affect the personality and/or its various vehicles of consciousness. Coarseness is a problem to the extent that it is detrimental or impedimentive to achieving or maintaining a meditative disposition (spiritual alignment) during the daily activities.

Matter is naturally or inherently coarse (of relatively coarse or inharmonious vibration) and so the matter utilized by the soul to recreate the personality (physical and etheric bodies, emotions, concrete mind) must be refined to some extent in order to be suitable for that personality (i.e., the matter available must be refined to the level achieved or earned by evolutionary and spiritual endeavor). Thus a relatively unevolved person will have (physical, etheric, astral, mental) bodies formed of rather crude matter, while a relatively highly evolved person will have personality vehicles (bodies) formed of considerably refined matter (i.e., utilizing greater preponderance of matter of the higher (or more refined) sub-planes). As a person develops or progresses (spiritually) in any incarnation, so will the relative refinement of the various personality instruments be improved, particularly as the process of refinement is intelligently and consciously (deliberately) embraced.

The problem of coarseness is compounded by both internal and external factors. Internal factors (that contribute to coarseness) include habits in thinking or feeling (or indulgence) that cause the matter of the personality (on one or more levels) to vibrate more coarsely. Examples are critical thinking, anger, resentment (and the various negative or destructive emotions), listening to coarse or loud music, smoking, allowing the physical body to remain dirty (i.e., insufficient cleaning), eating meat (fish) (fowl), etc. These habits tend to increase the coarseness of the affected bodies by replacing a measure of the material substance of the bodies by matter of lower, coarser vibration.

External or environmental factors (that contribute to coarseness) include all of the negative or detrimental environmental forces and relatively coarse matter of that environment (and the people inhabiting or functioning in that environment). Examples are living or working with or near relatively crude or coarse people, living or working in a noisy, smoky, or dirty place, being susceptible to (particular) negative or detrimental forces on etheric, astral, or concrete mental levels, etc. These (tend to) contribute to the coarseness of the affected bodies by induction, since unless otherwise qualified, each body will naturally incorporate the (relatively coarse or relatively refined) matter of the immediate environment. Being exposed to a coarse environment or coarse people (external forces) is one (potentially detrimental) matter, having disdain merely compounds the problem (i.e., consciously finding (external) coarseness to be repulsive only serves to incorporate coarse matter on astral and concrete mental levels (i.e., disdain in inherently negative)).

Thus coarseness is not a simple matter, particularly in consideration of the relatively coarse world in which we live and the relative stress and strain of living in accordance with the spiritual or subjective world of the soul while being surrounded by the noise and haste (and coarseness) of the mundane world. Since coarseness is the natural state of the unenlightened, it is only (generally) a problem for the spiritual student.

† Commentary No. 662

Coarseness 2

The solution (intelligent response) to the problem of coarseness involves three substantial endeavors (for the spiritual student): (1) a conscious, deliberate effort of personality purification, (2) a conscious, deliberate effort to eliminate detrimental habits, and (3) a conscious, deliberate qualification of the immediate environment and relationships.

Personality purification involves cleaning, qualifying, and uplifting the (matter of the) physical, etheric (astral), and (concrete) mental bodies (vehicles). Purification (qualification) (refinement) exercises should be performed daily (or more often) in conjunction with meditation and periodically throughout the daily activities. These exercises include bathing (daily) (for both personal,

physical cleanliness and by conscious association to higher order purification), the sounding of appropriate mantras or affirmations, visualization of light energy sweeping through the various subtle bodies, etc. The elimination of detrimental habits is a straightforward matter of personal discipline as a consequence of intelligent application of the will (i.e., with honest determination, the old patterns are replaced by the new, more appropriate patterns) (these efforts are oft undermined by the independent, subtle self-centeredness of the ego, but with sufficient qualification (intention) even the process of undermining can be transformed into intelligent cooperation).

The qualification of the environment, the qualification of student's relationship to the environment, and the qualification of the student's relationships to people in the environment are all essential aspects of achieving and maintaining a refined state during incarnation. Environmental qualification is simply an extension of self-qualification, visualizing an expanse of light energy extending from the individual (light) aura to fill the immediate environment (room, building, etc.), sweeping (uplifting) all of the intervening matter with that light energy (or through more advanced occult methods) on all levels (etheric, astral, concrete mental). Once this qualified atmosphere (immediate environment) is established, then all who enter that environment will be qualified by it to some extent (depending on their own relative coarseness and responsiveness to the qualified atmosphere) (and likewise is that atmosphere qualified to some extent by those who enter it, so that the effectiveness of a spiritual student's qualification of his environment may be limited (but nonetheless worthy of effort and continual renewal of effort (qualification) in order to maintain some appropriate balance)). The direct qualification of relationships is often necessary in order to overcome personal attachments and complications and thus should complement these other endeavors.

Any one or some of these efforts will have rather limited success, since the lack in any one will generally undermine the utility of the others. But when all of these efforts are properly undertaken, together, then the spiritual student can constructively and more effectively serve within (almost) any environment and with (almost) any circumstances. The results include improved physical, emotional, and mental health (to the extent that is karmically permitted), a greater feeling of well-being (which is important to subsequent qualifications), and greater spiritual responsiveness.

As the student becomes adept in these efforts (all of which imply need for an integrated personality), then the efforts become rather well-established along more subtle lines (and more occult means) (i.e., the efforts eventually become automatic and without need of (much) conscious attention) and the spiritual student completes the preliminary aspects of the spiritual path.

† Commentary No. 663

The Open Aura 1

The human aura consists of the personal energy field that incorporates (includes) the etheric web, the astral body, and the concrete mind. The human aura may be open or closed, or more generally, partially open and partially closed. The extent of openness determines the extent to which a person is vulnerable or susceptible to external impressions (subject to karmic qualification) and depends on the relative health of the personality.

A truly healthy human aura is wholly (properly) vitalized, coherent and stable (quiet), and fully bound or integrated by the mind (personality). A truly healthy human aura is closed in the sense that no external impressions are received and incorporated (within the aura) without conscious acknowledgement of their source and conscious acceptance of their presence. Thus a truly healthy human aura is relatively rare and a measure of achievement that occurs only in the context of the spiritual path and even then only after considerable spiritual development and occult training (and karmic fulfillment).

The other extreme is the open aura that indicates a rather severe disruption of the integrity of the human aura (and personality) on one or more levels. Such an (severely diseased or severely injured or impaired) aura may be open on one or more or all levels (etheric, astral or emotional, and concrete mental), and in varying degrees. An aura that is substantially open on etheric levels will lack vitality due to the continuous drain of personal energy to the etheric plane (normally the etheric body is in dynamic equilibrium with the etheric plane). Such an aura may also be battered by etheric forces, having no substantial defenses or protection against etheric elements. Some rather self-centered

people (and other etheric and astral creatures) naturally draw energy from people who are etherically and/or emotionally vulnerable (open) (passive). An aura that is substantially open on astral levels will lack coherence and stability and will naturally suffer the wild emotional swings (or one or both extremes) as consequences of proximity to other people (and astral creatures) who are emotionally active (imposing). An aura that is substantially open on concrete mental levels is wholly vulnerable to (imposed) telepathic impression and manipulation of thinking processes.

Anyone having a truly open aura (on whatever levels) is subject to obsession, possession, and other forms of madness (insanity), depending on the particular situation and circumstances (karma). The open aura is a rather severe karmic consequence and an intermediate cause of great distress (suffering), at least from the personality standpoint (i.e., which (personality) suffers lack of self-control and generally is unable to remedy the situation). The (completely) open aura is relatively rare and generally leads to an early death or lengthy insanity. More importantly, an incarnation involving an open aura is not one in which much progress can be made (except in the sense that super-consciously a realization of the cause and effect relationship may be achieved thus permitting adjustments to be made (generally upon the personality matrix between incarnations)) and indeed it is quite difficult if not impossible even for a talented occultist to provide assistance to someone so afflicted by virtue of karmic constraints.

Thus the (truly) open aura is a severe consequence, of relatively serious transgressions of (evolutionary) law (such as premature or unnatural psychic development, overdevelopment of the mind, severe sexual practices, violent etheric, astral, or critical (mental) assaults upon others, and severe attachments (generally in previous incarnations)).

The Open Aura 2

While the case of the (truly) open aura is generally not the concern of the spiritual student (who is generally coherent if not properly (wholesomely) integrated), the case of the partially open aura is or should be of concern, so that safeguards (in personal discipline) can be employed to prevent even modest susceptibility or vulnerability to external forces and impressions.

Etherically, the spiritual student should not be overly stimulated nor susceptible to the draining of vitality. The spiritual student should, however, be continually vitalizing or etherically qualifying his environment, as an act of service (the sharing of energy) (without imposition). This implies that the etheric web is healthy and that the etheric centers are functioning normally. Aside from the natural receipt, incorporation, and utilization of prana, the spiritual student should only accept light energy (qualification) on etheric levels, for purposes of healing and purification (refinement).

On astral (emotional) levels, the aura of the spiritual student should be quiescent, clear and calm, active only in the sense of not being passive and in the sense of sharing of refined astral energy for qualification (love) (light), impersonal healing, etc. If the aura is somewhat open astrally, then the person is somewhat vulnerable or susceptible to (detrimentally or passively) incorporating the feelings of others (nearby or related) as if they were one's own (i.e., without awareness or realization), resulting in emotional instability (from the spiritual standpoint) (there is also the danger of imposing one's own emotions upon others). With proper emotional qualification, the student achieves emotional coherence, stability, clarity, stillness, harmony, poise, peace (quiet), gentleness, etc. (and lack of susceptibility to external (astral) manipulation). The student is (ideally) never disturbed or ruffled emotionally (by external (or internal) circumstances), never without spiritual poise in all matters, never without a continual (if not continuous) sharing of love and light (on etheric, astral, and concrete mental levels).

On concrete mental levels, the aura of the spiritual student should similarly be quiescent, active only as warranted (as in study or pre-intuitional activity) and

without susceptibility to external impressions of thought-forms (or at least with awareness and realization). If the aura is somewhat open mentally, then the thoughts of others (nearby or related) (and the thought-forms of the world mental atmosphere) are to some extent received and incorporated without acknowledgement (which is really a form of self-deception). With proper mental qualification, the spiritual student receives the ideas and thought-forms in his environment, recognizes them as externals, and deals with them appropriately (with consideration).

The world atmosphere is filled with thought-forms and feelings, some from the spiritual hierarchy for stimulation and consideration, some from the various manipulated masses, many merely from groups or individuals of little consequence, but all of which in some measure impinge upon the consciousness (aura) to be accepted or rejected (or deferred) according to the relative quality of consciousness, the relative openness or vulnerability of the aura, and the relative awareness and capability of the student to deal intelligently with them. The spiritual student is (properly) (ideally) open-minded in the sense of having no opinions or attachments and having little bias (having awareness and intelligent compensation), but not mentally open in the sense of being passive to external impressions. The healthy aura is a ring-pass-not that is spiritually qualified and intelligently interactive (non-reactive).

† Commentary No. 665

Sleep 3

A clear distinction must be made between dreams (dream experience) and direct recollection of experience during sleep. They are distinctly different phenomena resulting from distinctly different processes. Dreams represent the first step toward continuity of consciousness, but merely reflect the noise and confusion of the astral plane, as filtered by the desires and bias (glamour) of the personality (emotional nature and to some extent the concrete mind) and consequently have little utility save to further feed or sustain the personal glammers and illusion. The second step is "dreamless sleep" where the person does not remember the "dream" or sleep experience. The third step is actual continuity of consciousness during the periods of sleep.

While the confused dreams stemming from the incomplete separation of the astral and physical bodies during light sleep are the most commonly recalled, there are several other categories of sleep experience, including (1) dreams relating the "wish-life" in terms of the sights and sounds of the astral plane, (2) recollection of the work done or actual experiences on the astral and mental planes during sleep, (3) impressions of mental (plane) quality which convey some of the lessons learned during sleep, (4) actual telepathic communications during sleep, and (5) impressions from the soul concerning group work and the world plan. None of the various dreams are particularly useful (in conscious remembrance) since all dreams imply incomplete (improper) separation of vehicles during sleep. "Dreamless" sleep is indicative of more constructive spiritual endeavors (during sleep), with subsequent conscious learning from subconscious experience (with or without conscious recollection).

Dream analysis and interpretation has some inherent usefulness for those who lack the ability of constructive (insightful) discrimination, as well as some inherent limitations and potential for compounding misunderstanding. Attempts at drawing significance from recounting the varied phenomena and vague impressions of the most common dreams (originating from restlessness) are of little value (at best). Frequent dreams of this nature are indicative of poor sleep. Rather than trying to recall these dreams and ascribing significance where none exists, the subject should concentrate on overcoming attachments (strong emotions compelling the mind) that prevent the necessary separation (which leads to real (beneficial) sleep) of the astral and physical bodies during proper (dreamless) (non-recollective) sleep.

Even when dealing with dreams that have a degree of coherency and originate in the astral or mental planes, proper interpretation is unlikely. In drawing meaning, for instance, from those dreams which are a record of the experience on the astral plane during sleep one may certainly gain some insight into the "character trends" and some subconscious desires of the subject, since it is the wish-life of the subject that generally attracts (seeks out) the various astral satisfactions (glamours and illusions) that are contacted in such dreams. But it should be realized that the astral plane also encompasses the wish-life of the entire race (root-race) (humanity), now and through the ages.

Many people observe and contact thought-forms that are not related to them individually, but rather to the massive wish-life of humanity. Mistaken identification with these thought-forms can lead to attribution of suppressed or subliminal desires and urges where none may actually exist. A further problem in interpretation is its dependence on the ability (inability) of the subject to accurately bring the sleep experiences back into the waking consciousness (such capability being inconsistent with the need for dreams in the first place).

† Commentary No. 666

Cosmic Fire 29

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2) continues with consideration of solar fire and the introductory issues of (1) the mind aspect, (2) the importance of the manasic principle, and (3) the manasaputras, through the context of (1) the nature of manifestation, (2) objective development, (3) subjective development, and (4) the relationship of man to the logoi.

