



The Upper Triad Material

Commentaries VIII

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:

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The Upper Triad Material 3rd Edition

Articles	3 volumes
Commentaries	15 volumes
Miscellany	2 volumes

The Upper Triad Material 4th Edition

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

A Personal Journey 4th Edition

Through the Grace of God 1st Edition

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Third Edition

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

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

Notes

To the best of the editor's recollection, all of the material in Commentaries VIII 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

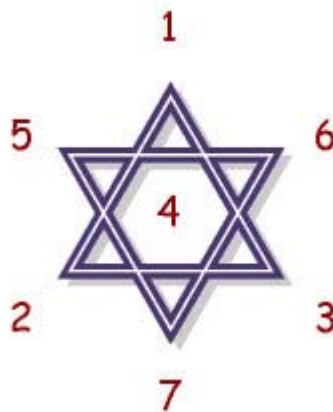
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There is a place, deep within the heart, where we touch God, and where God touches us, where human hearts achieve communion, with God, and with one another, there being no difference, no space between us.

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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Flakiness 1

Many of the people interested or involved in the (occidental) metaphysical movement are considered to exhibit flakiness in their character, behavior, values, etc., particularly from the point of view of more conventional (normal) people. Part of this perception is due to the bias of the conforming majority toward those of any relatively non-conforming minority, and particularly with regard to people and groups whose character, behavior, and values are poorly understood by the majority of more normal (typical) people. But another part of this perception is due to many metaphysical students actually exhibiting flakiness (and so to a large extent the perception is warranted albeit often exaggerated).

Not all metaphysically-inclined people exhibit this flakiness, but sufficiently large numbers do exhibit flakiness and therefore a stereotype has emerged in the public view that so generalizes metaphysical (occult) (mystical) students. This perception is reinforced in the general (majority) view because of the relatively strange and sometimes bizarre behavior or values demonstrated by “fringe” groups within the metaphysical movement (fringe denoting “extreme” compared to the majority). The fringe groups tend to be more outspoken or more visible or more dramatic (or more of an obvious “threat” to the more conventional values).

The majority view (character, beliefs, attitudes, etc.) is not always or necessarily right (if rightness can ever be ascertained), but the majority view (materialistic, self-centered, having conventional religious, political, social, cultural values, etc.) does tend to dominate within the boundaries that it establishes (or within which it is established). Consequently, metaphysical students (and the metaphysically-inclined) may do well to consider the majority view and moderate or temper their relationships with the majority (if that is even possible or practicable). Of course many metaphysical and theosophical students do not exhibit flakiness and many (usually the same students) do not exhibit their “differences” as openly among the population (one can be honestly different without flaunting it). The real leadership of the metaphysical movement is composed of two substantial and related group efforts, one that is relatively subdued and private, working along more subtle lines, and the other

which is more public yet relatively mature and working within conventional society rather than competing with it. Both cases are formed and represented by relatively mature spiritual students who do not naturally exhibit flakiness or any other substantially deviant character, behavior, or values.

Of course the majority of metaphysical groups wrongly believe they fall into one or another of these two categories (if they were to think about it) and are largely unaware of the real conflict between what they are and how they operate (behave) on the one hand and how they are perceived by the conventional majority (and by the more mature spiritual groups) on the other. For the more mature groups there is relatively little or no conflict with the conventional majority, even though real differences exist in character and values, they still appear to be relatively conventional and non-threatening, and therefore respectable (acceptable) to the majority.

The real challenge to the conventional view comes from more subtle activities, as the consciousness of the metaphysically-inclined minority (or mature subset thereof) serves inductively as a form of constructive evolutionary encouragement, almost regardless of the relatively loud undertakings of the overall (trendy) metaphysical movement.

† Commentary No. 702

Flakiness 2

So what is flakiness? And why are so many metaphysically-inclined people also relatively “flaky” people? Flakiness is defined as the state, quality, condition, degree, etc. of being flaky. Flaky means distinctly (somewhat) eccentric, offbeat, sleepy, unbalanced, irrational (or not objective), or unconventional. In our sense, being flaky does not mean being eccentric, offbeat, sleepy (spaced out), airy, quirky, fickle, inconsistent, unbalanced (unresponsive), irrational, or unconventional; it means having all or most of these characteristics all or most (or much) of the time (or being naturally flaky, so that considerable effort is required in order to “appear” normal).

In a sense flakiness is an inability to naturally or easily focus the mind in an objective (natural, objective-worldly) manner. The really “flaky” person is not

naturally attuned to the objective world (or even reasonably attuned to the real subjective world (the really flaky person is generally attuned to something else entirely)), but lives actively in a world of unconventional glamour and illusion (compared with the normal person who lives passively in the world of conventional glamour and illusion) (compared with the mature (trained) spiritual student who lives (operates) actively in the objective world while remaining relatively free from both conventional and unconventional glamour and illusion (i.e., the serious student is subject only to the relatively more subtle glamour and illusion) and who is able to focus the mind both subjectively (other worldly) and objectively (objective worldly) at the same time).

The serious student is generally “accepted” in the conventional world because he or she seems to fit, yet his values and character are generally quite distinctly different (unconventional); the serious student is highly self-disciplined, unconventional in personal matters (being a non-smoking, non-drinking, non-drug-consuming vegetarian who values (and exhibits) truth, who meditates, studies, etc., while maintaining some (healthy) rapport or involvement in the objective (conventional) world (the conventional view is not really objective, except in relation to most unconventional)).

The term flakiness arises from the sense of a loose or disconnected (illusory) fragment of humanity. Really flaky people are “really” disconnected in the sense of being empty (spaced out) or largely unresponsive to normal inputs (external forces). Most flaky people are not very earthly (mundane) and they tend to be absorbed in “mundane” matters of a less earthly nature. Their relative strangeness or quirkiness (exhibited peculiarities and idiosyncrasies (vagaries)) leaves them relatively out of touch (out of tune) with conventional (earthly) experience. Flakiness (quirkiness) implies that the mind is focused elsewhere (with corresponding lack of attention to more immediate (objective) matters) (the esoteric student is effectively dual-focused). This also implies considerable learning disability, as such a person lacks the normal correlative faculties, often tending to (falsely) correlate matters that are not related and failing to recognize those matters that are related.

All of us are in incarnation in the objective world primarily to learn or to serve (or both), and the “flaky” disposition seems largely ineffective in addressing either purpose. Exhibiting some (reasonable) measure of flakiness, a person

would still have considerable learning experience (opportunity), but such would be relatively inefficient (requiring more repetition and reinforcement than would otherwise be the case). And of course the average conventional person is not particularly well-suited to learning either, being relatively absorbed in personal and mundane matters.

† Commentary No. 703

Flakiness 3

Flakiness, like most characteristics is a matter of degree. The slightly flaky person is better “adjusted” (connected) and more responsive than the extremely flaky person. And being involved in “flaky” matters (e.g., in the conventional sense, astrology, occultism, etc.) does not make a person “flaky” (though by association, many people would nonetheless attribute flakiness).

One of the aspects of flakiness is inconsistency. A moderately flaky (quirky) person can be objective and responsive some times and in some ways (e.g., where there is personal interest to help focus the mind) and non-objective and unresponsive at other times and in other ways. There is no equivalency of flakiness and non-conformity except in the sense that a flaky person is a non-conformist (except in a culture or group that exhibits flakiness generally), for the non-conformist is not generally considered to be flaky (esoteric students are considered as intelligent, connected non-conformists). The genius of whatever tradition or field is likewise considered as non-conformist (and not generally as flaky). The genius has great leaps forward in realization, but can ultimately relate that realization to the conventional wisdom (i.e., true great leaps forward in any field are intuitive and correlative, rather than disconnected). Divergence of thinking (values, realizations, etc.) thus has naught to do with the airy (flaky) (quirky) nature.

Flakiness and quirkiness are not normally attributable to any defects in the brain, mind, etc. (although such may also exist), but are normally attributed to the natural disconnectedness of the “flaky” personality. An emotionally-polarized person (who is therefore not an integrated person) of an “airy” nature is likely to be or become flaky-quirky. Such a person is vulnerable to external (physical, emotional, concrete mental) impressions and the reactivity (vice

responsiveness) is relatively unpredictable (for the airy). A more “earthly” emotionally-polarized person is more likely to be (relatively) more objectively focused (not that any emotionally-polarized person is (or can be) particularly or very objective) (and objectivity has its problems too, vice intuitional realization).