Microcosmic and macrocosmic manifestation involves (1) sevenfold objectivity or the development of material forms, (2) sevenfold subjectivity or the evolution of consciousness through utilization of the various forms, and (3) sevenfold spirituality or essential life. For man, the lesser reality involves the trinity (monad, soul, and personality) and the seven forms or vehicles (the dense physical body, the etheric or vital body, the astral or emotional body, the mind, the causal body, the buddhic vehicle, and the atmic sheath) and associated chakras. The greater reality involves the various principles (however enumerated (from various points of view)) (e.g., prana (vitality), manas (mind) (intelligence), buddhi (wisdom) (love), etc.).

The solar logos evolves through the seven planetary logoi or manasaputras, who "are actively intelligent, inherently love, and objectively seen through their forms, the planetary schemes." A man "is developing intelligence, inherently love, and objectively seen through one or another of his bodies" (depending on relative consciousness). "Subjective evolution is the main enterprise of the (solar) logos, the planetary logoi, and man." The mind aspect plays a significant (crucial) role in bridging between the forms and principles, in

integration, etc. The mind aspect is “the ability or capacity of the logoi existence to think, act, build, and evolve in order to develop the faculty of active love.” It is the means whereby evolution becomes possible (on these levels), comprehension is achieved, and activity is realized.

The seven planetary logoi or manasaputras (the mind-born sons of Brahma) (the lords of the rays) (the seven heavenly men (spirits before the throne) (kumaras) (rishis)) (the Biblical archangels) (the collective dhyan chohans) (the sons of light) (the veiled synthesis) “developed the mind aspect in the first (preceding) solar system” and live through the units of the human and deva evolutions (as cells) as (analogously) human beings live through the cells of the various bodies. In terms of principles, the human being is extraneous to the physical plane, while the planetary logos is extraneous to the physical and astral (emotional) planes. Thus it is upon the plane of mind (abstract or higher levels) (and through the manasic principle) that man relates (in the lowest sense) to the planetary logos. The soul (through its causal body) is the lowest form of logoi manifestation.

The human reality is limited to the measure of activity and polarization (and quality) of the various chakras which form the inter-dimensional (energy) links (between the various bodies on the various planes of consciousness). Such measure is both causal and consequential and all else (of significance) in human terms can be related to various centers and their dynamic interaction. The various bodies may come and go but the chakras (being inter-dimensional) persist (albeit periodically in matrix or archetypal form). So too are the various logoi essentially the various centers of energy that persist on their levels. The various human and deva soul groups form the centers of manifestation (evolution) of the planetary logoi, which in turn form the centers of manifestation (consciousness) of the solar logos, etc. All are linked, not in terms of form, but in terms of energy (fire) and energy relationships.

Cosmic Fire 30

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2) continues with consideration of solar fire and the introductory issues of (1) cyclic evolution and (2) exoteric and esoteric knowledge. "Why is the progress of evolution cyclic?" Because the laws that govern evolution (manifestation) cause it to be so. Because evolution cannot proceed without an interplay or interaction of forces and because cyclic (panoramic) manifestation (of cycles within cycles) is the most natural and most efficient means of accomplishing that interaction. Since evolution is the natural consequence of dynamic interaction, so must evolutionary progress be cyclic. Each turn of the spiral brings into play the same relative forces under progressively different circumstances. The panorama of cycles within cycles is apparently without end. Every perfection constitutes a new beginning. Every achievement brings a new horizon and new goals.

Cyclic evolution involves (1) repetition in space as the solar system represents a solar incarnation, (2) repetition in time as a planetary scheme is manifested through consecutive evolutionary chains, (3) plane repetition in the sense of "the constant consecutive reverberation of a plane note, of a sub-plane note, and of all that is called into objectivity by that note," and (4) form repetition in the sense of "the tendency of atoms to perpetuate their activity, and thus produce similarity of circumstances, of environment, and of vehicle." As with the interaction of planes and rays and greater lives (logoi), so "the interplay of the self and the not-self is invariably of a cyclic nature."

The repetition of cyclic action is governed by the law of attraction and repulsion and its subsidiary laws of periodicity and rebirth (karma). "Cyclic evolution is produced by the interaction of active matter and molding spirit." Major cycles include (1) a "period of the domination of the form note" or involution, (2) a "period of the repulsion of form by spirit" or the "battlefield of the three worlds" (evolutionary experience), (3) a "period of the attraction of spirit and spirit, and the consequent withdrawal from form" or the spiritual path proper, and (4) a "period of domination of the note of spirit" or "the higher planes of evolution." As harmony (synchronization) (perfection) is achieved on some level, evolution proceeds upon the next.

The two types of cycles are (1) "rotation on the axis" and (2) "rotation around an orbit." For example, in the first case, man is a rotating atomic sphere, while in the second case, man revolves through the wheel of life (incarnation). Cyclic evolution in time and space (and activity) is a matter (or perspective) of (in) consciousness, so that the course of time exists only "in connection with the awareness of some entity" and in the sense of some "succession of states of consciousness." Each level (atomic, mineral, plant, animal, human, causal, planetary, solar) involves successive states of activity and relative awareness. Time and space are convenient (arbitrary) constructs, relating respectively to process or activity and to the radius of consciousness.

Exoteric and esoteric knowledge results from the cyclic nature of evolution, being a minor consequence and practical illustration. Like manifestation, knowledge has both objective and subjective aspects. Depending on level and quality of consciousness (awareness), esoteric knowledge is simply beyond the scope of understanding or comprehension of the bulk of humanity. As the interplay of esoteric and exoteric proceeds so does that which is esoteric become exoteric (as consciousness expands) and so is greater subjective realization achieved by the pioneers (resulting in a continuing renewal of esoteric knowledge).

† Commentary No. 668

Cosmic Fire 31

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2) concludes consideration of introductory issues associated with solar fire, with the relationships between the ten planetary schemes, the seven sacred planets, the seven chains in each scheme, the seven globes of each chain, the seven rounds of each globe, the seven root-races of each round, and the seven sub-races of each root-race.

Although the objective or form aspect of manifestation is adequately described in terms of the details and correlations and patterns of schemes, planets, chains, globes, etc., the subjective or life (consciousness) aspect of manifestation is better described in terms of inter-related lives and lifewaves, of goals in consciousness at the various levels of manifestation, of incarnations at the

various levels, etc., thereby demonstrating the utility of the various schemes of manifestation as means of achieving evolutionary goals at the various levels. The grand inter-relatedness of the panoramic cycles of manifestation and cross-correlation with the great incarnating waves of life (lives) further demonstrates the unity of all.

Each principal life has three evolutionary goals, (1) the development of individual consciousness, (2) the development of group consciousness, and (3) the development of God-consciousness. For each principal life, each of these goals is achieved in the context of its own level. Humanity (as a lifewave) exists for a period of one planetary scheme and evolves through the seven planes of consciousness that constitute one (the lowest) cosmic plane. The planetary logoi exist for a period of one solar system or seven planetary chains and evolve through two cosmic planes. The solar logos exists for a period of three solar systems (incarnations) through the vehicle of seven planetary schemes and evolves through three cosmic planes. Thus the solar logos lives through the means of seven planetary logoi, the planetary logoi live through the means of various chohans and groups, and humanity lives (analogously) through the means of the various principles.

As full self-consciousness is achieved on each level, the evolving life (unit) (group) becomes aware to some extent of the greater consciousness and life of which it is a center. As further consciousness is achieved, awareness is expanded to include some (small) perception at the next highest level (e.g., for the perfected human, conscious awareness within planetary and solar levels). The solar logos embodies second ray energy, while the seven planetary logoi embody the seven rays as sub-rays to that second ray. As the human evolves and develops along the seven ray lines (developing each to some considerable extent) then is the person relating to the seven planetary qualifications (logoi), within the context and consciousness of our planetary logos.

Each life incarnates on three major levels with corresponding cycles. The human being has monadic, soul, and personality incarnations, where many personality incarnations constitute a soul cycle or incarnation, and where (relatively) many soul cycles constitute a monadic cycle or incarnation. The three major cycles of a planetary logos are the respective periods of planetary schemes, chains, and rounds. The three major cycles of a solar logos are called

(respectively) (symbolically) one hundred years of Brahma, a year of Brahma, and a day of Brahma. From the standpoint of the personality, each cycle involves (1) differentiation, "the one becoming the many," (2) balance, "the process of karmic adjustment" or experience and expression, (3) synthesis, "the many again becoming the one" or the spiritual path proper of successive integration and alignment, and (4) obscuration or liberation.

† Commentary No. 669

Service

Service is a natural and normally realized attribute of a spiritual student, and it is one of the highest functions a student can perform at this stage of evolution. In the usual sense, service is the occupation, function or act of serving, i.e., helpful work performed. In a higher, spiritual sense it is the meaningful, unending, internally (soul) motivated contribution to the welfare of others, in whatever capacity deemed appropriate.

While a deeply ingrained service motive is usually a natural (unobtrusive) part of a soul qualified, spiritually integrated student, this is not true of humanity in general. In the early stages of personality formation, when the individual is melding the physical, emotional, and mental bodies to work cooperatively, the personality (lower self) orientation is extreme selfishness (self-centeredness). As the personality approaches (initially progresses along) the spiritual path, a dim realization surfaces (in response to ongoing, albeit low-level soul stimulation) indicating that reality only exists in the service motive. Initially this reality is fleeting, since the signal is weak and the naive student is almost totally unaware of the real, inner self, for the signal lacks focus (the personality strives to obliterate and subdue the soul impulse), and thus, the personality is able to easily repress the signal. Nevertheless, the signal undyingly (gently) persists, making itself felt more regularly as a precursor of things to come, no matter how unwilling the personality.

As soul-contact becomes a matter of soul control (from personality to soul guidance), the service motive becomes more a reality, rather than an inconsequential expression, in which service becomes a considerable part of the

student's life. Thus, soul expression and/or spiritual development (integration and alignment) of the personality is in part equated to realizing the service motive, for from the perspective of the soul there is nothing else.

Prior to embarking upon the spiritual path, however unconsciously, the individual does not participate in service. While the individual is at a probationary stage of spiritual development, service is secondary (subdued by the personality), yet considerable periods of relatively meaningful, soul-motivated service can and do occur. However, since such a personality is still self-oriented, personal indulgence is more the rule than the exception, since the service motive is weak. At the probationary stage, service activities are limited and relatively superficial (often resulting from glamour). But as the student progresses on the path, service is more properly embraced.

Eventually over many incarnations, the reference shifts so that activities are unreservedly service oriented, for the soul knows no half measures (and the student is then truly on the path). If less than whole-hearted service motives persist, then it is not of true soul-contact, but one in which the personality is deluding the student into believing that motives are pure (of the highest type) (one of appearances (personality) rather than substance (soul)). Once the service motive is truly embraced, service is done willingly and without reservation, somewhat akin to achieving the most desired personality wish (even though the joy, if it can be called that, of performing at the service level (soul), is not really comparable, being of higher quality). For the soul, unreserved service is everything, and thus, personality self-fulfillment and the service motive (soul) are not comparable. Under these circumstances, service becomes a full time endeavor, similar to and replacing the full time endeavor of the personality searching for self-gratification. At this service level, the end result is a positive activity of goodwill for mankind.

Sleep 4

Sleep experience is related to the quality of consciousness. Some degree of mental facility and control and some considerable degree of emotional refinement and qualification is required before any of the experience on the mental plane during sleep can be recollected by the waking-consciousness (experience on the astral or emotional plane during sleep is hardly worth recollecting). Thus, only as the subject approaches mental polarization could one expect to accurately interpret a dream as giving indication of the individual thought-life or the thought-life (analogous to the wish-life on the astral plane) of the race. Yet, as one progresses, in this sense, one becomes less and less interested in dream analysis and interpretation, for dreams fade in potential relevance and significance compared to the direct learning through intelligent awareness, recollection, and realization.

The paradox of dream analysis and interpretation contrasts the abilities needed for proper analysis and interpretation with the lack of need for such analysis and interpretation if those abilities are present. If a person has achieved a measure of (constructive) (insightful) discrimination (the ability to discern meaning, significance, value, etc.), then such a person has a significant measure of (conscious and subconscious) learning ability, during the waking hours and during sleep. Without significant attachments, such a person (spiritual student) will sleep “dreamlessly” (without need for conscious recollection) and awaken refreshed, with some conscious understanding of problems and issues of interest.

One of the problems of attention to (preoccupation with) dreams is that more often than not the supposed interest in learning from dream experience is really a mask for the attractions of glamour (presumed significance) associated with (presumed) revelations or personality interests (that are really attachments and distractions). Even where the learning interest is genuine, the dependence on indirect means (of dream analysis and interpretation) (of considerable limitation, having considerable probability of misinterpretation (due to personal energy) and (consequent) misunderstanding) actually undermines the mental development and the development of the faculty of (for) discrimination.

The existence of dreams indicates a lack of resolution or (normal) imbalance of the emotional (desire) nature, the concrete mind, and the higher self (and an incomplete separation of the subtle vehicles). "Dreamless sleep" implies harmony (resolution of conflict) or (natural rather than normal) balance (and a proper or complete separation of the subtle vehicles during sleep), while continuity of consciousness (which is quite rare and limited to the disciple who has achieved alignment and rapport (a responsive lower nature)) indicates the most productive state for the spiritual student (who is then able to recollect accurately the appropriate activities undertaken during sleep). In between these three principal steps are intermediate steps that imply the process of bridging. Some (accurate) representation of astral experience may appear in the form (interpretation) of relatively sharp dreams (provided the student has the commensurate capacity for discrimination). But for the most part, there is little similarity between dream remembrance and proper recollection of sleep activities.

In the final analysis, the purpose of sleep is the rest and revitalization (qualification) of the physical body, the etheric or vital body, the astral body (emotional nature), and the concrete mind. A secondary purpose is learning (to some extent) and service (in the case of spiritual students).

† Commentary No. 671

Teachers 1

We all have many teachers and learning opportunities, although few people actually learn consciously and deliberately in the course of life experience because most people are relatively unconscious. The principal teacher is life (experience), engendered by karmic balance, in the context of the evolutionary plan. We learn because we are programmed or qualified to learn by all of the evolutionary and karmic factors. Some are more resistive to learning (more asleep) than others, but eventually become more amenable and responsive to learning opportunities, consciously and otherwise, as the karmic and evolutionary qualifications begin to permeate the substance of the personality.

The true teacher is the soul who (which) overshadows the mind and heart (personality) of the student and who (which) qualifies each incarnation in order to achieve its goals of learning (development) (evolution of consciousness) and service (work within the context of the evolutionary plan). Very few people are responsive to their (respective) soul (or to the soul of humanity) and so karmic qualification must suffice for most people. But as the student learns to listen for and to the voice (silence) (light) of the soul, then (and only then) does the soul take a more active (albeit nevertheless subjective) role in directly qualifying the mind and heart of its personality (reflection) (false self). Then does the soul become the active teacher. Conscience represents an intermediate stage between being unresponsive to the soul and being responsive to the soul. Having a good (strong) (active) conscience implies previous experience and development (and soul qualification).

We are all students and we are all teachers, directly or indirectly. The spiritual student should strive to learn and to serve based upon his or her measure of understanding. The spiritual student should also be a teacher in the sense of facilitating learning wherever the opportunity arises, without imposition. Such facilitation is primarily by way of one's presence (relative quality of consciousness, lifestyle, values, repose, etc.) rather than deliberation. One should only facilitate by deliberation where one is clearly invited to do so (appropriately) or where one is appropriately obligated. One can and should learn directly or indirectly from all appropriate sources, by observation and evaluation, from discernment and discrimination of sense impressions and other information (potential knowledge) received.

But one must necessarily learn to discriminate effectively both (1) in the particular value of information and learning afforded and (2) in the relative value (validity) of any afforded teachers, (1) because some measures learned are more valuable and useful than others and (2) because much is not what it appears to be and may offer considerable (compounded) deception and relative waste of time and effort (of course one learns (slowly and painfully) from false paths and false teachers, but not very effectively).

Spiritual students (and aspirants to the spiritual path) should prepare (program) (qualify) themselves for learning, learn to learn (a not easily achieved attitude) (i.e., by increased and expanded awareness and by reduced distraction by

mundane or personal absorption, desire, etc.), not be concerned about finding or having a (particular) teacher (on the physical plane or elsewhere), and simply focus on learning (growing) and (more appropriately) service. But where a (particular) teacher is appropriate (not merely because the aspirant wants a teacher or thinks it is appropriate), then there are the problems of (1) the validity of the teacher, (2) the qualifications of the student, and (3) the relationship of the student and teacher.

† Commentary No. 672

Teachers 2

The problem of the validity of the teacher is a matter of proper discrimination and appreciation. One must be quite wary of the false teacher, for the student-teacher relationship implies vulnerability on the part of the student and much damage (impedimentally) can be done to the (potential) spiritual progress of the student. Those who claim (sincerely or otherwise) to be masters, teachers, master teachers, etc., in the spiritual path, are not, generally, what they claim to be. Real (spiritual) teachers make no such claims or pretensions, nor do they advertise their presence, qualifications, or availability. Real (spiritual) teachers are known (recognized) by virtue of their overall quality of consciousness (light, love, and power (humility)), not by demonstration or appearances.

The problem (of validity) is a paradox, though, in the sense that those who seek a real (spiritual) teacher generally lack the discrimination and insight needed to recognize such a teacher (master, initiate, or disciple), and those who do have such discrimination and insight for the most part do not need a spiritual teacher in the conventional sense of student-teacher relationship (but only need a spiritual “teacher” in the sense of casual encouragement (which is just as easily imparted subjectively via the soul (for responsive students (and unresponsive students are hardly qualified anyway)))).

In the case of previous association, even emotionally-polarized aspirants sometimes recognize their “teachers,” but generally lack any real understanding of what their teachers really are, how valid they are as teachers, and what an appropriate and proper relationship should be. False teachers are many, and most are sincere (yet self-deceived). Real teachers are very few and generally

not interested in teaching, for they are generally too busy “working” (in the sense of spiritual work) to deal with the clutter of unqualified students.

The problem of qualifications is also a paradox to some extent. The aspirant who lacks sufficient qualifications (experience, knowledge, understanding, and ability) has no need for a teacher and has nothing to offer a (spiritual) teacher anyway (for unless a student can contribute to the work undertaken or can learn quickly enough to be able to contribute, the student does not warrant the attention of a teacher (or of the soul)). Such an aspirant must depend on the ordinary course of experience, development, and evolution, until such time as he or she is fitted for spiritual work. On the other hand, those who have sufficient qualifications (experience, knowledge, understanding, ability, etc.) for spiritual work have no need for a teacher either; being qualified, they are at least somewhat responsive to the soul, are working directly or indirectly, objectively or subjectively, with an esoteric group and learn and grow by virtue of their association and spiritual work, not by any (particular) student-teacher relationship. But there may be a grey area, between unqualified and qualified, where a teacher could be useful.

Having a teacher in a proper (valid) student spiritual teacher relationship offers short-term gains at the expense of somewhat undermining the student’s self-responsibility. One cannot really have it both ways; either the student is primarily responsible for (self) discipline, discrimination, exercise, and the learning process, or the teacher is so primarily responsible (and the student secondarily). Real teachers encourage self-responsibility and prevent or minimize student-teacher dependence, but even so it is necessary (in such a relationship) to subordinate oneself, and few are so capable or willing (and those who are often indiscriminate in the first place).

Teachers 3

Eventually (hopefully quickly), the subordination is transferred from the teacher to the soul, so that a proper spiritual relationship can proceed unencumbered by personalities. Even with a real (spiritual) teacher (in incarnation or otherwise), one must appreciate that no such person (functioning on physical, emotional, and concrete mental levels) is perfect or without some weakness. So ever, ultimately, the true responsibility lies with the student in all regards.

There are numerous misconceptions in the metaphysical movement concerning teachers, the need for teachers, the student-teacher relationship, etc. For the most part, the need for a teacher is an illusion and based upon the glammers associated with the spiritual path and the emotional polarization of most aspirants to the spiritual path. Students can certainly learn from or by association with teachers, but the relationships need not (indeed should not) be personal. Real spiritual students (and teachers) are impersonal because they embrace the humility and impersonality (and repose) of the soul. Most emotional aspirants are ill-suited (unprepared) for the spiritual discipline, seek a teacher for the wrong reasons (for the glamour of association rather than for true learning opportunity), and contribute very little of a meaningful nature to the spiritual work. But those who are less emotional and less englamoured, who earnestly seek to learn and grow and contribute toward the spiritual work are generally welcomed. Where a "teacher" accepts ill-prepared students there is a cause to question the validity of the teacher and the integrity of the relationships.

Another, less fundamental misconception concerns demand and obligation. Some aspirants believe they have recognized or found "their" teacher and (rudely) demand attention and acceptance, believing the teacher to have some obligation to the student. Real teachers would reject such students (and their demands) as being rude, unprepared, and unworthy of (unresponsive to) spiritual qualification. No true teacher is obligated to any student unless the student meets the teacher's criteria for acceptance and unless the teacher so chooses to accept such a student (nonetheless qualified) and thereby accepts some obligation (for as long as the teacher permits, which generally means for as long

as the student complies with the afforded discipline, exercise, and work and for as long as the relationship is warranted).

Some aspirants presume they will be recognized by the teacher and expect the teacher to accommodate the desires of the student, but in fact, even if recognized, the obligation is for the student to approach the teacher and properly ask for counsel. It is not the place of the teacher to accommodate the student, but rather for the student to accommodate the teacher. This provides all the more reason to insure the relative validity of the teacher and the qualifications of the student, for otherwise the naive student-teacher relationship can be abused.

In the final analysis, the traditional student-teacher relationship is ill-suited to the evolutionary endeavors of the spiritual path. What is far better for spiritual relationships and spiritual work (development and service) is the mutual respect and appreciation (consideration) afforded to coworkers upon the path. Even while some may be better qualified than others and due some further consideration, the central theme or basis for relationship should be dependence upon the soul and qualified relationships between coworkers of the various types and grades (levels of achievement).

† Commentary No. 674

Sacrifice and Service

Just as service is a primary characteristic of the soul, sacrifice is an inherent characteristic of the soul's activity. Whereas the personality seeks the fulfillment of desire through activity in the lower worlds, the soul seeks its fulfillment in service through sacrifice. As the spiritual student progresses on the path, the sacrificial impulse of the soul becomes more compelling. In personality refinement (self-sacrifice) and group endeavor (Self-sacrifice) this impulse manifests.

In the most basic sense, to sacrifice is "to make sacred (holy) (dedicated to God)." In this sense, any act which uplifts essence of a lower level to some higher level (on whatever plane) is a sacrificial act. All efforts made in purification of the personality may therefore be viewed as sacrificial in nature.

The student is compelled to cast all the dross and impurities of the lower nature into the sacrificial fire within. Letting go of the lower (whether it be indulgences, reactivity, strong emotions, crystallized thoughts, etc.), that the higher may be attained is the process of (personality) self-sacrifice.

Sacrifice on group levels (Self-sacrifice) does not involve so much the activity of "giving up" something, as the mere activity of "giving." Indeed the Law of Sacrifice may be expressed as the "impulse to giving." To act wholly under this impulse means that one desires nothing for the separated self, that all resources (time, money, thought, energy, etc.) are viewed and appropriated in accordance with whatever is the need of the whole (the group) (humanity). To truly sacrifice (serve) is to give completely to meet the need without regard for the extent (share) to which others are giving (or not). To truly sacrifice is to hold no desire for the recognition of any gift or service, nor to see the fruits of any action. To truly sacrifice is to give whatever is needed, trusting securely in the soul (all insecurities are born of the personality). The sacrificial impulse (of the soul) is distinctly different from any emotional compulsion to indiscriminately relinquish resources due to enchantment by a "cause" or (emotionally) magnetic leader. It is the ever increasing identification with the One (the group), through the soul, that encourages true sacrifice, not mere foolishness based on emotional reaction.

Within a spiritual group, as selfish personal interests are released, this impulse to give draws the spiritual student ever into fuller, more joyful participation in the work of the group. The student who seeks primarily that which the group may offer him will find little, but he who seeks earnestly (with patience and consistency) to give whatever he may to the group will find the true comradeship born of shared struggle, work, and opportunity. He will deepen and grow (ever along with his brothers on the path) nearer to the One.

On a higher turn of the spiral, it is the sacrifice (fixed determination) of the solar logos and the cosmic logos, that brings into and sustains all in manifestation that lesser lives (such as humanity) may have the opportunity of upliftment (evolution) (release) into higher lives. Even with understanding of the correspondence of sacrifice on human levels, it is difficult to begin to comprehend the supreme sacrifice of these great beings. The keynote of sacrifice pervades all of manifestation (and is requisite to manifestation). Identification

with sacrifice (rather than resentment of its call) will similarly pervade the entire life of the dedicated spiritual student. Sharing appropriately (constructively), while embracing the sacrificial aspect (nature) of the soul, ultimately brings the mind and heart of the personality into balance and in their upliftment to the soul is true spiritual union realized.

† Commentary No. 675

The Nature of Manas 1

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division A) addresses the issue of the nature of manas or mind, through the three manifestations of manas and through six definitions of manas. The three manifestations of manas are (1) "the fire of mind, cosmically considered," (2) "the fire of mind viewed systemically," and (3) "the fire of mind in connection with a human being." Cosmic consideration refers to the mind of the solar logos in the context of the cosmic field. The systemic view refers to the mind of the planetary logos in the context of the solar field. And the human manasic consideration refers to the microcosmic (human) mind in the context of the planetary field.

The first definition is manas as the fifth principle. Manas is thus related directly to that aspect of the cosmic (solar) (planetary) sacred word that vitalizes the fifth plane of consciousness and the mental field or atmosphere. The fifth or mental plane (at any level) is also directly related (by reflection) to the third, and is qualified by the fifth ray (and the third ray). Manas as the fifth principle "underlies all manifestation" as all that is manifested is "activated by mind of some kind or another."

The second definition is manas as electricity, as manifested on the seven planes. On the first or logoc plane (adi), manas demonstrates as the aspect of logoc will "which eventually results in objectivity." On the second or monadic plane, manas demonstrates as "the first manifestation (aspect) of form, as that which causes forms to cohere." As the internal fires of matter blend with the electric fire of spirit, form appears. While the first plane (adi) is a sea of electrical fire, the second plane (anupadaka) is akasha (burning (cosmic) etheric matter) (necessarily derived from the first plane). In this context of cause and effect,

will is dynamic electrical manifestation and desire is burning electrical manifestation. The electrical phenomena which “distinguish a human being” are (1) “that coherent vitality which holds the entire body revolving around the central unit of force,” (2) “that radiatory magnetism which relates man to the matter of which his vehicles are composed” and “to the units which form his group,” and (3) “that activity (fohatic impulse) on the physical plane” which corresponds to the Brahma aspect. “These three electrical manifestations (vitality, magnetism, fohatic impulse) are the objective manifestations of the (solar, planetary, and human) psychic nature. Heat and light, electricity and magnetism, are all intimately and metaphysically related. Heat is the cause and effect (relationship) of activity. Light is the cause and effect (relationship) of the approximation of polar opposites.

On the third plane (atma) (the plane of Brahma), manas demonstrates as “intelligent purpose”. This (electrical) intelligence is fundamental to both will and desire (and their fundamental distinction). This (electrical) intelligence is fundamental to all three levels considered (solar, planetary, and human) and relates purpose to manifestation, evolutionary qualification to the adaptation (manipulation) (utilization) of matter through form (and its vitalization by consciousness or relationship), and on to the ultimate succession of atonement and abstraction. The linking factor of the threefold sacred word is electricity as (1) vibratory impulse causing “the aggregation and activity of matter,” (2) light “causing spheroidal objectivity,” and (3) sound.