Flaky people tend to be trendy, but in a non-conventional sense (meaning they are liable (vulnerable) to unconventional glammers) (though a particularly glamour-vulnerable person will not discriminate between conventional and unconventional glammers). This flaky trendiness implies some sheepishness (lack of thinking for oneself, i.e., indiscriminateness). While quirkiness implies some constitutional erratic nervousness, both flakiness and quirkiness are aspects of this problem of unconventional character (ability), behavior, and values. In many cases there is a temporal disconnectedness in association (contact and response) that is further exacerbated by a lack of objectivity. Creative people tend to be non-conformists (since most people are not consciously or particularly creative), but many creative people are also non-flaky. In fact, the non-flaky, non-conforming, creative person invariably proves superior (to the extent that “superiority” is even real) except in the trendy viewpoints.

There is of course nothing “wrong” with being flaky (or quirky) (or airy) (or earthly) (or anything else), except perhaps the self-deception that flakiness implies (flaky people almost invariably believe themselves to be non-flaky) and the relative ineffectiveness and inefficiency for learning and growing (and serving humanity). Yet, in their way, flaky people are still achieving what incarnation is designed to achieve (progress).

Individual Rapport 2

When both individuals seeking mutual rapport (1) are integrated (or very nearly so), (2) understand to some extent each other's character, mental capabilities, and ray make-up, and (3) are actively seeking to know themselves (be honest with themselves), they must further embrace a fourth requirement, that of a firm commitment to honesty and direct communication in the relationship.

Any attempt (conscious or unconscious) to deceive, evade, or misrepresent one's true thoughts (to the extent that the individual is aware of what his thoughts are) represents a breach in (and stress upon) the relationship (any lack of honesty (self-honesty and otherwise) tends to undermine the integrity and substantiality (vice superficiality) of the relationship). There needs to be the willingness to face up to the tensions or energy stresses that may arise in the relationship via direct communication and a vigilant maintenance of an environment of truth (to the extent to which truth is embraced). As more among humanity develop telepathic abilities, the concept of "privacy" of thought (so frequently presumed to shield deceptions or other inappropriate thoughts) will fade (privacy in specifics will remain, but the more general thoughts and feelings will ultimately be apparent to all, much like one's physical (and to some extent emotional) characteristics are now (normally) apparent) (e.g., the existence and nature of deception will be known, but the specifics may not be).

The need for mental control, purification (right thought), and honesty will take on added significance, for it will become impossible to continue to "hide" within the privacy (barrier) of the mind. Within a mature spiritual group, the thoughts (or quality of thinking) (motive) of each member are known (to some extent) by each of the others. The barriers between minds and hearts of group members are diminished, and therefore reflect (on the personality level) the nature of the soul (soul relationships). There are no barriers between souls; there is only complete freedom (which actually replaces privacy) in open unity.

All members of a serious spiritual group are expected to eventually achieve a rapport with each of the group members. The inability or unwillingness to do so

indicates that an individual still has a more considerable effort before him in terms of integration and/or refinement before he can be more fully trusted to assume certain responsibilities within the occult or even more mundane aspects of the work. There is further a group rapport (on mental levels) (a synergistic relationship comprised of all of the individuals relationships and group energy) which is enhanced and strengthened as members achieve rapport with each other and the group energy. Within the group rapport there are no secrets to be hidden away and no aspects of one's life so personal that they cannot be openly and comfortably discussed (should the need arise) in an effort to enhance harmony, restore balance, provide encouragement, and understand lessons which are to be learned. Inherent in such group rapport is a mutual trust in the discretion of each member not to violate the confidence of members to others outside of the group.

One of the real encouragements of life within a spiritual group is that of rapport. Establishing such rapport may be a considerable challenge (learning opportunity), particularly where personalities are dissimilar. As members rise above the personality level and become more responsive to the quality of the soul, true friends (comrades and fellow pilgrims on the spiritual path) are recognized and appreciated for the role that each plays in the greater group (soul) context.

† Commentary No. 705

Transition 5

The process of attrition (the gradual exhausting of the attractions on each astral sub-plane) of the astral body relates primarily to the emotionally-polarized (average) person. It is generally a fairly slow (from an earthly time perspective) process. Those who are approaching mental polarization (utilizing essentially a kama-manasic rather than purely kamic vehicle) may practice a more conscious, more deliberate withdrawal process from the astral body in response to the attraction of the developing mental body. By utilization of mental will they may actually "shatter" the kama-manasic body, and progress onward to the mental plane.

The mentally-polarized person (possessing an integrated personality), who is aligned with the soul (or is rapidly approaching soul alignment) (vice the majority of mentally-polarized who are not so aligned) simply refuses, while in physical incarnation, to allow himself to fall under the influence (dictate) of desire. For him, the attrition process and "dynamic negation" are consciously undertaken as a part of the physical incarnation, so that there is virtually no astral body to contend with. He passes rapidly through kamaloka. Whatever the polarization of the man in physical incarnation, there is a clear value in his endeavoring to consciously recognize (and overcome) the desires that bind him, the emotions that resist mental redirection and control. Through such endeavor (for example, as part of an evening retrospection), he can improve both the quality of the immediate physical incarnation, and prepare himself for a more expedient assimilation of experience after the physical death.

With the discarding of the astral body (second death), the individual is ready to transition to the mental (manasic) plane. A period of "unconscious gestation" is undergone at this point. This intermediary gestation period provides the opportunity for vivification of the mental body and consolidation (absorption) of the quality to be carried forward into subsequent incarnations via (within) the astral permanent atom.

Upon emergence from this gestation period, the individual functions (on the lower four levels (sub-planes) of the mental plane) through the mental body, which is the only remaining vehicle of the last personality incarnation. Consciousness is, at this point, focused in what is called the rupaloka (form, concrete, region) of devachan (sometimes called second heaven). The joy and bliss of devachan is of a much higher order than the corresponding "pleasures" of kamaloka (first heaven of the astral plane), but it is of a distinctly (intensely) mental nature. By the time the individual enters into the devachic consciousness, the negative (coarse) aspects (qualities) of the incarnation have been released (via the kamalokic experience or the conscious efforts made while in incarnation); therefore, only the positive (higher) (altruistic) qualities of the mental life are carried forward. The assimilation of mental experiences of the incarnation is one of the principal occupations of the devachic (devachanic) experience.

An individual is only able to partake of the opportunities of devachan to the extent to which the mental body is developed and prepared. The average emotionally-polarized person is not capable of participation to a large extent in the mental world, and would consequently spend only a brief period (from the physical perspective) in devachan. The more developed the mentality (prior to soul alignment) the more there will be to assimilate, and the more potentially responsive the individual may be to the enhancement and learning opportunities offered on the mental plane.

† Commentary No. 706

Transition 6

Devachan has been called "a state of intense selfishness during which the soul reaps the reward of its unselfishness on earth." The devachic selfishness is due to the pleasures experienced as a "separated unit" as opposed to the nirvanic experience of participation in the group condition (in which each unit partakes of the "group realization" leading to bliss for the individual units). Devachan is the reflection (on the personality level) of nirvana (that condition in consciousness into which the soul may pass only after the higher initiations have been taken and the necessity for further incarnations is transcended) or transpersonal reality.

Long periods of time (from the physical plane perspective) are generally spent in devachan by those who have had mentally enriched and mentally active incarnations. The length of time of the assimilation process is directly related to the ability of the individual to "meditate upon experience." For the mentally-polarized (integrated) person who is aligned with or reasonably responsive to the soul, however, the pleasures of devachan pale by comparison with that which is sensed (known) to lie beyond in nirvana. Disciples and initiates upon the spiritual path generally, therefore, renounce devachan (or spend a much abbreviated period there). Having consciously practiced the devachic experience of assimilation while in incarnation, and having to some extent developed a "continuity of consciousness," disciples and initiates have little need for further review. They thus generally elect to pass onward, often returning more rapidly to physical incarnation to continue (fulfill) their (group) work and karmic and service obligations.

In addition to the assimilation of the mental experience (working up of character) of the past incarnation, the other major occupation of devachan is the preparation for the next incarnation. It is in devachan that a person learns the theory (technique) of building his vehicles. The physical plane is the laboratory in which he actually gains experience in the use of the vehicles constructed. By natural law, an individual (soul) cannot inhabit a body (on any of the planes) that is more sophisticated than he is able to build for himself. Each incarnation brings the opportunity for refinement, working from the basic quality carried forward in the permanent atoms. With each incarnation, the person should advance in the ability to create vehicles that are more suited to evolutionary purpose, and, later upon the spiritual path, to the wielding of energies (power) for spiritual purposes.