On the fourth plane (buddhi), manas demonstrates as color. Thus are further related (1) the heat of electrical origination (initial vibration), (2) light, (3) sound, and (4) color, manifesting through the first (second) (third) (and fourth) plane (sub-plane) (ether), respectively.

The Nature of Manas 2

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division A) continues consideration of manas as electricity and subsequent definitions. Significant correlations exist between the principles embodied by (through) the first four planes of consciousness (adi, anupadaka, atma, and buddhi) (heat, light, sound, and color, respectively, in a more cosmic (subtle) sense) and the four etheric sub-planes of the seventh or physical plane.

The work of evolution demonstrates as (1) "involution, wherein the negative (passive) (feminine) electrons of matter predominate," and (2) "evolution, wherein, due to the action of manas, these negative atoms" are appropriated, stimulated, utilized, transformed, and ultimately returned to the central electrical reservoir or merged in their opposite pole. Polarity is a key to manifestation and relationships. The human being is "essentially positive in his own nature" relative to the vehicles which are negative and thereby bound to the "central unit of positive electricity." The human being is negative with respect to the planetary logos, as humanity constitutes the cellular nature of (planetary) logoc existence. All is relative, one to another, each to all, and the all to the greater one. Buddhi is the plane and principle of atonement, of group unity (human and deva), as the higher three planes (sub-planes) are related to (balanced with) the lower three planes (sub-planes) of endeavor.

The third definition is manas as that which produces cohesion and "enables an entity to work (1) through form, and thus exist, (2) by means of progressive development or cyclic evolution, (3) on planes that are, for the entity concerned, the battleground of life and the field of experience, and (4) by the method of manifestation," from birth to growth to expression and on to abstraction and obscuration. Manas (intelligence) is the medium whereby the human being is (becomes) a coherent whole (from which the personality is subdued and integrated) and corresponds to buddhi as a plane of coherence for the planetary logos and to atma as a plane of coherence for the solar logos. "Manas or intelligence is the basis of the separative manifestation of man while wisdom or buddhi is the basis of the group manifestation of a planetary logos and will is the basis of the one life which synthesizes all groups."

The fourth definition is manas as “the key to the fifth kingdom in nature,” or the “key to the door through which entrance is made (from the fourth or human kingdom) into the fifth or spiritual kingdom.” Where refined (developed) instinct is the key for (to) the human kingdom (from the animal kingdom), the key for humanity is “the transmutation of the discriminative faculty of mind” which brings about a “spiritual individualization” or emergence. The fifth definition is manas as “the synthesis of five rays” and refers to the relationship of a planetary logos who is linked to the four planetary logoi who embody in our solar system the four minor rays (of attribute). Together, these five “are the totality of manasic energy” in the system. “Manas is the psychic effect of their united group work,” which embraces primarily the “five lower sub-planes of each plane.”

The sixth definition is manas as “the intelligent will or purpose of an existence, or the intelligent will and ordered purpose of every self-conscious entity,” each being an expression of cosmic (solar) mind (since manas is a logoiic principle). “Spirit employs manas in all that concerns matter, the electrical substance, or the active akasha. Spirit employs buddhi in all that relates to the soul. And spirit employs atma in all that relates to the essence of all.”

† Commentary No. 677

Psychic Vulnerability 1

The whole nature of psychic attack, relative susceptibility or vulnerability, and defense (or self-defense) is a matter primarily of emotional and/or mental stability (health) and the underlying (personal) (group) (racial) (planetary) karma (lessons to be learned from particular experience). The realm of psychic vulnerability includes the condition of the psychic centers (emotional and mental nature), deliberate psychic activity, and casual negativity.

Psychic forces can be external or internal and can act on physical (etheric), emotional (astral), and/or (concrete) mental levels. But psychic vulnerability is principally an emotional (astral) phenomenon that can induce etheric effects (and to a lesser extent a concrete mental phenomenon with or without

associated emotional (astral) effects). One of the principal factors is the condition of the psychic (energy) centers (chakras). A (physically, emotionally, and mentally) healthy person is generally not susceptible to psychic attack or casual consequences, unless the karmic factors are strong enough to overcome the healthy person's natural (unconscious and conscious (in the case of the occultist)) defenses (or in other words, unless the psychic force is strong enough). A healthy person is generally emotionally and mentally stable, so that his or her chakras are not functioning substantially (i.e., are relatively inactive) or are not functioning passively (involuntarily). If the centers are open and passive, then a person is psychically vulnerable to the extent of that openness and passivity.

Mentally-polarized people (who are therefore integrated personalities) are generally more healthy (psychically) than emotionally-polarized people. Mentally-polarized people are generally not psychically vulnerable (although some are open or receptive to mass thought-forms and can therefore (unfortunately) be manipulated in their thinking). Emotionally-polarized people are generally psychically vulnerable to some extent due to the relative emotional instability that emotional polarization implies and are therefore vulnerable to external (astral) impressions. The mental impressions (thoughts) of emotionally-polarized people are often externally and incidentally induced.

If the psychic centers of an emotionally-polarized person are open and passive, then that person is particularly vulnerable. The centers are open and passive either as a result of premature experimentation with the psychic centers (in the present or preceding incarnation) or as a result of needing the emotional experience that ultimately leads a person to develop the mind and mental control (self-discipline) that leads (in turn) to emotional stability and mental polarization.

Trained or untrained occultists who work (consciously) on psychic levels are thereby somewhat relatively vulnerable (particularly so in the case of the untrained occultist who lacks the normal safeguards and protective discipline). But the more common psychic vulnerabilities fall to those who are merely emotionally active (open) (passive) and relatively negative in their emotional or mental nature. Fear is a great (negative) factor in psychic vulnerability (and a consequence in itself), greatly compounding any emotional or astral

vulnerabilities, whether or not the associated astral (psychic) forces are deliberate or casual, since fear (and other negative emotions) simply attracts bad (psychic) energy. Consequently, the lack of fear (and the lack of negative emotions) is a form of protection (unless the lack of fear is imprudent (based in arrogance)).

† Commentary No. 678

Psychic Vulnerability 2

Living or working in a predominately negative emotional environment is conducive to psychic vulnerability. Exercising the emotions to excess (or in some cases even at all) (either positively or negatively) invites or sustains the emotional polarization (instability) (vulnerability) (susceptibility). Strong emotions of either kind (positive or negative) simply undermine the ability of the mind to stabilize and uplift the emotional nature.

Deliberate psychic activity (consciously or unconsciously applied) is a much more dramatic (and obvious) problem than casual negativity. Deliberate psychic activity of the negative variety is black magic in one form or another and is inherently evil or unnatural (no matter how casual it may seem to be). Anyone who seeks to manipulate another person is practicing black magic (encouraging someone to learn and to think for themselves is not manipulation nor is respecting a person's values or point of view) (but imposing upon others, either consciously or unconsciously, is related to the left-hand path (black magic) to some extent). This includes religious (political) (cultural) (family) (commercial) (personal) domination (imposition) (manipulation) in its various forms (e.g., dictatorship, manipulative commercial advertising, emotional appeals, etc.).

The (undermining) dominance of one person over another (which thereby disregards or fails to respect the intelligence and self-consciousness of the victim), is consciously or unconsciously psychic (all such dominance is inherently psychic), and is the worst form of black magic or manipulation. Those who have learned various preliminary occult practices, who lack the quality of consciousness (sensibility) (maturity) (respect for others) (refinement) (spirituality) (ethics and morals) of the properly trained, are the most dangerous.

Religious (political) (commercial) leaders who resort to emotional appeal are actually manipulating their audience psychically according to (misused) (misappropriated) occult techniques. On the other hand (with no excuses intended for the manipulator's role) the victims of psychic attack or emotional (mental) manipulation are merely fulfilling their own karma and ultimately will learn to rise above the arena of vulnerability to the arena of positive (constructive) (spiritual) service.

The practice of black magic (manipulation) (imposition) in any form ultimately either destroys the practitioner or brings about the forces of transformation (and restoration of the person within the mainstream of humanity), depending on the merits of the particular case (i.e., responsiveness to rehabilitative forces). Of course psychic vulnerability is not principally a matter of external forces (the activities of black magicians, evil influences, etc.) but is, rather, principally a matter of individual vulnerability by (karmic) virtue of the condition of one's physical (etheric), emotional (astral) and (concrete) mental nature (i.e., the personality) and associated energy centers. Thus the responsibility rests primarily with the victim for his or her own consequences (and likewise to the perpetrator for his or her actions). While the perpetrator is wrong and will ultimately suffer (learn) appropriately, the victim cannot effectively blame the perpetrator (or any external forces) for his or her condition.

Thus the primary responsibility for resolving the problem of an individual's psychic vulnerability rests entirely with the individual (victim), and as the person learns, grows, adapts, etc., so shall these problems be overcome and progress be attained (into the next arena of experience and evolution).

Psychic Vulnerability 3

There are basically three categories of victims of psychic attack or imposition, (1) those who are emotionally (psychically) vulnerable as a group (e.g., those who are emotionally vulnerable, those who are linked in some way to tribal (astral) currents, the masses of humanity who are vulnerable to mass manipulation, etc.), (2) those who are individually psychically vulnerable, due to present or past untoward dabbling in psychic matters or due to evoking the wrath of someone more potent (but necessarily unrefined) in the wielding of psychic or astral (or mental) forces, and (3) those public figures who are unconsciously the recipients of emotions and thought-forms focused upon them by the masses.

In each of these three cases, psychic protection is afforded only to the extent that the person (potential victim) is either strong emotionally (which is detrimental to becoming mentally polarized) or strong mentally (and thereby able to stabilize the astral body (and field of emotional endeavor)) so that external (astral) forces do not penetrate sufficiently to be a problem.

Keys to the elimination of psychic vulnerability include (1) the elimination of fear and other negative emotions, (2) the cultivation of refined, clear, stable emotions, (3) the stabilization (control) of the psychic centers (i.e., transformation from the involuntary (passive) functioning of the centers to either inactivity or voluntary (active) and sensible functioning of the centers), (4) the cultivation of insulating factors (e.g., ability to place wards, competence in utilizing effective rituals, wall-building, etc.) (some techniques of which bring about additional problems or considerations), (5) the practice of harmlessness (being or becoming refined and involatile with respect to the (necessarily coarse) negative external vibrations), (6) protection by virtue of being upon the spiritual path and in group formation, and (7) positive assimilation (transformation) of the received energy or impressions (a relatively dangerous technique for the uninitiated but sometimes (karmically) the only solution).

In each case protection is afforded only to the extent warranted by karma and consistent with the degree of self-responsibility of the individual (rarely is it appropriate for one person to artificially protect another). Because energy

follows thought (and feeling), much of the phenomena of psychic imposition occurs as the parties are relatively unconscious of these activities (e.g., hatred, envy, fear, etc. are highly projective emotions (and incidentally attract similar (negative) currents and forces)). In extreme cases of psychic manipulation or vulnerability, suicide is a common consequence. In the final analysis, those who are positive (active) in relation to their environment are relatively safe from psychic attack or manipulation, while those who are negative (passive) in relation to their environment are relatively (particularly) vulnerable. Becoming mentally polarized and relatively refined is a long-term solution.

The proper spiritual student, however, is neither emotionally active (projective) or emotionally passive, but rather relies on mental qualification and emotional refinement (stability) (non-reactiveness) for protection (if indeed protection is even needed) (for the student's character and quality (and sensible endeavors) generally preempt the psychic (astral) (mental) vulnerabilities and susceptibilities of the (emotionally polarized) masses of humanity. Furthermore, the (spiritual) student's character and quality serve to induce a more positive environment (through incidental qualification).

† Commentary No. 680

Syncategorematics

Syncategorematics is the study or consideration of various concepts represented by words that are traditionally syncategorematic (or words or symbols that traditionally have no independent meaning but need to be joined with some categorematic (word) in order to be meaningful). The concept of syncategorematics arises (in the orthodox sense) from traditional and modern logic (e.g., the realm of categorical propositions or syllogisms), but in the metaphysical sense arises from occult discipline in abstract thinking and the cultivation of buddhi.

In the orthodox (academic) sense, syncategorematic words have no independent meaning, but in the metaphysical (occult) sense all words have independent meaning (even if only strictly by symbolic association or by virtue of mantric value), however practical or impractical they may be. Examples of words

dismissed orthodoxically as syncategorematic are “all” “and” “some” “large”, etc. In this sense, orthodoxically, something is large only relatively (i.e., in relationship between the “something” that is large and something else). But in abstract metaphysics, “large” has independent meaning (apart from any subject or predicate), as do “all” “and” and “some” (as well as comparable words (e.g., “a” “an” “the”, etc.)). From the standpoint of concrete thinking, these words and concepts (alone) may be illusive if not insensible, but from the standpoint of abstract thinking and intuition they can provide a considerable (subtle) stimulation as the various mental attachments are challenged, overcome, and properly disposed.

For example the word and concept of “and” can serve as a meditative or contemplative focus of considerable depth and breadth, on both concrete and abstract levels. Concretely, “and” is a linking, combinative concept rich with associations, while abstractly, “and” is a potent mantra of subtle detachment. The closed mind is quick to dismiss matters that are not so obvious or not already within the personal opinion field of the personality, but the open mind will (fortunately) consider fairly (futilely or otherwise depending on ability) any idea or concept, however apparently unrelated or however abstract it may seem to be.

The power of syncategorematics (by whatever name) goes beyond merely cultivating the inner awareness (disposition) and linking of abstract and concrete minds, but also facilitates the breaking (destruction) of (necessarily limiting) attachments to ideas or concepts, habits, patterns of thinking, etc. But one also needs to distinguish between the value or meaning of the syncategorematic word or concept and the value of the exercise in syncategorematics. The exercise is usually more meaningful than the focus, but one should not preclude insight from a particular syncategorematic focus. Of course care should be taken to avoid categorematic association so that the abstract value of the syncategorematic is lost by concrete or objective dilution.

Consideration of the non-relative “large” or an independent “the” can provide a considerable challenge of dissociation, refining the concrete mind and cultivating cooperation between the concrete mind of the personality and the abstract mind and intuition of the soul. Even though all things are relative, the exercise of non-relativity (detachment) is quite potent (non-relative does not

mean absolute). Syncategorematics is, ultimately, a path of freedom related in part to Zen Buddhism and other fields of practical and more-than-practical experience.

† Commentary No. 681

The Paradox of Service 1

For most of humanity at this time, the main focus in active consciousness is that of lower-nature (astral), emotional, sense-gratification. This self-oriented, excessively indulging focus (absorption) demands unending gratification, and anything less than instant reward (for the senses) is considered a sacrifice, and not to be considered or even tolerated. This orientation is a natural (necessary) step in the evolutionary process of humanity (hopefully for a limited (reasonable) time), following the premise that one must learn to walk before one can learn to run. In a similar way, before sacrificing (serving (a soul function)), the ego (lower-self) (personality) is generally (usually) allowed to fulfill (achieve) (learn) (go beyond) its lower nature indulgences (but not unendingly).

However, as the emotional self-indulgence continues (for years, lifetimes, eons (?)), a time comes when the question (issue) is faced (considered) (recognized) and the student wonders if these (sense-gratifications, ego-centered achievements) are all there is, for self-gratification has limits of indulgence (excesses) (even though it may not seem so) that in time naturally bring forth (evoke) an upward reaching (to the ever-waiting soul) that leads eventually the personality (mankind) to more meaningful (higher) pursuits (that are service-related and thus, sacrificial from the lower (ego) perspective).

This natural (higher) soul-dictated stimulation is occurring (is always in the process of occurring) in some (relatively few) individuals (not without struggle) at this time. These higher-oriented (inner) individuals (spiritual students) are interested in more than just lower (ego) self-gratification, and thus, these pioneers making this initial, meaningful soul contact (who are gradually becoming more an accepted norm) are part of the leading edge of human evolution (the new group of (soul-infused) world servers) (those that sacrifice) (spiritual students).

While those engrossed with the lower, mundane perspective cannot accept that anything meaningful exists beyond the gratifying self-indulgence (of the personality), similar (but different) considerations are equally true from the higher, soul perspective as experienced by the spiritual student, in which anything less than a pure service (sacrificial) motive is not to be considered. In this case, the all-inclusive, higher soul-perspective (as to the lower, exclusive, mundane personality) can understand, but not accept undue concern about a natural (inevitable) upward transition (i.e., service and/or sacrifice).

With this perspective, while the lower vehicles (personality) are not able (interested) (willing) to understand the more inclusive motive behind (the need for) sacrifice (service), the higher self (equally) cannot understand (and/or accept) anything less. Even more interesting, or paradoxically, from the higher (soul) perspective, there is no sacrifice in service, and much like (but not really) the mundane, lower nature requirement (of the personality) for emotional indulgences (excesses of the body), the soul must also be able (allowed) to indulge (?) itself (in service (sacrifice)). Thus, from the higher orientation, service is not a sacrifice, but rather a natural (necessary) condition that (will) must exist in order for the soul-infused individual (spiritual student) to develop and unfold. In addition, while this service may appear to be sacrificial from the lower reference (consciousness (of the personality)), it really is not, but rather it is the norm of the future, if the group-oriented (impersonal) soul-infused reference is to fulfill its natural (inevitable) destiny in the overall scheme (plan) of evolution.

The Paradox of Service 2

The consciousness of the majority of present humanity is emotionally focused; however, in any evolutionary period, a few advanced individuals (spiritual students) are gradually (continually) discovering (recognizing) that the issues of the lower-nature (personality) are no longer important. Initially, the higher awareness of the transitioning individual (aspirant) is unconscious and weak, but gradually this awareness becomes stronger, more durable, and conscious, and the soul (of the spiritual student) becomes more in control. Up to and during this transition (struggle), personality interests still prevail, but once this new awareness is fully in place, personality interests become less engaging, for an impetus is ever present for something more (i.e., soul-stimulated interest in service and sacrifice).

The distance (time) (separation) between those (aspirants) just achieving an awareness of the soul and those (initiates) who have achieved (conscious) soul awareness can seem considerable, and thus, it may (but need not) take considerable time (effort) to negotiate this separation. Due to this (falsely) perceived distance, it is (often) natural for aspirants just beginning the trek (homeward) to the soul (based on desire (kama-manas), rather than a meaningful soul-oriented understanding), to think of the advanced spiritual student with special (unwarranted) (unappreciated) regard, which can range from placing them on a pedestal (idolatry) to aggravated envy (depending on the relative status of the reference personality).

Such (extreme) responses are inappropriate, for there are no references in the plan for any essential inequalities (there are, however, non-equivalences). All are merely (equal) divine sparks of life on (relatively) (inconsequential) different steps of the evolutionary continuum. Furthermore, some of those who appear more advanced (more capable) are souls that were held back from another lifewave (for failing to progress sufficiently) or who have joined this lifewave for particular (obscure) reasons. However, in the greater plan, such considerations are unimportant, being primarily indicative of a personality consideration, but not that of the more impersonal soul.

This love/hate personality perception is interesting (peculiar), for the relatively advanced spiritual student is merely dealing with the higher consciousness sooner, and thus, the process should not be externally perceived either favorably or unfavorably, but merely as a natural evolutionary step (i.e., the soul achieving its destiny, much like the personality before). In addition, such (advanced) individuals are necessary as path leaders. The inconsistency of any personality response (reaction) is natural for the lower self or personality. But in the soul reference, the mundane personality has very little impact. The personality that (wrongly) believes that subjugation (sublimation) equals dissolution is simply fighting to hold on to itself (which is a natural instinct of material existence).

The advanced student (who is not required to incarnate or who has reached the point where there is no longer any need to incarnate) who incarnates has already made (performed) the ultimate sacrifice (service) (since incarnation threatens (by absorption) one's spiritual nature), by merely incarnating. While the average person in incarnation generally considers life (living) as precious and not to be lost or given up (offered in sacrifice), the spiritual student regards living in this world either as an opportunity for service or (sometimes) even a painful obligation. Thus there seems to be a never ending paradox of service and sacrifice.

† Commentary No. 683

The Factor of Manas 1

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division B) outlines manas "as a cosmic, systemic, and human factor" through consideration of (1) the origin of manas or mind, (2) the position of manas, (3) the present stage of manasic development, and (4) the future of manas.

As a principle and as a plane of consciousness, manas is the result of various esoteric applications (experience, progressions, balancing of forces) on cosmic levels and beyond, which are merely reflected (by analogy) onto solar (planetary) (human) levels. The activation (origin) of manas relates directly to the various processes of individualization and methods of initiation on the various levels (cosmic, solar, planetary, and human) and during the various solar and planetary incarnations. This activation refers to the means by which an individual or

group, on some level, is fitted for the participation in manas and subsequently (consequently) is able to employ (embrace) (utilize) manas. Manas is, predominantly, an aspect of the fire of mind (solar fire), being the vital heat or “downpouring fire that animates the darkness of matter.”

The process of individualization is “the process of intelligent self-realization” in which the two poles (spirit and matter) are brought together to evoke the light or irradiation that brings about “self-realization, purpose, separation, consciousness, the ability to evolve, and the capacity to radiate.” In the previous planetary manifestation (the moon chain), human individualization was “the result of work accomplished during incomprehensible aeons of endeavor” involving “the latent presence of the fiery spark of mind working through the instinct,” while in the present planetary manifestation (the earth chain) there is a “hastening of the evolutionary process” through “the interposition of external forces” (at least apparently, as all that is external is from a broader perspective merely internal). The one (the second method (electrical polarity)) is actually an advanced (progressed) recapitulation of the other (the first method (latent activity)) (while the third method (to be revealed in the next planetary chain) is one of occult abstraction (drawing out)). All three methods draw upon external (internal) sources of manas (or forces pertaining thereto), namely the star system of Sirius, the star system of the Pleiades, and the planetary system of Venus in the (our) star system of Sol.

Individualization is a major “initiation into conscious existence” while subsequent major initiations (in the context of the (formal) spiritual path) are initiations “into spiritual existence and (progressive) group identification.” In this (proper) sense, initiation refers to the expansion of consciousness associated (directly) with “entrance into a new kingdom of nature,” in the first case (individualization) the transition from the animal kingdom to the human kingdom, in the second case (the path of initiation) the transition from the human kingdom to the spiritual or superhuman kingdom (of soul consciousness).

For all practical purposes, manas originates in the interplay of forces that bring about systemic manifestation. Each “mind” on each level (cosmic, solar, planetary, and human) animates the individual (constituent) atoms of its field (body) of expression and (ultimately) draws “into intelligent cooperation all the lesser units included in its sphere of influence.” Manas is, in a sense, the

working out (means) of will and (ordered) purpose. And the mind at one level is therefore the origin and source of manas at lower (internal) (induced) levels. Thus, in a sense, manas (the fire of mind) is a great animating and linking factor for all lives and demonstrates as an ordered, causal chain from the lowest level of consciousness to the highest conceivable.

† Commentary No. 684

The Factor of Manas 2

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division B) continues consideration of human manas and the current planetary chain (the earth chain). Man is an expression of "the purpose and the will in action of the planetary logos in whose body he is a cell or lesser life." The factor of mind is the means of achieving various developmental and evolutionary goals. Each factor of mind (cosmic, solar, planetary, and human) is an inherent qualification of ordered purpose of all that is included within the corresponding ring-pass-not or sphere of influence (field of manifestation). It is the conscious and unconscious force of mind that provides atomic stimulation.

The matter and entities of the various centers and levels are more central to the solar fire (fire of mind) than are the more peripheral lives. In the case of our planetary logos there are two great (active) chakras, the deva evolution (lifewave) and the human evolution (lifewave), while the other evolutions (involutionary lives) constitute the remainder of the planetary vehicle (body). In the case of a solar logos, each of the planetary logoi "holds the position of a center in the body of a solar logos" and "will embody some outstanding characteristic." The various active centers are the means of experience and expression (evolution) and indicate to some extent the nature of current consciousness and the current developmental or evolutionary goals. As the work of the lower centers is fulfilled, they are synthesized and absorbed (allowing a more predominant activity in the higher centers). The cosmic (solar) (planetary) (human) correspondence holds in each of these respects.

Each planetary logos (and each center) is "the embodiment of a particular kind of electrical force" (and associated ray). Each has a number of characteristics (key vibration, color, petallic structure, geometric formation and relationships,

stage of activity, etc.), with each logos (center) being distinctively different from its collaborators and serving different (albeit complementary) purposes within a greater purpose or progression. In each of the planetary schemes there is an analogously human component (hierarchy) (lifewave) which fulfills the role that our human race provides (being self-conscious units on some (but not necessarily all) globes of the planetary chain).

Furthermore, each of the planetary logoi (centers) provides a characteristic influence or qualification for each of the others. As that influence (collaborative radiation) is developed and as the various other logoi become more responsive, the entire system becomes more actively interdependent (dynamic) and the consequential force field (sphere of interplay of force) becomes more “energized” as the various geometric and progressive links are fulfilled (as force flows unimpeded) (leading ultimately to a major cosmic initiation). In addition to the progressive development of the systemic structure (organization) (relationships), there is a matter of periodic alignments and relationships within alignments.

At the moment (systematically) (encompassing vast aeons of existence), we are upon the fourth round of the fourth globe (planetary incarnation) of the fourth planetary chain (the earth chain) of the fourth (ordered planetary) scheme of a fourth-order solar system, which demonstrates a fivefold alignment of some not inconsiderable significance (although cosmically such fivefold alignments are fairly common (periodic) such coincidence suggests relativity (e.g., from some perspective or another are we not always in some such fivefold alignment)). This particular alignment suggests involvement (qualification) (enhancement) (stimulation) and a clear channel along fourth ray lines.

Physical Illness

In terms of the causal chain that leads to physical illness there are a number of superficial or intermediate (consequential) factors as well as an overall, underlying factor of karma. The superficial factors are (1) exposure to an environment of illness-conducive agents, (2) the presence of such agents, and (3) the relative responsiveness of the body (consciousness) to the presence of illness-conducive agents.

These three factors indicate superficially (consequentially) the relative susceptibility or vulnerability of a person to physical illness in general and/or to particular maladies. All people (in incarnation) are exposed to a wide range of environmental factors, germs, chemicals, genetic factors, etc., some (people) more than others, depending on geography, relative environmental cleanliness, etc., but all people to some extent. These factors may be externally or internally environmental. But not all are susceptible to incorporating internally or externally environmental illness-conducive agents; e.g., for two people of equal exposure, one might incorporate (attract) particular illness-conducive agents and the other might not. For two children of common parentage, one might receive (embrace) certain genetic factors while the other may not. For common exposure, there is (relative) individual variability in degree of susceptibility or vulnerability (just as some people are accident-prone and others are not).

The relative concentration of a given illness-conducive agent is a factor, i.e., the presence of certain chemicals (drugs) (germs) in moderate amounts generally indicates less vulnerability than large concentrations of these agents (too much of almost anything can be detrimental). On the other hand, some people are particularly sensitive or vulnerable to some agents for which others are wholly indifferent or invulnerable. It is the relative responsiveness (susceptibility) (vulnerability) of a particular person to a particular illness-conducive agent that ultimately (superficially) determines the extent (magnitude) and duration of any illness. Part of the relative responsiveness has to do with the overall physical, emotional, and mental health of the individual (healthy people have better and stronger defenses), but where necessary, even relatively invulnerable people can suffer uncharacteristically.

The overall, underlying factor of karma determines all aspects of physical illness. Karma determines the internal and external environment and relative concentrations and distributions of illness-conducive agents. Karma determines whether or not and to what extent and for how long a person will be subjected to the presence of such agents. And karma determines the relative susceptibility or responsiveness of the person to that presence and the nature, extent, and duration of all consequential illnesses (as all illness is consequential and all effects are karmic). So any analysis or evaluation of physical illness should consider the causal (karmic) chain and the underlying reason(s) (lesson(s) to be learned) for any particular illness or general susceptibility. All individual consequences are self-determined. Every illness is a relative consequence of some activity, attitude, or disposition, as is every extent of health a consequence of more a positive (constructive, learning) endeavor.