Eventually, when the assimilation of the experiences of the past incarnation is complete, the mental body drops away (the third death), as have the astral, etheric, and dense physical bodies when their respective purposes for the incarnation were fulfilled. Throughout the "heaven-life" (on astral and concrete mental levels), the personality of the last incarnation is retained, but at the point when the consciousness is at last drawn onto the arupa (formless, abstract) sub-planes of the mental plane, that personality incarnation experience is essentially completed. The permanent atoms for each vehicle are withdrawn with the sutratma into the causal body. The causal body (vehicle of the soul) came into existence at the moment of individualization. It therefore contains (embraces) the abstracted quality of not just the past incarnation, but all of the student's incarnations since he individualized.

At this level, the previous lives are not perceived as "past," but are ever "present" in the greater consciousness. The soul essentially integrates the experience (quality) of the many lives such that it is realized as but one life.

The Factor of Manas 7

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division B) continues consideration of the factor of manas and the development of the human mind (ray effects). Occasional, rather dramatic consequences are evoked by the first ray; e.g., (1) "human individualization in the middle of the third root-race" (which distinguished humankind from the animal kingdom as the "spark of mind was implanted" with a corresponding "death of the (then) animal form"), (2) the coming fifth round period of withdrawal of forty percent of humanity who have failed to progress sufficiently, and (3) the coming seventh round final "obscuration and destruction of the (human) form" as humanity is released into the next stage. In the meantime, under the cyclic influence (manifestation) of the four minor rays, specific results are obtained in the achievements of humanity (with regard to mental development and overall evolution).

The fourth ray will cultivate (in responsive humanity) the development of the intuition (to some extent) (the relationship or responsiveness of the mind to buddhic or intuitional impression). Music and "the manipulation of matter by means of sound" will be considered on physical and astral (emotional) levels. "The laws of fire will be gradually permitted exoteric publication." All things associated with the fourth ray will be stimulated and cultivated (e.g., the role of the fourth ether, the "analogy between the fourth etheric sub-plane and the fourth or buddhic plane (the fourth cosmic ether)," healing, harmony, etc.

The fifth ray will similarly cultivate development and achievement within its domain (the "building of form, the utilization of matter, and the embodying of ideas"), particularly during the period of the fifth root-race and during corresponding (fifth-fold) cycles (e.g., the fifth round) and upon the fifth levels (sub-planes, planes, etc.). Likewise the sixth ray will cultivate according to its domain and correspondences (including duality, the relationship of humanity to the deva lifewave, the role of magnetism, etc.), yet with waning influence as the sixth ray recedes (as it is currently) and as the seventh ray builds in momentum as the world ray. Of particular current influence and relatedness is the cooperation of the fourth ray (of the current globe and round) with the seventh ray (of the current world order) (i.e., the cooperation of the respective planetary

logoi with regard to humanity). In understanding the rays, their nature, and cycles of influence relative to our planetary evolution comes realization of specific results or consequences (encouragement and stimulation).

The seventh ray role is rather fundamental in the sense of qualification of the entire physical plane and the processes of transmutation, incarnation, and transference (i.e., particularly during a period of transition between systems, schemes, chains, kingdoms, etc.). During the (seventh ray) world period will effect considerable environmental and species changes (as the environment and enfolded species adapt to the new forces and influences (opportunities)). The processes of form-building and adaptation involve (1) the will aspect and associated purpose, (2) the material through which life manifests and its character and quality, (3) the builders, (4) the plan (latent within consciousness), and (5) "certain words or mantric sounds" uttered by creative lives (logoi, monads, souls).

The results of these forces applied during the current and succeeding cycles will include the "development of etheric vision, increased mental activity, increased facility in approaching the path, and the coming into incarnation of various groups of fifth ray types and various groups of seventh ray types.

† Commentary No. 708

The Factor of Manas 8

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division B) continues consideration of the factor of manas and the development of the human mind (animals, human beings, and the rays) (types of karma), in the context of the incoming world ray. Each kingdom of nature (species) emerges from within its predecessor. The human lifewave has passed through the animal stage (fourth kingdom) and has emerged into the fifth or human kingdom (although still inhabiting primarily animal forms) (the principal difference being the result of individualization). Animal lives are stimulated primarily along astral or emotional lines, while human lives are (to be) stimulated primarily along concrete mental lines.

But the incoming seventh ray involves both humanity and the (parallel) deva evolution. Improvements will occur in both human and animal forms making them more resistant to disease, more responsive to prana, somewhat more refined, etc. (enabling those who merit such bodies to incarnate more effectively) (all results are necessarily the consequences of work and are fully merited). A growing rapport between humanity and the animals will emerge. A growing rapport between humanity and the devas will similarly emerge. Many animal forms will be withdrawn and new forms provided. For every (constructive) step forward there will be an associated destruction of the old forms and patterns.

Throughout all the cycles of manifestation and the gradual working out of the evolutionary plan, all proceeds according to law and according to karmic constraints (guidelines) (balancing forces) (agents of evolution). Karma is "imposed upon the ensouling entity through the medium of matter and this matter or substance is intelligent material composed of deva essence." There are a number of kinds or levels of karma, all of which play upon or effect the lives within. There is cosmic karma "imposed upon the solar logos" from without the system. There is systemic karma or the particular consequences of previous solar incarnations and activities. There is planetary karma or the karma of the particular planetary logoi based upon their past and present states. There is the karma of each chain, relating to the life which "ensouls a chain and is a center in the body" of the planetary logos.

There is globe karma or the "individual destiny of the entity who is a center in the body of the ensouling life of a chain." There is plane karma, relating to both the respective planetary logoi and ray devas. There is sub-plane karma, "or the destiny of certain lesser entities who manifest through these planes." There is the karma of the kingdoms of nature (mineral, plant, animal, and human). And there is the karma of the human hierarchy "in its seven groups and of the individual monads," including world karma (and the seven root-races as a whole), racial karma (the "destiny and purpose of each root-race"), sub-racial karma, national karma, family karma, and individual karma. All of these different types of karma are extremely interrelated (internally bound) as each affects the other in some way or another.

Throughout these cycles of karmic consequence and the generation of new karma within the guiding presence of the plan, the deva lives play a tremendous role, both in the case of the great devas who cooperate consciously with those who guide humanity and in the case of the multifarious lesser devas who serve unconsciously in every aspect of human manifestation. Direct contact between man and deva can only properly (safely) occur on the plane of buddhi, but indirect contact occurs continuously, naturally, and safely on all levels. As humanity unfolds, so does the role of the deva lives expand to complement humanity's progress, as energy is shared and qualifications achieved.

† Commentary No. 709

The Flow 1

The flow refers to the energy flow associated with a (particular) given (individual or group) life (lifewave) in manifestation. That flow is a smooth and continuous stream of qualified energy within which is contained (defined) all of the individual (group) parameters. The flow is both continuous and continual (cyclic) (modulated), time-dependent (from the lesser, objective perspective) and interactive (i.e., a person's (group's) response to the flow may affect the flow (subsequently or precursory)), generalized (in terms of overall qualification) and particular (specific) (in terms of contingent qualifications).

The flow pertains to (enfolds) individuals and groups at all levels (from atoms to logoi). The flow is spatial and temporal (from the lesser, objective perspective) as well as spectral (from the higher, subjective perspective). The flow is necessarily circular, in the same sense that an electrical circuit must be closed in order for energy to flow. The flow is (provides) the continuity (circuit) of life (and in a sense, the flow and the individual (group) life are equivalent and synonymous). The flow is also (equivalent and synonymous with) karma in all of its causal and consequential implications.

The flow is a continuous transfer of energy (resulting in force or evolutionary pressure (opportunity)) from one phase to another (and (ultimately) back to the source in one form or another) with the appropriate qualification(s) for the associated (manifested) life (lives) (reflections). From one perspective, the

individual exists and the flow is viewed in terms of its effects (forces (compelling, impelling, casual, or otherwise)) upon the individual (group), the response (if any) of the individual (group), and the effect(s) of that response upon the flow (if any). From another (more real) perspective, the flow exists and a person (group) moves (lives) (works) (evolves) within the parameters (boundaries) (qualifications) of that stream (flow) of life. And from an even higher (relatively more real) perspective, neither the flow nor the person (group) can be differentiated.

All of the various factors, characteristics, etc., of a (given) life (incarnation) and their temporal nature (sequence and timing (or illusion thereof)) are contained within (and produced by) the flow (which is itself merely a projection of the higher order (the soul, etc.)). Biorhythmic factors, for example, are a very small (incidental) part of the flow. A person's (time-dependent) vitality and health (in its various aspects and dimensions) are similarly part of the flow. Likewise a person's path and interactions with others are all qualified by (related within) the flow. One person's flow and another person's flow may or may not be substantively interactive. Two flows may be mutually attractive, indifferent, or repulsive (or some time-dependent combination). Of course there is but one flow (God) within which are differentiated all individual and group flows.

For those upon the spiritual path (and to some extent for those who are approaching the path), the individual flow is merely a (cooperative and subordinate) component of a group flow, such that as a person's individual karma is fulfilled (with corresponding increase in freedom, maturity, and (spiritual) potency), the group flow (and all of its qualifications) supersedes that of the individual. The flow is both providence and pitfall. Thus, the keys to the flow, from an individual or group perspective, for ordinary humanity as well as those upon the path (albeit more so) are self-responsibility and intelligent cooperation.

The Flow 2

Intelligent cooperation means consciously finding the balance between aggressive manipulation of one's (outer) life (or the illusion thereof) (at one extreme) and the passive, thoughtless acceptance (acquiescence) of all that is encountered (at the other extreme). Those who fight (push) (manipulate) (resist) the flow of life actually accomplish relatively little (except that considerable energies are expended with little real growth or resulting understanding) (and except perhaps by mundane (superficial) standards). Similarly, those who remain passive (deliberately or incidentally) and unthinking actually accomplish very little, for passivity contributes little to real growth (understanding) (realization) (expansion or improvement in consciousness).

"Going with the flow" may seem like intelligent cooperation, but it is usually just a (popular) means of attempting to evade or avoid responsibility for one's own life and its implied decisions. Proper intelligent cooperation is more deliberate, thoughtful, open-minded, and "reasonable" (albeit hopefully not merely rational). One should embrace the flow intelligently, seeking to understand the path implied by the flow, seeking to recognize the trials and tribulations (and other tests) implied therein, and all the while accepting full (conscious) responsibility for all (past, present, and future) consequences for action (or non-action) in the face of the flow (as all is consequential).

Thus the full panorama of the flow involves (in manifestation) its two principal dimensions and their relationship or interaction, the first being the flow and its nature (character) (parameters) and the second being the individual (or group) and his (her) (its) degree and nature of cooperation. The flow cannot be compelled (though it may seem otherwise), yet the individual (group) can, to some extent be compelled or impelled (or not) as the (particular) case and circumstances warrant. The flow (karma) provides opportunity for experience and expression (and growth) (and service), but increasingly as a person approaches or embraces the spiritual path does the flow require more (and more) intelligent cooperation.

Sometimes, if a person is not responsive and the situation (karma) (accumulated merit) warrants, a person is forced or compelled along a particular path. But more often, failure to recognize an appropriate opportunity means that that opportunity is lost (and the karma is compounded). If the path seems clear, then one should proceed (accepting responsibility for same) (being forced or compelled conveys no accomplishment or credit) in moderation (or appropriately, according to whatever wisdom is available) (one should ever endeavor to do what is before oneself to do, sincerely and without fear). If the path is not so clear, then one should probe cautiously and seek to realize the appropriate direction or path. But if the path is not so clear, it generally means either one is looking in the wrong direction or the mind (personality) (ego) is clouding the issue and resisting the progress (and path) that will eventually and inevitably destroy the ego (as an ego).

So the flow contains the opportunities of manifestation, intelligently accepted, that lead (at least eventually) (ever) onward and upward (and over the veiled protestations of the ego). Humility (in the mature, responsible, spiritual sense) and openmindedness are the great facilitators of the clear path (and the associated clear channel or proper intuition), while intelligent cooperation properly enfolds the flow and avoids the extremes of activity and passivity.

† Commentary No. 711

The Flow 3

Cooperating with the flow, intelligently, allows the flow to unfold in the most constructive, most fulfilling manner. But that implies constructive and fulfilling from the greater perspective of what really needs to occur (karma), not necessarily (merely) what a person or group desires or thinks (believes) is (apparently) constructive or fulfilling. Everything that occurs (every situation, every circumstance, every interaction, every relationship, every qualification, every consequence) is appropriate, necessary, and ultimately constructive and fulfilling.

But all that occurs occurs naturally and in its own timing and manner of occurrence (for everything that occurs (flows) is a balance of natural

(consequential) (purposive) forces (which does not imply that everything that occurs is necessarily or particularly significant)). One cannot push or force or compel the flow to accelerate or decelerate or change its direction, timing, magnitude, manner, or character. But each flow does act (function) interdependently in relation to every other flow (each with some significance or not as the case may be). And each flow is influenced to some (greater or lesser) extent according to the relative responsiveness and participation of the qualified individual(s) or group(s).

Thus one cannot compel a change in the flow, but the flow can change by virtue of intelligent cooperation (responsiveness) (and the flow can change by lack of responsiveness or by virtue of individual (self-centered) (personality-centered) resistance or reluctance (consciously or unconsciously manifested or expressed)). Except that the flow has (subjectively) (consequentially) already taken into consideration the disposition (relative intelligence) (relative responsiveness) of the individual (group) so that the flow correctly and appropriately anticipates the consequences of its flow (at least to some considerable extent).

There is a measure of individual (group) freedom and free will, but the flow embraces that freedom (free will) from a higher, time-independent perspective (more consistently with the consciousness of the soul). In any event, from the lesser (personality) perspective, one can allow the flow to manifest relatively freely or one can (attempt to) retard or impede that flow by virtue of the ego (personality), from lack of realization (responsiveness) (cooperation) or from active (ego) resistance. Things fall into place nonetheless, as they need to (taking into consideration the failures and weaknesses of the manifested lives (people)). The relative ease (difficulty) of life (in particular circumstances or in general) is a function of the flow and the individual attitude (responsiveness) (resistance), as the flow is a proper manifestation of karmic consequences.

If things appear to fall into place it does not necessarily mean that one's actions and attitudes and decisions are necessarily correct (only that the flow proceeds as it must), nor if things do not appear to fall into place does it necessarily mean that things are not falling into place. For everything does fall into place, whether or not the appearance (from the individual or personal perspective) is consistent with reality. If things do not appear to fall into place it is because either (1) the expectation is false, unrealistic, or misguided by the ego, (2) the

person or group is unresponsive or resistive to the flow, or (3) the proper (intended) path is (somehow) otherwise blocked. But in any event, the flow proceeds (as it must) and place is appropriately and necessarily conserved.

† Commentary No. 712

The Flow 4

Since the basic purpose of life is the evolution of consciousness (through experience and expression) in general and in the particulars (specific events, processes, qualifications), the basic or fundamental (underlying) purpose of the flow (karma) (qualified life-force) is to provide the overall (general) and specific (particular) experience that each individual (actually) needs in order to grow (expand) in consciousness and to achieve more refined (more highly qualified) consciousness (which implies, in the later stages of human evolution (i.e., the spiritual path), increasing group context (significance) and decreasing individual context (significance)).

But that specific experience must also be earned or merited. Those who appear to flow through life relatively unhindered or unimpeded are generally learning and accomplishing relatively little (and mostly subjectively) (and are generally living in a broad (vague) flow), while those who appear to “suffer” impediments, stumbling-blocks, crises, difficulties, etc., are generally more apt to learn and grow (and adjust) thereby (and are generally living in a relatively focused flow). The fast (broad) (vague) flow conveys relatively insubstantial karma (of somewhat fleeting value), nonetheless merited. As the associated relatively vacuous (overly mundane or relatively indifferent) people act or operate on their environment so do they thereby incur more substantial consequences (learning opportunities) (albeit delayed temporally) and so do they thereby become more substantial in themselves. On the other hand, the slow (more focused) flow conveys a more substantial karma (of more substantial value, albeit more difficult to deal with), also necessarily merited.

At some point in the development of consciousness, awareness is sufficiently achieved for the student to learn consciously more so than subconsciously. The tests and trials do not lessen in frequency or magnitude. To the contrary, as a

person evolves so do the learning opportunities and associated tests and trials increase in accordance with the student's abilities. But the element of "suffering" is lessened as the student becomes more aware and more responsive to the flow. Ultimately, the student becomes so attuned (responsive) that subtleties in the flow (discerned qualifications, not omens or other superficial indications) convey sufficient encouragement for the student to act or operate appropriately (without reservation or hesitation).

In the meantime the student must develop a stable sensitivity and intelligent responsiveness. Those who oppose the flow suffer accordingly (and appropriately) until the lesson(s) to be conveyed are accepted. Those who cooperate intelligently (and with some insight and understanding) tend to progress more readily (as individuals and in group formation). Every time a person is out-of-sorts or where everything seems to go "wrong" there is generally a cogent message awaiting conveyance (acceptance). It may be a simple reminder of patience or refinement (maintenance of poise), or it may indicate that a different direction is more appropriate (or it may indicate persistence in the current path) (discretion being the key to appropriateness and significance) (without discretion or discrimination one tends to flounder).