Karma overcomes, as needed. Benign (malignant) transformations are karmic consequents (consequences). Severity and mildness are karmic factors. And past (as well as current) emotional and mental factors are usually significant influences in physical illness. In the final analysis, one must learn what one must learn, and all that intervenes merely facilitates that learning.

† Commentary No. 686

Emotional and Mental Illness

Virtually all physical illness is related in one way or another to present and/or past emotional and mental behavior and conditions. The susceptibilities and vulnerabilities to particular physical ills are directly related (karmically) to past and present attitudes, conditions, activities, etc., in thinking and feeling. Physical illness is merely (generally) the manifestation on dense physical levels of an illness or inconsistency on etheric levels which is in turn a manifestation on etheric levels of an illness (inconsistency) (lack of harmony) (lack of propriety) on emotional and/or (concrete) mental levels (the problem of consciously understanding the cause and effect relationships is dramatically compounded by the fact that current effects are the result of current and past

(unfulfilled) causes, and most people cannot effectively (with detachment and impersonality) perceive their current or past conditions).

The keys to properly resolving illness of any form are (1) acceptance of responsibility for the condition in a positive, constructive sense, and (2) appreciation of the behavioral causes and resolution to overcome such causes. In the predominant case of lack of knowledge or insight into the causes, it is usually sufficient (to induce learning and moderate the effects) to be open and willing to face up to the causes (and associated lessons). The principal objective should be learning and understanding (not merely or even the removal of consequences). Of course if current emotional or mental conditions are less than sound (stable), then resolution (fulfillment) of illness is a more complicated and difficult matter.

From the metaphysical point of view, emotional (and mental) illness refers to conditions in the astral (emotional) body (and in the concrete mind) (respectively) that are inconsistent with the intended (evolutionary) accomplishments of the current human cycle (range of numerous lifetimes) (the further along the evolutionary path one may be the more significant are the lesser inconsistencies). Consequently, emotional and mental extremes are (in this context) indications of emotional and mental illness. Wherever there are wild swings in mood, emotional outbursts, coarseness in feelings, strong attachments, intense desires, etc., there is (metaphysically) emotional illness. Even the normal and natural (intermediate) state of emotional polarization (as most human beings are so polarized) is considered an emotional illness. Similarly, mental extremes are forms of mental illness. Being (highly) (or at all, depending on the place upon the path) opinionated is a mental illness. Being ultra-rational or closed-minded or particularly concrete-minded are forms of mental illness.

While all of these conditions indicate emotional and/or mental illness, the proper attitude toward people who exhibit these conditions is not to treat them as being ill, but rather to appreciate that these conditions are natural (even inevitable for most people at some time or another) and will naturally pass as the people concerned learn and grow by virtue of their experience. Thus compassion and appreciation for these people and their difficulties should serve without judgment. Many of the current physical ills (e.g., cancer, immune

system deficiencies) are directly related to sexual (and other emotional) excesses or improprieties from earlier lifetimes (which may or may not be triggered from current circumstances or related activities).

But in each case (illness) is a lesson or series of lessons ultimately revealed and embraced, even if primarily subconsciously or super-consciously and even if in the afterlife rather than concurrently.

† Commentary No. 687

Harmlessness and Truth 2

Of the three major endeavors within the spiritual path (namely (1) the adherence to truth, (2) the practice of harmlessness, and (3) service), service is the least understood by aspirants to the spiritual life; the concept of harmlessness is reasonably well understood (by virtue of its practicality) and increasingly so as the aspirant matures; and adherence to truth is not only poorly understood by aspirants but aspirants' belief in their understanding of adherence to truth generally greatly exceeds their real understanding of it.

Truth is revealed progressively as the student grows and deepens in the spiritual discipline and as the student becomes more and more qualified (refined). Adherence to truth is a more complex matter in which experience tests the student's ability to discern truth and the means and practice of adherence to the truth that is revealed, discerned, and relatively understood. In addition to the distinction between truth and adherence is the distinction between being honest with oneself and being honest with others. Virtually everyone is self-deceived to some extent, but on the spiritual path one must be determined to virtually eliminate self-deception (lack of self-honesty), as a prerequisite to proper external expression (honesty in regard to others) and proper internal expression (self-honesty leading to rapprochement with the soul). The spiritual student (who is endeavoring to embrace the spiritual path) as well as the aspirant (who seeks to embrace the spiritual path) generally greatly underestimate the importance of honesty (and adherence to truth).

One of the reasons for that underestimation is the attention of the mind of the student to other, more apparently pragmatic matters, such as the practice of

harmlessness. Harmlessness is nonetheless quite important, and as the student learns more and more of occult (spiritual) (cosmic) law and discerns more and more (better) the causal processes and cause and effect relationships, then the student is better able to practice harmlessness. The practice of harmlessness builds (proper) character and helps in the process of refinement (albeit not sufficiently in itself except in the sense that all of the preliminary (spiritual) disciplines and endeavors are considered aspects of the harmlessness (as they are, as well as being aspects of adherence to truth and service)).

But often enough students see (albeit improperly) a conflict between harmlessness and truth and choose harmlessness over truth. In practical matters it is psychologically easier (for most people) to practice perceived harmlessness than it is to be honest (this is also true in more subtle ways). Harmlessness is often the excuse used to justify “white lies” and other forms of dishonesty. But (in truth and harmlessness) (in theory and practice), there is no actual conflict between truth and harmlessness (while conflict does indeed exist between harmlessness and dishonesty). The student should always endeavor to be true (honest) as well as harmless, never undermining one for the other, and true to oneself as well as to others, withholding comment where necessary in order to remain true (and harmless). In practical matters (of honesty) one must have the courage to be truthful (openly where appropriate) (and withholding comment where appropriate). One is never obligated to answer questions or to comment upon the demand or expectation of others. With gentleness, one can properly refuse (and have the courage to face the consequences of that refusal).

It is better to be honest (harmless) than to be dishonest (albeit perceived (improperly) as harmless), for dishonesty (even in apparently inconsequential matters and ways) is harmful, for it creates a barrier between the mind and the soul, that fosters self-deception and inhibits the discernment of truth.

Listening and Speaking

Proper listening is a combination of hearing, paying attention to what is heard, and having an open mind so that learning is facilitated. What is heard is not necessarily valuable or constructively stimulating, but if one does not listen properly, then the opportunities for learning inherent in other people's experience is precluded to the extent of one's own mindset. With an open mind and ability to discuss (discriminate) what is useful or worthy of consideration (without unwarranted bias or preconception), the student's opportunities for learning are expanded.

One must discriminate to some extent, or else subject oneself to mindless drive and suffer mundane absorption accordingly, but with suitable discrimination and deliberately maintained listening skills (habits) much can be learned by consideration of other's experience (attitudes) (circumstances) (causal relationships). The development of proper observational and listening skills is an important part of the preparation and continuity of the spiritual student for learning and (service) expression. Furthermore, listening and observing properly is crucial to the development of the spiritual poise that is a necessary prerequisite to soul contact. One simply cannot approach the soul if one's mind or heart is noisy with one's own ideas, beliefs, thoughts, feelings, etc. Thus the development of outer listening skills paves the way toward development of inner listening skills and the concomitant spiritual poise that marks the established student relative to the aspirant.

Speaking is sometimes appropriate, particularly when the student must function in the outer (objective) (mundane) world, but the spiritual student should (must) nonetheless carefully cultivate (1) the proper listening disposition (predisposition) and (2) a corresponding reluctance to speak. People who speak reactively (responsively to others) or who "need" to speak or who "like" to talk have therefore and thereby a significant learning disability (people who like to talk do not therefore and thereby listen very well), which is a significant impediment to the cultivation of proper spiritual poise. People who like to talk (regardless of usefulness of the subject matter) (and even if the subject matter is useful) are therefore so filled with personality-centered energy (absorption) that

they cannot be responsive to the soul. In fact, some can be manipulated by external forces and thereby appear to be “inspired” but they are not thereby in genuine spiritual rapport.

The natural detachment of the spiritual student (lacking significant attachments to mundane or personal matters) affords effective listening and effective speaking. The spiritual student (of any grade) primarily listens, observes and considers (and through consideration performs effective service), speaking appropriately (without the need or desire to speak) and occasionally, where called upon. The spiritual student has beliefs (knowledge) (relative understanding) but not opinions or attachments to particular beliefs. The spiritual student never needs to defend or explain his or her beliefs to others (although he may explain himself if warranted, but without need to do so). The spiritual student properly shares energy (by qualification of his environment, by his considerations, etc.), but never (properly) by imposition of ideas, beliefs, etc.

While mantras are useful for qualification, the student does not need to speak to God or the soul within. To the contrary, what is needed is the cultivated and qualified habit of listening to (for) the voice of the silence and adherence to its quality and encouragement.

† Commentary No. 689

Transition 1

Immersed in the struggles of material existence, with no clear concept or understanding of the cycle of life and creation, the average (Western) man approaches the prospect of death (inevitable though he realizes it to be subconsciously) with fear and confusion. Understood from a theosophical perspective, however, there should be little cause for uncertainty or apprehension. Indeed death has been described as “the great adventure,” the release from the prison of matter leading to “adventures” in consciousness beyond those realizable to the waking consciousness of someone in physical incarnation.

What is commonly called death is really only the transition of the waking consciousness in the physical world into the lower levels of the super-physical

worlds. Death is one of several transitions in consciousness that man undergoes (on the physical, emotional (astral), and mental planes) in the greater cycle of birth (into a physical body), experience, restitution, assimilation, elimination, preparation, and rebirth (into another physical body).

Only a small portion of each life cycle is spent on the physical plane, but it is this portion that most of Western humanity erroneously regard as (the greatest or only) reality. Even among those who have some (limited) appreciation of super-physical realms (planes), the experiences on these inner planes is often believed to be of a more dream-like, semi-conscious quality, and the inner planes themselves are believed to be more illusory in nature than the so-called "reality" of the physical plane. But the consciousness experienced in the higher realms (even after death) depends on the (overall) quality of consciousness achieved, and that (super-physical experience) can range from semi-conscious and dream-like to a relatively sharp objective awareness (complemented with subjective insight).

The astral plane is often called the "world of illusion," (no less so than the physical plane (just in a different way)), but to one of proper training, the astral plane is actually one step nearer to reality than is the physical. Indeed, the ascension from the physical to the astral to the mental planes is one which draws the man ever out of illusion and nearer to reality. The shedding of the physical body (death), frees the inner man to direct, physically unencumbered experience through the astral body. Similarly, with the falling away of the astral body (sometimes referred to as the second death), the man is further liberated to function through his (however undeveloped) manasic (mental) vehicle without the necessity to work through the physical brain or the potentially distorting astral vehicle (emotions).

With the exception of the relatively unevolved, man on the inner planes (after death) is potentially as (or almost as) conscious of himself as an individual as he was during physical incarnation (one must be considerably qualified before the same is true of one actually in incarnation). The (physically) disembodied state is, relatively speaking, a more "normal" state than the physical life, owing to the comparative reality and duration of the former. Man, on the inner planes, recognizes (to the extent of his consciousness) the governing principles of the Law of Rebirth, and is aware (possibly not immediately after death, but at later

stages) that the passage through the inner planes, and the consequent elimination of his astral and mental vehicles is but part of the interlude between incarnations. During this interlude he (or more properly, the soul) consciously works with the fruits of the experience of his past incarnation and prepares for the next.

† Commentary No. 690

Transition 2

The purpose (for man) of descent into matter (physical incarnation) is essentially to gain experience on the physical plane (in the human form) that is otherwise unattainable. We might consider this cyclical process of descent and re-ascent as analogous to a scientist who wishes to develop a theory (solve a problem). The scientist (soul) first designs an experiment. He (clothed in a personality) proceeds then to the laboratory (physical plane) to conduct the experiment (physical incarnation), and thereby gather data (experience) (quality) (character). Following this, he withdraws for what may be a lengthy period of analysis (assimilation) before he has gained the understanding requisite to designing the next most advantageous experiment in the sequence. He (clothed in a new personality) again returns to the laboratory.

This sequence is repeated until the theory is sufficiently developed (consciousness sufficiently evolved) that further experiments (incarnations) (in this particular field of endeavor (physical plane (consciousness))) are not necessary (meaning that subsequent experience is afforded on other levels or other fields). There is no denying that the laboratory phase is essential to the overall cycle, but it cannot be viewed as an end in itself, just as any particular physical life should be seen in relation to the greater life cycle of which it forms only a part.

That which most of humanity call death, but what spiritual students recognize to be only a transition (one in a series of transitions) of life and consciousness to a higher plane, occurs when the "will to be" of the soul is withdrawn from its physical form. This transition is marked by the detachment (snapping) of the sutratma (thread soul) (silver cord) from the dense physical vehicle.

When the soul incarnates (wills to be (express)), it does so via the extension of the sutratma into physical form. This life-current differentiates into two threads: the "individual consciousness stream" (thread), which is secured (focused) in the head, and the "dynamic life stream" (thread), which is secured in the heart (center). It is the individual life stream that controls and coordinates the physical molecules and atoms (all of which are lives in themselves) that compose the dense physical body, molding them and maintaining them as an integrated composite organism. The stream of "universal pranic energy," the life principle that vitalizes the individual lesser (elemental) lives, enters the body through the spleen, and ascends to join the life stream secured in the heart. The etheric body is the vehicle for this pranic energy that enlivens the organism (physical body).

When the soul withdraws from an incarnation (recalls the sutratma), the life thread reunites with the consciousness thread, and this magnetic cord is severed from its point of focus in the heart, thus terminating the link of the higher vehicles to the physical body. The permanent physical atom (the small force center embodying the physical quality abstracted from each incarnation and the archetype of the physical body for subsequent incarnations) is retained and withdrawn with the sutratma. Death and sleep are similar in that in both cases the higher vehicles are withdrawn from the dense physical. The important distinction between them, though, is that in sleep, only the consciousness thread (secured in the head) is withdrawn (temporarily), thus causing the loss of physical consciousness, but allowing the focus of consciousness to shift to the higher (astral or mental) planes. The life thread, during sleep, remains secured in the heart.

The Factor of Manas 3

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division B) continues consideration of human manas and the earth chain. In relation to the fivefold four-centered alignment is the role of the fourth creative hierarchy. Of the twelve creative hierarchies, five have passed and seven remain. "Of these seven, our human hierarchy is the fourth, making it literally the ninth of the entire twelve" (thus is significance attributed to the role of the number nine and the number four in these regards).

"The planetary logos of this (earth) scheme is primarily" concerned with those units or monads who resonate or belong to its ray (by key vibration, color, number, etc.). "All monads pass at different times under the influence of the different planetary logoi, and all are found at some time in each scheme" (not necessarily or even generally in terms of incarnating in each scheme) and all monads eventually pass through each of the seven ray qualifications. There are four ways of "participation in the life and influence of the different (planetary) schemes:" (1) through three-or-four fold alignment (i.e., of numbered round and globe and chain (and scheme), respectively) and the "interim between cycles of physical incarnation on the particular globe of their scheme which numerically coincides with the particular other scheme whose influences are needed," (2) through direct monadic transference between appropriate schemes during pertinent interludes (of magnetic interaction of the respective schemes), (3) "through a conscious passage of the initiate, through initiation, from one scheme to another," and (4) through other (occult, esoteric, alchemical) means.

The various relationships between and alignments of the planetary logoi afford considerable and periodic collaboration and stimulation (e.g., as the manasic fires were brought from Venus to Earth during particular and previous alignments). In each major relationship (enhanced periodically by alignment) there is a triangle of forces, one positive (active) (male), one negative (passive) (female), and one neutral (moderating) (synthesizing). The various internal and external alignments involve rounds with rounds, globes with globes, etc., rounds with globes, globes with chains, etc. The factor of polarization is relative and depends on the particular relationship, alignment, roles, etc. and most

relationships and alignments are bidirectional and thus polarization (in this sense) depends on perspective.

In the context of the current incarnating monads, there are components of two distinct groups, those who were individualized in the current (fourth) (Earth) chain during the manasic stimulation of the third root-race and those who were individualized in the previous (third) (Moon) chain and who rejoined humanity during the fourth root-race of the current cycle. The majority of the human pioneers (advanced souls) belong to the moon-chain-group and considerable stimulation (tension) (encouragement) is afforded humanity by virtue of the (occult, subtle) differences between the two groups.

A considerable correspondence relates the levels of planetary manifestation to the levels of human expression. Each planetary scheme corresponds to the monad and its forty-nine cycles. Each chain corresponds to the soul or causal body and its seven great cycles. Each globe and "its seven rounds corresponds to a particular series of incarnations" (physical or otherwise). Of course the perspective of an incarnated human being as a personality is rather misleading (as well as useful), just as is the perspective of planetary schemes, chains, globes, rounds, root-races, etc., since each is more realistically viewed in terms of chakras and relationships (interplay of forces).

† Commentary No. 692

The Factor of Manas 4

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division B) continues consideration of the position of manas (the mental principle) (the fire of mind) (solar fire) and the present stage of manasic development in the three groups. As intelligent purpose working out in active objectivity, manas is necessarily quite closely related to karma (and, systemically, to the Lords of Karma). Although much anent manas and karma can be understood, at least, intellectually and intelligently (which is partially), "until the intuition is better developed in the average man, the very principle of manas itself forms a barrier to its due understanding."

For the human being, manas is the bridge between (conscious association of) personality and soul, since manas forms both the concrete mind or highest aspect of the personality and the abstract mind or lowest aspect of the soul. Before intuition can be brought into play (with respect to the personality), the abstract mind must be developed and the person must be able to bring the concrete mind into harmony with (close association to) the abstract mind (from the point of view of the personality, the abstract mind does not inhibit or impede the intuition (buddhi), since both manas (in the higher sense of abstract mind) and buddhi are formless in comparison with concrete mental and lower levels). The plans and purposes of the concrete mind (personality) are relatively futile; as the proper role of the mind is to embrace the higher will (qualification) and bring its energy (plans and purposes) into objective realization (manifestation). Manifestation occurs as a result of will (ordered purpose) and through the means of manas (and the collaboration of active lives (e.g., self-realized human beings) and the various builders (e.g., deva lives)).

The human (fourth) hierarchy works intimately with the deva (fifth and sixth) hierarchies in this great undertaking (the work of manifestation or objective existence) (the working out in manifestation of the great periodic and evolutionary plan). "Karma works through manas," and thereby human beings are able to achieve relative perfection (completion) (alignment). But throughout these processes, it is the fire of matter which keeps matter in a state of activity (availability) (adaptability) (responsiveness) and it is the fire of mind which provides "the coherent impulse and purpose, driving the forms (built up of active matter) in a specific direction, and along certain destined (intended) paths. It is consequently karmic impulse, originating cause, and operating will."

A distinction is made between transmutation and "the final resolution of transmuted essence into synthesis." Each of the planetary logoi is at some stage of manasic development (transmutation) (resolution) and transmutation (and eventual resolution) becomes possible only as an appropriate preponderance of evolutionary units (monads) achieves the requisite development (capability) (maturity) (each transmutation or resolution implies a great day (period) (aeon) of testing in which those who pass are sent on to the next cycle and those who fail are held over until the next (following) lifewave catches up with them).

Devas exist more or less in their natural state (of radiant electric matter) while only human beings (logoi) can exist artificially "in time and space, during manifestation, and through cycles of objectivity", and naturally otherwise. Progressive evolution for humanity and the various levels (logoi) comes about as the various internal and external forms are balanced, the various progressions of the fire balanced, and various synthetic resolutions and abstractions achieved.

† Commentary No. 693

Angst

Angst refers to the relative anxiety "occasioned by man's realization that his existence is open towards an undetermined future, the emptiness of which must be filled by his freely chosen actions." In this sense, "anxiety characterizes the human state, which entails constant confrontation with possibility and the need for decision, with the concomitant burden of responsibility." While these concepts are more popular in the existential point of view, they remain valid (in the esoteric philosophy) without regard to other existential concepts (which may or may not be consistent with the esoteric wisdom (higher truth)). Esoterically and exoterically, man (humanity) enjoys a measure of free will, bounded to some extent by personal, racial, and planetary karma. While some aspects of the unfolding life are somewhat predetermined (by a person's previous activities and consequences), much of each life is relatively unbounded and subject to the personal (and higher) energy of the individual, through desire, intention, will, etc.

If a person assumes (consistently or otherwise) that all things are predetermined and individual initiative (effort) (decision-making) is futile, then such a person will flow through (incarnated) life without much benefit of the rich diversity of experience afforded and will consequently learn and grow only minimally. On the other hand (extreme), if a person assumes (similarly consciously or unconsciously) that life is entirely self-determined in real time (i.e., through absolute individual free will), then while such a person will probably experience (potentially) a great deal, such a person will thereby necessarily be relatively blind to the lessons afforded by the higher self (and by intelligent cooperation with natural forces).

The proper balance is a realization that the general parameters of an incarnation are relatively predetermined but that (relatively) a great deal of freedom is afforded for self-determination. The specific future is relatively undetermined, and a person can choose his future by default (inaction), by active self-will, or by intelligent consideration. Intelligent consideration is the way of the (evolving) spiritual student and affords maximal progress (contributory service) in life and upon the path. The individual (particularly the spiritual student) should consciously accept responsibility for all current and future consequences, while actively and intelligently considering his or her response to the opportunities revealed. While decisions are needed in order to actively embrace experience afforded, the process of decision-making need not be traumatic or even rational.

With intelligent (reasonable) (open-minded) consideration of alternatives, the preferred (most suitable (appropriate)) path or choice is generally reasonably easily recognized, intuitively (preferably) or rationally (if need be). But in the final analysis any particular decision is not particularly important, because karmically an individual will always be afforded appropriate paths and opportunities (and what is merited is never lost) (one is still (nonetheless) responsible) (and the degree to which responsibility is accepted (not over-accepted) is the degree to which maturity will be achieved).

While the realization of personal responsibility and an undetermined future is relatively important, there is no need for anxiety (angst) or undue stress. One can learn to continually and comfortably confront one's (open-ended) life and the opportunities thus afforded. The future is not an emptiness but a substance to be molded and realized. Every action (and every lack of action) is consequential, and subject to the overriding (underlying) wisdom of karma.

Data 1

Data in its most primitive form is defined as energy that is available to perception. Primitive data is real by virtue of its being undisturbed or undistorted by the process of perception, but even though the (energy) field of (raw) (primitive) data may be disturbed by perception (which is a dynamic and interactive process), raw data remains real (while the data perceived is merely a copy of the primitive data) (while perceived data is necessarily distorted by perception, greatly so or otherwise depending on the relative bias of the perceiving organism and the level and manner (quality) of perception).

Raw or primitive data is naturally self-structured or organized but not necessarily perceived as such. Raw data is normally perceived as being unstructured or unorganized because the perceiving entity generally takes a relatively narrow view (i.e., views the data partially) and is generally limited in its ability to embrace the depth, breadth, and underlying structure (fundamental organization or pattern). Perceived data must therefore be (arbitrarily, intelligently, or naturally) organized and information extracted in order for it (the perceived data) to be useful or meaningful (and, unfortunately, normal (heavily biased) human perception leads one to see (perceive) what one wants to, somewhat (at least) regardless of reality, and therefore the information “extracted” is often misleading and, “wrong” conclusions are drawn.

Information is defined as the relatively useful content (component) of data (or information is less primitive data, data that has been perceived (correctly or incorrectly) (objectively or otherwise) and evaluated (consciously and/or deliberately or unconsciously and/or carelessly)). Information is generally more organized or structured than raw data is perceived to be, but information per se may or may not be properly organized and therefore may be useful, not useful, or misleading, depending on the processes involved, the character and quality of consciousness, the circumstances (internal and external bias), etc. Information then is a subset of the perceived data and that subset that is potentially meaningful to the perceiving organism (given that some or much of the potential information content of the perceived data may be disregarded or not recognized

as having value (and given that the perceived data from which the information is extracted may or may not be the most useful dataset)).

The next step in this process is the correlation of the higher order or refined (organized) data (information) so that knowledge can be obtained. This occurs through conscious or unconscious consideration, evaluation, analysis, etc. and ultimately through some form or extent of discrimination (weighing what is of relative value and what is otherwise). This correlation of information from one or more sources of data leads to relative knowledge (beliefs) (opinions) (conclusions) and relative understanding. These processes may be more or less instinctual, emotional, mental (rational or otherwise) (concrete or abstract) (objective or subjective), and/or intuitive. Depending on the particular process or processes, the particular character and quality of intervening consciousness, and the relative ability, experience, training, etc. of the person or entity, the results (knowledge) will be relatively good (accurate) (meaningful) or otherwise.

Knowledge is therefore “data” of a higher order than information and conveys some degree of (apparent) understanding (or relative understanding conveys some extent of knowledge). But knowledge without understanding (correlation, appreciation of relative significance, etc.) is of relatively little value.

† Commentary No. 695

Data 2

Beyond knowledge is wisdom. In this context, wisdom is the kernel of knowledge that is extracted from knowledge (or experience) by virtue of assimilation. While knowledge implies or conveys some degree of understanding, wisdom implies or conveys some degree of realization (more properly, understanding and realization convey knowledge and wisdom, respectively). Wisdom is, in this context, the most refined level of “data” and is the first of the four levels to convey achievement (data is obtained; information is extracted or obtained; even knowledge is primarily obtained; while wisdom is achieved). In the parallel between matter (energy) and data, raw or primitive data corresponds to dense matter (the available reservoir of material substance); information and knowledge correspond to more refined matter (forms); while

wisdom corresponds to formless energy (arupa levels). Thus data, information, and knowledge belong to the realm of form (personality), while wisdom belongs to the formless domain (beyond personality).

The experiential process of obtaining data, extracting information, acquiring knowledge, and achieving wisdom involves all of the seven rays and demonstrates the parallels and distinctions of the occult rays with respect to the mystical rays. Data per se belongs to the seventh ray of boundless, fundamental energy. Information belongs, in this context, to the fifth ray of concrete knowledge. Knowledge, in this sense, belongs to the third ray of correlated information (understanding) (intelligence). And wisdom, in this sense, belongs to the first ray and realization (in the more normal context, knowledge belongs to the fifth ray and wisdom to the second).

The process of perception, of extracting information from data, belongs to the sixth ray. The process of discrimination, balance, etc., of acquiring knowledge from information, belongs to the fourth ray. And the process of assimilation, of achieving wisdom from knowledge and experience, belongs to the second ray. Thus all seven rays are linked constructively, with the occult or odd-numbered rays showing a progression in refinement, organization, and usefulness of data, and the mystical or even-numbered rays demonstrating a progression in processes from the relatively primitive (perception) to the intermediate (discrimination) to the relatively advanced (assimilation).

Another useful analogy is that of noise, music, and silence. In this sense raw data corresponds to noise; information and knowledge correspond to unrefined and refined music, respectively; and wisdom corresponds to silence (truth). Noise represents unrefined (coarse) matter. Music is useful transitionally (and represents the human personality). And silence is more universal (and represents the soul (and its monad)).

One of the objectives of life in the lower worlds is to learn how to perceive more clearly, accurately, and effectively; how to discriminate more effectively and easily (naturally and without bias) in the face of tremendous amounts and diversity of perceived data and information content; and how to assimilate one's experience (and meaningful knowledge obtained) more directly, so that evolution may proceed expeditiously. With increasing quality of consciousness

(refinement of the physical, emotional, and mental vehicles), distortion in perception is minimized, effectiveness in discrimination is enhanced, and proper assimilation is assured. Evolution proceeds from the assimilation of knowledge and experience (from the achievement of wisdom). Wisdom (conscience) (capability) (subjective data) is carried forth to the next incarnation, while knowledge (information) (data) is released.