The more substantial flow is necessarily patient (relatively slow), permitting all of the pieces of the puzzle of life to fall into (proper) place each in its own time and manner. All that the student really requires (in this context) is a commitment to truth (an intelligent openmindedness) (relative responsiveness to higher impression), a cooperative (and comfortably subordinate) personality, and sufficient patience (discretion) (faith).

Transition 7

An individual's opportunity (quality of participation) on any plane of manifestation is determined by the relative development (evolution) of his consciousness. Just as the devachic experience on the lower levels of the mental plane is limited by the individual's mental development and refinement, experience on the higher (arupa) levels in the causal body requires even further development of an increasingly abstract, spiritual nature. As part of the cycle between death and rebirth, the individual must participate in experience on (or at least symbolically "touch") the higher mental levels, but the duration and quality of this participation varies tremendously. Participation for the relatively unevolved is of a brief unconscious or semi-conscious nature; more highly evolved individuals participate in full consciousness.

The recognition of the "eternal now" (simultaneous awareness of past, present, and future) is inherent in participation on higher mental (causal) levels. The life cycle is a continuous process, a series of transitions from one state to another, rather than discrete events that can be clearly demarcated (e.g., the process of the transition from the physical plane (death) may elapse over a number of years during which the consciousness (focus of the soul) is slowly withdrawn, while the actual event of "death" (the disassociation of the sutratma from the physical body) is the culmination of that process). In the portion of the greater life cycle which comes between physical death and rebirth (bardo), the higher (arupa) mental plane experience can be considered the transition between the close of the "after death" states and the commencement of a new birth. With the consciousness unfettered by the lower vehicles and centered in the causal body (soul), a more integrated picture of the past life may be realized. The resultant gains, in terms of quality of consciousness of that life may be appreciated relative to the quality of all preceding lives. Further, an individual is permitted the opportunity to glimpse (in a rather general sense) the predispositions and opportunities of the next incarnation.

Just as the postmortem review (in kamaloka) of the experience of the previous incarnation is intended to facilitate understanding of how certain effects in the life proceeded from certain causes, the preview (glimpse) of the next incarnation

is intended to further encourage understanding of the coming karmic lessons. The effects that will manifest lie latent in the causes of previous lives. To the extent to which he can recognize these causes, the individual may be aware of the future effects and progress in consciousness that is intended for the next incarnation through the working out of his karma. In this sense, the preview of the coming life is not so much a prediction or a prophecy as it is an indication of the karmic opportunity that lies ahead. It is left to the individual to make what he will of that opportunity.

After having thus “touched” (contacted) his soul, the as yet unperfected individual will be drawn again into preparations for physical rebirth. It is desire (kama) or trishna (thirst) for further physical experience that leads the individual to respond magnetically to the pull back to incarnation. So long as imperfections and the need for assimilation of the kind of experience only the physical domain can offer persist, the individual will continue to respond (of his own desire) to the call of descent to earth life.

While the physical birth is a significant point in the transition cycle, it is only one of the events in the much broader process of descent into incarnation that actually continues after the physical birth (for about seven years) until the causal body is fully linked (the sutratma firmly anchored).

† Commentary No. 714

Transition 8

In preparation for physical incarnation, the individual first “sounds his own true note into the substance of the three worlds.” He revitalizes his permanent atoms, and as he descends first onto the lower mental plane, he magnetically gathers the material (mental elemental) substance to form his mental body. The substance which he attracts on any level must be compatible in quality with the development of his personality matrix (within the permanent atoms). He is thus restricted to substance which he has earned through previous development and refinement. As he descends further to the astral plane, he similarly attracts the needed (deserved) material consistent with his emotional development and refinement. Thus, in the process of descent to incarnation, ready-made mental

and astral bodies are not provided for the individual, only the substance from which the bodies are built during the incarnation itself. Descending to the etheric plane, the individual works with the substance of the vital body in shaping the seven centers, preparing them as recipients of higher forces. He there awaits the opportunity for a physical vehicle.

The vast majority of humanity are not sufficiently developed to deliberately choose a physical body for themselves. Since there is generally much left to develop, any one of many possible bodies (and corresponding life circumstances) may be suitable to the evolutionary goals and karmic opportunities that are to be dealt with in a given lifetime. Thus, it is primarily karmic law (including the force of personal relationships from past lives) that determines most births. Since more highly evolved individuals have fewer, more specific lessons to learn, suitable opportunities for them are rarer. Advanced spiritual students, returning to incarnation in response to the service objectives or work of an esoteric group may exercise some degree of choice in the circumstances of their birth for service (dharma).

Formulae may be found in the metaphysical literature for the duration of the bardo (interval between death and rebirth). Most of these systems and the averages reported are misleading. The bardo may vary from a matter of months (in special cases) to thousands of years. Generally, the bardo for the relatively unevolved is fairly short, there being insufficient consciousness on any of the higher planes conducive to lengthy periods of assimilation.

Similarly, the bardo for an individual who passed out of the previous incarnation during childhood would tend to be short due to the relative little opportunity for experience that would require assimilation. As an individual evolves, becoming emotionally polarized and later mentally polarized, more time would be spent in assimilation on the astral and mental planes, respectively. The individual with a well-developed, integrated, personality would generally experience the longest bardo (due to his ability to participate more fully in a lengthy devachan). But when the individual becomes aligned with (or responsive to) the soul, the cycle shortens as he deliberately seeks a more expeditious return to incarnation for service and group (karmic) fulfillment.

Time exists only within the physical brain consciousness and not for the disincarnated. The time that elapses on the physical plane between lives may seem significant, but the perspective on the higher planes is very different. The individual descends through the three worlds (mental, astral, and physical planes) and re-ascends, repeatedly. The wheel of rebirth is actually more of a spiral. At each turn of the spiral the consciousness is raised (generally) (somewhat) until at some point the need for further experience in the three worlds is transcended, and the perfected human moves on to loftier realms.

† Commentary No. 715

The Factor of Manas 9

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division B) continues with consideration of manas and the transmutative process. Transmutation is the “passage across from one state of being to another through the agency of fire.” Transmutation involves the life (consciousness) of the atom (atomic sphere) at whatever level (microscopic to macrocosmic). The central life of an atom corresponds to the positive center, while the field of manifestation is represented by the (negative) electronic periphery. But polarity is relative, as each atomic center is peripheral to some other (greater) life. The binding energy of the electronic field determines (and conveys) various relationships.

The human being is both an atomic sphere in its own right and a minute part of an electronic field, subject to both the forces (laws) (principles) that bear upon (through) an atomic life and those that bear upon (through) the electronic field. From microscopic through human to macrocosmic levels, “radiation is transmutation in process of accomplishment” and “transmutation is the liberation of the essence in order that it may seek a new (higher) center, the process of such being radioactivity.” All radiation is related to transmutation. As atomic life evolves sufficiently, it eventually radiates beyond its periphery.

The overall process (cycle) includes twelve stages. (1) The life takes primitive form and (2) that form is subjected to outer heat. (3) Heat playing upon the form produces exudation and the factor of moisture supervenes. (4) Moisture and heat perform their function in unison while (5) elemental lives tend all lesser

lives. (6) The devas cooperate under rule, order, and sound. (7) The internal heat of the atom increases and (8) the heat of the atom mounts rapidly and surpasses the external heat of its environment. (9) The atom radiates and (10) the spheroidal wall of the atom is eventually broken down. (11) The electrons or negative units seek a new center while (12) the central life escapes to merge with its polar opposite, becoming itself negative and seeking the positive." This process is (temporary) obscuration.

The lives of each kingdom (lifewave) aid the "transmuting process of all lesser lives (atoms)." The measure of human participation in this process is currently limited by humanity's lack of sufficient altruism. With sufficient wisdom (humility) (realization) (preparation, training, refinement) (self-mastery) the spiritual student eventually receives the proper keys and is then and thereby able to work actively and constructively. While the black (self-centered) magicians and (black) occultists work with the material (form) aspect (and external force), the white (group-centered and spiritually bound) magicians and (white) occultists (masters of the wisdom) "deal (more properly) with the soul of things" (by induction or application of internal force (qualification)). The white brotherhood does not interfere "in material matters and affairs" but "reaches the whole through the agency of the few centers in the form."

The real key to transmutation lies in (a proper understanding of) conscious manipulation of the fires. "This conscious manipulation of the fires is the prerogative of man when he has reached a certain point in his evolution" (and not before he is properly prepared and refined (purified)). The three stages of (actual) transmutation are "(1) the fiery stage (period) of blending, fusing, and burning through which all atoms pass during the disintegration of the form, (2) the solvent stage in which the form is dissipated and substance is held in solution (the atom being resolved into its essential duality), and (3) the volatile stage which involves the essential quality of the atom and the escape of this essence, later to take a new form."

The Factor of Manas 10

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division B) concludes with consideration of transmutation and synthesis. The masters and higher-order devas closely cooperate in this matter of transformation (transmutation). "Conscious transmutation is possible only when a man has transmuted the elements in his own vehicles (in four stages from this perspective); then only can he be trusted with the secrets of divine alchemy." The four stages involve transmutation (qualification) (mastery) of the mineral (etheric) (animal (emotional) (astral)) (human (as the soul fully aligns the purified and fully integrated (and responsive) personality with itself)) nature (respectively).

Five postulates pertain to the "transmutation of substance, the resolution of the life, or the transference of energy into different forms." (1) "All matter is living matter or is the vital substance of deva entities." (2) "All forms are fabricated by the building devas (the mother aspect) out of the matter of their own bodies." (3) "The devas are the life which produces form cohesion." (4) "All deva essences and builders on the physical plane are peculiarly dangerous to man, for they work on etheric levels as transmitters of prana (vital, animating substance) and hence set loose upon the ignorant and the unwary, the fiery essence which burns and destroys." (5) "The devas do not work as individualized conscious units through self-initiating purposes as does a man, but work entirely in groups" subject to purposive qualification.

In the two final root-races comes "synthesis and the gradual utilization of that which has been manasically achieved," as manas is applied less to the objective existence and more to the subjective side of manifestation. The manasic characteristics are related to each of the various planes of consciousness and human experience (in addition to the transmutative power on each level). On the physical plane manas demonstrates as "(1) the selective power of the atoms on the body, (2) the adaptability of the physical form to its environment (circumstances), and (3) the ordered purpose of the informing life."

On the astral (emotional) plane manas demonstrates as "(1) the discriminative power of choosing between the pairs of opposites, (2) adaptability to emotional

conditions and the power to attain eventual equilibrium, and (3) the power to clear the astral body of foreign matter." On the mental plane manas demonstrates as "(1) the selective power to choose the form through which to manifest, (2) adaptability to mental currents and vibration and utilization of them to control the lower forms, and (3) the working out of purpose." On the abstract mental levels manas demonstrates as "(1) the ability of the soul to discriminate as to time and space in the three worlds, (2) the soul's adaptation of matter and circumstances of time and environment to the specific needs under karmic law, and (3) the intelligent purpose which lies back of all physical objectivity."

On buddhic levels manas demonstrates as "(1) discriminative power or the ability to distinguish between abstract and concrete and to arrive at conclusions apart from utilization of the mental body and physical brain, (2) adaptability to hierarchical enterprise and receptivity to higher life impulses and spiritual currents (flows), and (3) the ordered purpose which guides the choosing of one of the seven paths of endeavor (based on knowledge rather than desire)." And on atmic levels manas demonstrates as (in) "(1) the selective work of the adept with regard to planetary manifestation, (2) the adaptation of groups (deva and human) to certain types of influence, and (3) the synthesizing work of the third aspect as it blends the four minor rays into the major third."

† Commentary No. 717

Altruism

Altruism is the unselfish regard for the welfare of others and behavior that is not necessarily (apparently) beneficial to oneself but that primarily benefits others. Key aspects are unselfishness and the welfare of others.

People of character and quality of consciousness are naturally unselfish, for with refined consciousness comes a transition from the basically selfish, self-centered, egoistic temperament to the basically unselfish, soul-responsive temperament. As one becomes more refined (from spiritual discipline and practice), the ego is gradually subsumed by the higher calling (the soul). Material things and the various glammers and self-interests are all passed over

as objects of personal attachment or deception, being replaced by emphasis on quality of consciousness, the process of the spiritual path, and the altruistic service implied by that quality and implied by (in) the path.

The (proper) spiritual student (and anyone who can respond in some measure to the soul) cannot ask the question “what is there here to benefit me?,” for such a question is antagonistic to the soul. The spiritual student by virtue of his place upon (within) the path is continually being tested in terms of his motives (and degree of ego or self-centeredness). The path is designed to refine the motives of students until they can stand forth in service to humanity (and all of life). Thus, one who would ask such a question, nonetheless sincerely, is not really very refined. It matters not that the coarser, more selfish people presume (self-deceptively) to “take advantage” of those who are altruistic, for in time all of the needed lessons will be learned by all concerned (and in sincere giving there is never any loss). And yet, although the proper motives are unselfish there are necessarily benefits to those who so serve (altruistically). The giving of one’s time and energy to noble (worthy) (primarily spiritual or consciousness-related) endeavors helps us all, in the sense that it is the evolution of the whole that matters, much more so than the development or evolutionary contribution of any unit. Any activity that encourages growth or refinement or realization in consciousness is a positive (noble) (worthy) endeavor. The individual contributes to and benefits by the growth (quality) of the whole. And of course there are the ever-present aspects of karma and dharma.

But what constitutes the welfare of others? Certainly growth and refinement and realization in consciousness, to the extent that it can be effected. Any sincere and selfless endeavor has value, if only from the expression of sincerity and selflessness. But unselfish endeavors that serve primarily materialistic or glamouristic objectives are limited in value. Or in other words, kindness and consideration are greater gifts than any material or personality-oriented incidentals. It is the sharing of energy (love, encouragement, goodwill) that matters (although material gifts can play a constructive role). Altruistic people should not be naive or serve without discretion or wisdom, for they are still accountable for their endeavors.

Altruism is more fundamentally a matter of being true to oneself (in the higher sense). Truth and selflessness (and soul responsiveness (God-centeredness)) go

hand in hand. Conversely, dishonesty and selfishness (self-centeredness) go hand in hand and tend to block the flow of truth (realization). Self-centered people are more or less oblivious to the truth. Altruistic, relatively selfless people are more receptive and responsive to the truth. But more significantly, altruism is “living the truth” of spiritual service, without self-regard (those who (truly) serve are protected by virtue of their service).

† Commentary No. 718

The Crisis of Commitment 1

The human personality and ego are not (naturally) predisposed to respond to the call of the (spiritual) path and properly acknowledge the commitment of the soul (to that path of hastened evolution in consciousness); to the contrary, the personality (and particularly the ego) is (naturally) predisposed to resist any alignment with (or responsiveness to) the soul. This (egoistic) path of increasing resistance (as the ego develops and strengthens its defenses, so is it increasingly resistant to higher impression) is a natural one in the sense (1) that the ego is the psychological equivalence (correspondence) to material attachment and (2) that the development of the ego is a necessary stage in the development of the human personality and preparatory to personality refinement, integration, and (subsequent) alignment (with the soul).

The resistance (independence) of the personality (ego) is the inherent resistance of matter. The personality is formed of physical (etheric), emotional (astral), and concrete mental matter that has been appropriated by the soul to serve as its means of obtaining objective experience (and subsequently, as a means of expression (service)). The inherent coarseness (independence) (separativeness) (resistance) of matter is thereby incorporated in the form of the personality and is very gradually purified, qualified, and further refined by higher impression (over the course of many incarnations) (with the quality of matter appropriated in a particular incarnation being (initially) comparable to that achieved in the previous cycle (lifetime)).

As the personality develops and as the mind begins to integrate the personality into a single coherent (composite) energy, the personality is further refined. But

the ego is a more subtle creature than the personality per se, and draws upon the material (form) aspect (even in the case of a well-developed and reasonably tempered (refined) personality) to resist and impede any perceived threat to its (presumed) (illusionary) independence. The basic self-deception is that of the personality. "Advanced" self-deception is much more subtle and based upon ego rather than (merely) personality (in this context, the ego is a relatively subtle aspect of personality that takes on an artificial "life" of its own).

When the soul makes its (natural) (and eventual) commitment to the path, it sends forth a vibration (message) (qualification) to its lesser (personality) expression, seeking to reform, refine, and uplift that personality into an effective instrument of (in) the service of the soul. The personality (ego) naturally resists (except in exceptional cases of considerable preparation and tempering) and the struggle (crisis) unfolds. This struggle (crisis) is not between the soul and personality directly, but between the qualifying forces of the soul and the ego or resistive aspect of the personality. The soul is not objectively conscious or concerned about "details" at the personality level; the soul is concerned with quality and consciousness and responsiveness as measured by quality of consciousness.

Similarly, the waking-consciousness of the personality (i.e., what most people identify with as themselves) is not normally conscious of the presence of the ego (or of the soul), nor of the crisis evoked by the resistance of the ego. The battle (struggle) takes many forms, generally along relatively subtle lines, such that the ego willfully (and usually relatively effectively) deceives the waking-consciousness and actively manipulates that personality consciousness in its own (egoistic) defense (even as that consciousness remains oblivious to the process).