† Commentary No. 696

Individual Rapport 1

Living in a serious spiritual community (or being actively associated with a spiritual group) can provide potent opportunities for the establishment of rapport (primarily on mental levels) between individuals. There is further opportunity for the participation in an intuitive rapport or meditative rapport, but on this level is more properly a case of rapport between the individual and group (energy) rather than between individual members (as individuals).

In the context of the spiritual group, individual rapport is not simply a matter of fondness or comfortable cooperation and mundane responsiveness (although these may be consequences of a deeper rapport, they more often are merely apparent and not indicative of anything deeper). Similarly, knowing another's values and being able to predict (to some extent) another's responses to situations does not imply that a rapport exists. The individual rapport that members of a spiritual group or community seek is primarily the result of the establishment of a relationship of direct, honest communication. There are four basic requirements for the establishment of such a relationship.

The first requirement is that both individuals have integrated (or very nearly integrated) personalities. Where the personality is clearly not integrated (lower vehicles not firmly under the control (self-control) of the mind) there is no stable (workable) personality energy. The non-integrated individual tends to be quite changeable because he is to a large extent the slave of whichever of the lower vehicles happens to be in control at the moment. Often such an individual is (unknowingly) confused about his thoughts and feelings since there is no stable, unified personality energy; there is only the whim or desire or emotion of the moment to dictate action or response. Non-integrated personalities are quite

capable of emotional rapport (due to the emotional polarization of the non-integrated personality) (and actually more easily so than integrated personalities), but emotional rapport is of little value in a more mature spiritual relationship. While it is possible for individuals who are not yet (quite) integrated to be party to very helpful, encouraging, and cooperative mundane relationships within a group context, the establishment of a real (mental and intuitional) rapport is not quite possible.

The second requirement is that the individuals seeking a rapport understand to some extent each other's character, mental capabilities, and ray make-up. The thinking processes and abilities of individuals vary considerably. For one person to expect (assume) another to think (reason, deduce) in a similar manner to himself, without regard for the differences that exist in mental capacity or mental processes (both developed and resulting from ray influences), leads often to a judgmental and critical approach to relationships. Such unreasonable expectations (assumptions) preclude further understanding and may result in one individual attempting merely to impose his thinking processes upon the other. Where individuals have a healthy understanding of and respect for each other's current abilities (inabilities) there can exist a potent environment for establishment of a (proper) rapport that is not pressured by expectation or unreasonable assumption.

The third requirement for establishing an individual rapport is that the participants are actively seeking to know themselves and to make self-honesty a keynote in their lives. One can only be honest in a relationship to the extent to which one is able to be honest with oneself, to face the ego in an impersonal and reasonably detached manner, and to open oneself to the reality of the personality condition in consciousness.

Transition 3

Without the coordinating force of the life thread and the permeating etheric body to process the prana necessary to vitalizing the composite organism, the lesser lives (molecular and elemental) revert to a disorganized state and begin to decompose. They eventually return to their natural state of basic formlessness (only to be reformed in new ways in other times). It is only the coordinated physical organism that is “dead.” The constituent atoms remain alive as individual units.

Following the detachment of the sutratma from the dense physical body, the etheric body, though liberated from its dense counterpart, is still drawn to it. The etheric body (at this point still enshrouding the subtle bodies) may be seen (clairvoyantly) hovering over the dense vehicle. Generally speaking, the pull of the soul is sufficiently strong to disengage the five higher principles from the etheric body relatively quickly (a few hours to days), except in the case of extreme material attachments or identification with (polarization on) the physical plane. The ethereal corpse, once shed from the higher principles, remains near the dense one, and the two decompose synchronously.

Cremation of the dense physical body serves both to hasten the release of the subtle vehicles from the etheric body, and to provide the immediate restoration (restitution) of the physical elements composing the dense and ethereal corpses to the (respective) elemental reservoirs from which they may be again drawn for future forms. The purificatory flames which sweep away any negative forces associated with the old form provide an inherently more appropriate disposition of the body than does the slow deterioration and decay of interment. Indeed, cemeteries are seen, clairvoyantly, to be very “unfortunate” (if not ghastly) fields of decaying ethereal corpses. As human consciousness evolves, cremation will become increasingly more widely accepted and preferred, and the unhealthy blights that cemeteries are on the etheric (and psychic) body of the planet will be phased out.

Regarding the custom of funerals, memorial services, and the mourning which often accompanies them (and may continue for years in the case of strongly

attached friends and family members): prior to death, the student should either make the necessary arrangements for his eventual cremation or advise those responsible for making the arrangements of his wishes. He should also convey his wishes (to those responsible) regarding the nature and tone of whatever memorial service there might be (if any). A memorial service should be of a positive nature, emphasizing appropriate release and return as transition is made from one phase of the life cycle to the next. The memorial service should offer encouragement to those remaining to release their attachments, that the individual may progress onward to the next phase unencumbered by the chains of emotion that would tend to bind him to the physical and lower astral planes.

While it is natural to experience a period of necessary “adjustment” to the transition (physical death) of a loved one, intense grief or an extended period of mourning is inappropriate and often indicative of self-centeredness, rather than a true love that releases and encourages the individual who has transitioned to similarly release his attachments and move onward in consciousness. Unhappily, many individuals (after physical death) are detained far longer than is necessary on the lower levels of the astral plane due to such attachments (which often are intensely felt by the deceased). Some attachments are so strong that they prevent the individual’s further progress until his “loved ones” have themselves transitioned from the physical plane.

† Commentary No. 698

Transition 4

Having shed the dense physical and etheric bodies, the individual (in his astral and mental bodies) passes progressively through the astral sub-planes. The region of the astral plane which characterizes the condition in consciousness of such individuals is often called kamaloka. The kamalokic condition exists on each of the astral sub-planes.

As a person experiences during physical life, matter from various astral sub-planes is built into the astral body, vivified, and utilized. The more evolved (purified) the individual becomes, the more matter from the higher sub-planes is built in, and matter of a grosser nature on the lower sub-planes is released. The

passage through the astral sub-planes after the discarding of the physical body involves the exhausting of the attractions of the matter of the astral body on each sub-plane such that the grosser matter "falls away," and the individual may then progress, through affinity, to the next higher level (sub-plane) or state of consciousness. This describes the process of attrition of the astral body, the eventual elimination of which is referred to as the second death.

As long as desires persist relative to the earthly life, the individual may not progress onward, and the kamalokic experience then serves as a purgation, purifying and inducing eventual release from the binding desires. The lowest three (astral) kamalokic sub-planes are, for this reason, sometimes called "purgatory." During the purgatory experience, the individual reviews the "evil" (grosser) (more negative) (ignorant) acts of the earthly life, until sufficiently freed from the matter (desires) of these lower levels.

The fourth (astral) kamalokic sub-plane is sometimes called "the borderland," and the three highest (astral) kamalokic sub-planes are sometimes referred to as "the first heaven." In general, the state after physical death (in the kamalokic state) for the average person is much "happier" than life in the physical form. The individual in the "heaven" region (condition) (state of consciousness) enjoys far greater freedom than when hampered by material conditions. Since he is able to create whatever world he wishes via his thoughts, his "heaven" would vary from the "heavens" of all of the other individuals similarly participating in kamaloka. Astral pleasures (sensuous enjoyment) are much greater than those of physical incarnation, with considerable potential for distraction. The aspirant should endeavor to remain detached, that he might more rapidly pass through the astral levels (ever consistent with duty or service opportunity).

For the average man, the kamalokic experience is essentially a continuance of the attractions and tendencies of the physical incarnation. The aspirant, however, who has participated in active service on the astral plane during sleep, finds himself (after physical death), in the familiar field of that service. He is able to devote himself to continuous service in this field, rather than being confined to the intervals allotted by earthly sleep. Furthermore, karmic law applies to the individual whether in or out of physical incarnation. Wherever a man's consciousness may be developed, wherever he has the ability to make

choices and act upon them, these actions will contribute to his future karmic condition (possibly manifesting in the next incarnation). Therefore, the kamalokic experience, while potentially one of extreme sensuous pleasure (absorption) may rather be (much more constructively) (if the aspirant applies himself properly) one of definite spiritual progress, learning, and opportunity for service.

† Commentary No. 699

The Factor of Manas 5

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division B) continues consideration of the factor of manas. Three broad generalizations of systemic manifestation are position, relation, and limitation. Position refers to the basic structure of manifestation or "the place of the system within its greater whole and the corporate nature of all manifestation" (e.g., solar systems, planetary schemes, chains, etc.). Relation refers to the interrelation and interdependence of the various factors and their correspondences. And limitation refers to the boundaries or qualifications of manifestation.

Each of the divisions (levels) of the basic structure of manifestation (position) is characterized by "an ensouling life, intelligent activity, power to evolve or progress, and capacity to cohere." On the levels above humanity there is active, conscious, and intelligent cooperation with and involvement in the work of manifestation. On the levels below humanity there is relatively unconscious and indirect cooperation with and involvement in the work of manifestation. On human levels there is semiconscious cooperation and involvement, as humanity forms (experiences) the bridge (transition) between unconscious and conscious intelligence (cooperation and involvement).

Relationships exist between each planetary scheme and the totality of schemes, between planetary schemes, between schemes and chains, between chains, between chains and globes, between globes, between globes and groups, between groups, between subdivisions, between units, between cells, etc. Relationships also exist between the various cycles and between the various levels and between the various cycles and levels. Wherever resonance (correspondence) is achieved there is considerable relationship (interaction).

Limitation “presupposes capacity beyond that manifested, duality or that which is limited and the limiting substance, and purpose” (the basis of persistence of limitation) (until it is “succeeded by abstraction”).

Within the field of consciousness (manifestation) of the planetary logos are the kumaras “who are the sum total of manas on (within the field of) the Earth.” These kumaras “are the centers in the body of the planetary logos (where each chain corresponds to one center)” and serve as agents (representatives) (correspondents) of the seven rays, the seven planetary logoi, the devas of the seven planes, etc., respectively, working within the law and being cognizant “of the intelligent purpose of the logos.” The kumaras provide “the link between the chain and the scheme” and together form the unity, continuity, and position (relationship) (limitation) of the planetary logos.

During an involutory manifestation of a planetary scheme there is first a period of three chains, then a period of seven chains, and finally a period of ten chains. During a subsequent evolutionary manifestation of a planetary scheme there is first a period of “ten chains, then seven, and finally three.” In the current scheme, manifestation has proceeded to the (approximate) mid point of the evolutionary sequence (i.e., having for now seven chains). The current (earth) chain has “absorbed or synthesized the moon chain” and is now (thereby) bipolar (male and female). Thus the earth chain has inherited and incorporated the successes and failures of experience (expression) (evolution) of the moon chain and much of the current world distress (occultly speaking) is a consequence or partially attributed to failures of that preceding chain. The earth chain appears to be a (relatively unusual) “sphere of suffering” (conflict) (distress) that should enable (challenge) humanity to overcome the inherited problems.

The Factor of Manas 6

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division B) continues consideration of the factor of manas, and in particular, the future of manas, including “(1) the characteristics of manas, (2) the developments of the human mind, and (3) manas in the final rounds” (at least with respect to humanity).

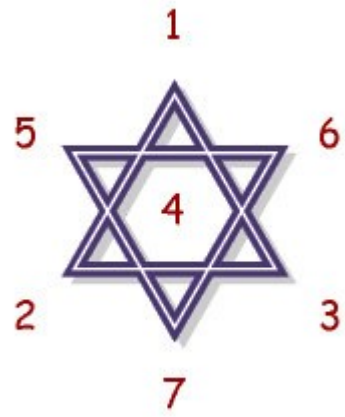
The principal characteristics of manas are “discrimination, ordered activity, and adaptability.” The “discriminative quality of manas and its selective capacity” exists in some manner or another (i.e., utilized consciously or unconsciously) on all of the planes and manifests as (1) “the ability to distinguish between oneself and all other forms extant,” (2) discrimination between the soul and its personality (such discrimination is undeveloped or very poorly developed in humanity), and (3) discrimination between the soul and the monad (such discrimination is even less developed or nonexistent in humanity). Evolution, in this sense, proceeds from (lower) self-discrimination through the true realization of distinction of personality and soul (which even the bulk of aspirants and spiritual students have yet to achieve) to the realization of distinction of soul and monad. The embrace of discrimination also proceeds from self-centered discrimination (separateness and separativeness) through intermediacy to realization of unity and inclusiveness.

Man’s extent (natural perversion) of self-centeredness leads him to (falsely) perceive the subtle (deceptive) elements of his own personality (lower mind) as the soul. This extent of self-deception is a major stumbling block for aspirants to the spiritual path. However, ultimately this is overcome as the self (reality) and the not-self (illusion) are distinguished and in higher discrimination (the mind illumined by the soul) comes true realization of unity and continuity. The “inherent discriminative faculty of manas” leads a person “into matter and form, through all forms of matter on all planes, and finally brings about his eventual abstraction from all forms and matter (plus the aggregate of transmuted knowledge which the evolutionary process has procured for him).”

Ordered activity brings “the concept of intelligent purpose.” In this sense manas is both the means and the medium of (1) realization (consciously or

unconsciously) of intelligent purpose, (2) receptiveness (responsiveness or reactivity, depending on relative quality and character of consciousness), and (3) achievement of implied or inherent (underlying) goals or objectives in support of that intelligent purpose. Man is swept into and out of incarnation as a direct consequence of this characteristic (ordered activity) of manas, for man (currently) resides, in principle, on the mental plane and is primarily (inherently) inspired from that plane (yet in incarnation, almost all of humanity are largely absorbed on emotional levels and do not respond effectively on mental levels).

Adaptability is “the prime attribute ascribed to the third ray” and “that attribute of intelligence which adapts the matter aspect to the spirit aspect” (as the work of evolution is accomplished through the utilization and adaptation of matter by consciousness (and the utilization and adaptation of consciousness, in turn, by spirit)). Adaptability (active intelligence) embraces the four rays of attribute (the fourth ray of harmony through conflict, the fifth ray of concrete knowledge, the sixth ray of idealism, and the seventh ray of ceremonial order) in this work of utilization, qualification, transformation, transmutation, and involvement of matter and form (on etheric, astral or emotional, and (concrete) mental levels).



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