The Crisis of Commitment 2

If the soul makes its commitment relatively early in the evolutionary cycle, such that the ego has not had much opportunity to develop, then the crisis of commitment on the part of the personality is relatively straightforward (i.e., the soul “wins” relatively easily, as the personality is tempered and subsequently integrated in the context of the path (i.e., in such a case the ego really does not have a chance to resist or impede the work of the soul upon the personality and the soul is able (more properly the forces or energy of the soul as impressed upon the personality are able) to prevent the substantial development of the ego (i.e., the ego that does emerge is already well-tempered and not much of an impediment))).

But if the soul makes its commitment relatively late in the evolutionary cycle, such that the ego is already well-developed (firmly entrenched) (dominant (even subtly)) within the personality, then the crisis is relatively major and relatively enduring (typically, for several incarnations). The soul almost always “wins” but the struggle will be protracted. Although the ego is artificial, it is nonetheless effectively highly intelligent and resourceful. The evolutionary process has produced this individual survival mechanism which (unless tempered) grows from lifetime to lifetime. Because of the great illusion (wherein the personality (i.e., human waking-consciousness) believes itself to be real, independent, etc.), the ego is (normally) easily able to deceive and manipulate the personality and draw upon all of the resources (fears, strengths, etc.) of that personality, dividing or temporarily integrating the personality as it (the ego) needs in order to maintain control (or at least its influence and independent existence).

The ego will lead the mind to rationalize (fabricate) whatever reasons or excuses are needed to achieve its goal (maintenance of independence). But the soul will, over the long term of this struggle, increasingly qualify the mind (and the whole personality) (even the ego) so that eventually the mind (and personality (and ego)) are won over to the soul (i.e., they eventually become increasingly responsive to the soul, even so the ego is willing to give up its (illusion of) independence). In the beginning of responsiveness, the person (personality) will

be drawn toward the path through various means (knowledge, wisdom, service) while retaining as much of the independence as it can.

During the crisis of commitment many contradictions may then emerge that indicate the presence of both forces (e.g., there may be a service motive and considerable self-indulgence, or there may be interest in learning theosophy while reserving or resisting any commitments). Those who as personalities are not yet consciously committed can still contribute significantly to the spiritual work, albeit relatively far less effectively than those who are consciously committed to the path. Those who have emerged from the crisis and who are then fully consciously committed (albeit still far less than perfect), generally shine forth as relatively tireless workers in the context of the path, where virtually every aspect of the personality life is (in principle and to a large extent even in practice) subordinated to the spiritual work (of whatever the calling may be).

When the balance shifts from the ego's influence to that of the soul, then considerable and relatively rapid progress is achieved as the individual becomes more and more (intelligently) responsive to higher impression. The resulting spiritual momentum brings considerable joy (quiet encouragement) to the student, who is then free to face the consequential dharma of the path.

† Commentary No. 720

The Path and the Rules

From the standpoint of the spiritual path, the entire period of involution and evolution up to the time of actually approaching the spiritual path is the first or preliminary phase and is governed by the third ray of active intelligence and the ordinary rules (karmic or balancing forces) of life in the lower worlds (incarnation). Under the rules of the third ray (third aspect) (in the sense of relationship to the spiritual path, not with regard to particular third ray personalities, souls, world periods, etc.), the human being incarnates, gathers experience, develops according to the human archetype and the particular qualifications of the soul, and ultimately becomes relatively complete (as far as ordinary humanity is concerned).

The rules of this third ray (relatively mundane) period of evolution (experience and expression) are the parameters of the karmic equation; i.e., for every action the human being is responsible and accountable and experiences consequences appropriate to gradual, relatively gentle development and maturation. Karmic force provides evolutionary pressure, but the pressure is relatively gentle and allows for a wide range of experience and a relatively long timescale of fulfillment (resolution) of particular karma.

Those “students” who have a casual (peripheral) (superficial) interest in metaphysical matters (as a preliminary to real interest in the spiritual aspects of the path) are still governed by third ray (or general) rules. But at some point, the student’s casual interest is transformed, albeit gradually, into semi-casual (semi-serious) interest and the student then comes under the rules of the second ray (second aspect) and the second or intermediate phase is entered. This occurs as the soul begins to stir in response to the call of the path (and the personality begins to respond, albeit distantly and without conscious appreciation of the occurrence). Students operating (semi-consciously) under the rules of the second aspect are subject to a quickening (acceleration) of the karmic timescale and an increase in the relative magnitude of karmic force. While under the third aspect (preparation) there are no real expectations of the student, but under the second aspect, the student is expected to learn more readily (quickly) and to (relatively gradually) consciously adjust to the dictates of the path.

The period of “adjustment” corresponds roughly to the paths of approach and the probationary path (and to some extent even to discipleship). Therein the student learns the discipline of the spiritual path and generally makes relatively rapid progress (with respect to the eons of experience under the third aspect). The second phase is a great time of testing, of trials that tend to separate the student from the basic glammers and illusions of life in the material (mundane) world and lead the student through various stages of refinement and integration. But even so, the rules of the second aspect (balance) (adjustment) (accommodation), being more severe (austere) than those of the third aspect, are not very severe compared to those of the first aspect.

When the semi-serious student makes the commitment to the path and thereby becomes the serious student (acknowledging the soul’s decision (commitment)),

then the path narrows considerably and the expectations of the (soul for the) student increase dramatically. The discipline of the path in the third phase (first aspect) is enforced in such a manner that the student cannot wander much from the intended path, yet the freedom and constructive potency of the serious student is increased also dramatically. Thus the first ray ultimately rules, yet with the intelligence of the third ray and the wisdom of the second ray.

† Commentary No. 721

The Aberrant Personality

A crucial endeavor in each cycle of mundane life (death) is developing (reconstituting) (reestablishing) the personality, which is comprised of the concrete mind, emotional (astral) body, and physical (etheric) body. The endeavor is crucial, for the properly aligned and integrated personality is the gateway to the soul, and without its (at least) relative development, progress in any higher (spiritual) (or even mundane) sense is not possible. However, during an (any) incarnation (seeming) psychological (personality) problems may exist (can occur) which hinder and/or obviate this development, and thus, from the mundane perspective, an aberrant (abnormal) (atypical) (deviant) (non-conforming) personality is the consequence.

The types of abnormalities possible are numerous and include (but are not limited to), manic-depression, schizophrenia (split personality), obsession-compulsion, etc. These are the more severe psychological (from the lower perspective), psychotic aberrations. However, there are (also) less severe, neurotic, behavioral symptomology, or phobias (exaggerated or pathological dread of a stimulus or some situation, e.g., heights, confined areas, going outside, etc.), tics (spasmodic facial twitches or body movements), etc., which are classified as less severe, but can still be extremely debilitating to those afflicted and thus can still have very serious consequences.

Superficially, it appears that psychological aberration (deviancy) is becoming more and more commonplace (from the lower perspective). However, as with any (seemingly) new (from the lower perspective) area of awareness, it is not that psychological aberration is manifesting more now than before, but rather

that humanity is willing (able) to incorporate these (seeming) problems into their reference frame (consciousness) (i.e., the conditions existed before but were either erroneously classified or simply ignored).

From the perspective of the (exoteric) psychologist, these aberrations for the majority of mankind are due to (created and/or caused by) chemical imbalance or behavioral deviation (probably the primary cause of psychological disorder for most of mankind). However, in the case of the spiritual student (or from the perspective of the esoteric psychologist), the deviancy may also be due to ill-advised personality manipulation in order to achieve spiritual growth before achieving proper personality integration. In addition, while all (inappropriate) personality manipulation for premature spiritual ends is dangerous, the danger increases as the student is further along the spiritual path, i.e., advanced students are afforded less room for error. However, in all cases such manipulation should not be attempted without proper knowledge and guidance (due consideration of the proper alignment of the higher soul and lower personality) (for one is dealing with considerable (unknown) power and if done inappropriately, it can easily lead to a mental and/emotional breakdown (or total destruction) for at least part of the current lifetime, if not longer).

However, one way or another, all (seeming) aberration is karmically warranted (if not appreciated from a mundane perspective) (if not actually sought?), to provide the opportunity to work out consequences (achieve learning) (aid in development and progress) not possible or practicable any other way. So while such deviation may seem to be wasted effort from the perspective of the (inconsequential) lower self (personality), it may in fact be an accelerated path and/or the only option available to achieve the desired end from the perspective of the soul (i.e., no experience is wasted from the higher perspective).

The Multiple Personality 1

Once the spiritual student begins to (consciously) traverse the spiritual path to (of) the higher self (soul), the personality should (ideally) be a single, (relatively) focused unit (uni-dimensional) (non-compartmentalized) (unsegmented).

However, this is not usually the case at first, for while the student may dimly recognize a higher calling, the personality is still quite independent (i.e., lacking control). Thus, the personality is quite rebellious (separative, self-centered, etc.), desiring mainly to indulge its lower-nature excesses, which is natural for the personality is still young (inexperienced) (most likely just achieving power over its components, the physical, emotional, and lower mental bodies).

During this time of seemingly unending excess (normal evolutionary progress), personality development usually involves divisions, or the personality is split into two or multiple (equally important?) segments. Normally less severe examples of the division are deceit, hypocrisy, or simply maintaining a (designed) separation (split) between the work, home (social) and spiritual milieu, i.e., the multiple personality. In the case of a personality with a severe psychological aberration, the individual is unaware of the split, and the person is (exoterically) called a schizophrenic. However, with a student further along the path some awareness of the division (multi-faceted makeup) exists (or at least the potential for awareness exists). At this time, since personality existence normally involves duality, having a multiple personality may be all that can be expected. However, as the student progresses on the path (before any real progress is possible), any schisms in the personality must be resolved, i.e., the personality must achieve at-one-ment (unity) (the integrated state) (which, with refinement, allows for alignment).

At first, achieving unity in the personality is difficult (or impossible) (even if appropriate), for the individual lives in the chaotic (and possibly psychologically diverse) world of the newly formed (multiple) personality. However, as the student progresses, the ability to recognize the compartmentalization becomes (gradually) easier and soul awareness (control) becomes the norm. In addition, as spiritual progress occurs, while compartmentalization may exist, possibly it is done knowingly, e.g., to retain stability (balance), for the consequences of

living life as the whole (at-one) unit of the spiritual self are difficult (if not completely overwhelming) for the lower self to resolve (i.e., the personality may not willingly (easily) subjugate itself to the soul).

Attempts to achieve the higher self without unity of the personality will be only partially successful (at best). Forcing the situation (the way of a personality that outwardly professes subservience but inwardly is more self-centered) before unity is naturally achieved is the reason that some students on the path go psychologically astray (permanently with regard to a lifetime but temporarily with regard to the path). However, as progress is made, the necessary unity is achieved (seemingly) easily or not, as the student strives and progresses.

Until relatively recently, psychological aberration and multiple personalities were mainly handled as exoteric psychological exercises (considerations) without any real appreciation of the greater whole. However, orthodox psychology is progressing and gradually incorporating a more integrated (broader) (more inclusive) view of the human personality as more psychologists become more responsive to higher impression.

† Commentary No. 723

The Causal Body

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division C) considers the subject of the soul ray and solar fire, and begins with consideration of the causal body. The causal body is the actual vehicle of the soul and consists of relatively permanent higher (abstract) mental matter that lasts throughout the cycle of incarnations of the soul. It is the repository of the assimilated experience gathered by the soul through its various incursions into the lower worlds.

In contrast to the vehicles of the personality (dense physical body, etheric double, astral or emotional body, and concrete mind or mental body), the causal body is not really a "body" per se, but a relatively well-defined energy matrix that represents the character and quality (and relative achievements and capabilities) of the soul. It is the source of conscience (accumulated wisdom or that portion of which is readily available to the mind) and remains uncompromised by material existence. When the soul is created (by the monad,

as the incarnation of the monad on solar levels), the causal body is formed as a receptacle of the soul's experience (i.e., the causal body is initially empty). As the soul incarnates through a succession of relatively worldly incarnations, the (positive) accumulated wisdom is incorporated in the causal body (field) through assimilation (and retained in the personality matrix), while the (negative) tendencies remain only within the personality matrix.

The causal body is, in effect, the individual solar matrix, the intermediate source of all causes (potential) relating to the personality (and necessarily consequential), while the personality matrix is the lesser reality that is masked by the appearance of the personality and its forms. All of esoteric psychology (for those who are evolving within the context of the spiritual path) relates in one way or another to the soul ray, solar fire, and the causal body. This is due to the role of the second aspect (soul) (consciousness) as the place of balance (atonement) (equilibrium) between spirit and matter (i.e., the true field of evolution).

The causal body is "formed by the contact of the two fires of spirit and matter," by means of the "positive life (fire) of spirit (electric fire)" meeting the "negative life (fire) of matter (fire by friction)," causing a "blazing forth of the solar fire." Ultimately this second (solar) fire "burns up the third fire, or absorbs its essence, and is itself eventually blended with the fire of spirit and passes out of objective display." The causal body (soul) remains when the personality reflection has served its purpose (objective experience) and has been consumed by the solar fire, and, ultimately, the causal body is similarly destroyed (consumed) (its essence extracted) by the monad.

"The causal body is that sheath of mental substance which is formed at the moment of individualization by the contact of the two fires," as the "force or energy that pours through from the higher planes (the breath of the monad) produces a vacuum (the sheath of the causal body) (the ring-pass-not of the central life)." The causal body is the intermediate point of the six-pointed star (of the upper triad (soul) (atma-buddhi-manas) and the lower triad (personality) (physical, emotional, mental)). The soul does not manifest during the involutionary period but only appears (as subtle qualifying presence) upon individualization and is only fulfilled (in the lower sense) when the lower triad is uplifted into (fully aligned with) the upper triad and the presence of the soul

then truly dominates. The personality matrix is represented in the causal body by the three permanent atoms of the lower principles, i.e., the physical permanent atom, the astral permanent atom, and the mental unit.

† Commentary No. 724

Permanent Atoms 1

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division C) continues with consideration of the nature (purpose) of the permanent atoms. The three permanent atoms enclosed by the causal sheath are the centers of force of the personality matrix that constitute both the potentiality and actuality of achievement on each of the three respective levels (physical, emotional, concrete mental) (within the lowest sub-plane of the cosmic physical plane).

As a person evolves in consciousness, the respective permanent atoms are separately and interdependently vivified and awakened (developed from potentiality to actuality) appropriately and in accordance with the assimilated experience of the personality. These permanent atoms (and the enfolding causal bodies) are more real than all of the lesser manifestation in the sense of (1) their duration (which far exceeds that of the personality) and (2) their representation and roles. "The permanent atoms on each plane are (1) the distributors of a certain type of force, (2) the conservers of faculty or ability to respond to a particular vibration (qualification), (3) the assimilators of experience and the transmuters of that experience into quality (the result of the work of the soul ray as it plays upon the respective permanent atoms), and (4) the memory of the unit of consciousness (when fully vibrant they provide for continuity of consciousness)."

Polarization of consciousness relates directly to the relative vivification and maturation of the three permanent atoms. Physical polarization equates to the vivification of the physical permanent atom within the causal body (and the lack of vivification of the emotional and mental permanent atoms). Emotional polarization likewise equates to the vivification of both the physical and emotional permanent atoms (and the lack of vivification of the mental permanent atom), with the emotional dominating and directly influencing the

physical. Similarly, (concrete) mental polarization equates to all three permanent atoms being vivified, with the mental dominating and directly influencing the physical and emotional. Most people have all three permanent atoms "active" but with the mental being overshadowed (for the time being) by the emotional.

The interplay of force between the three atoms (force centers) determines a person's status or state of consciousness in the lower worlds. As each person achieves a relative transmutation of consciousness, so does the greater life achieve its (incremental) transmutation or growth. From another point of view (perspective), "each of the seven rays, viewed in connection with the causal bodies of men, demonstrates as a unity on the first sub-plane, as a triplicity on the second, and as a septenate on the third," so that "(1) the septenary status governs the time from individualization until the student enters upon the path, (2) the threefold status governs the time of the minor initiations, and (3) unity is achieved at the Fifth Initiation." This then corresponds to "the awakening of the life forces within the permanent atoms, viewing each atom as the seventh principle in each of the three aspects of the personality."

The permanent atoms are more real (more substantial) (less apparent) than the chakras or inter-planar force centers. But the permanent atoms (exhibiting duration and continuity) represent the field of (qualifying) causes for the various chakras, while the waking-consciousness and subconscious provide the temporal and largely unconscious (induced) utilization of the chakras. The individual in incarnation does not therefore work directly with the permanent atoms, while he may (if he is able and preferably if he is sufficiently and properly trained) work more or less directly with the chakras.

The Crisis of Faith

Inevitably and periodically in the progressive development and service of the spiritual student there are crises of faith to test and challenge the place and perspective of the student in relation to the path and its energy flow. Some of the crises are evoked as consequences of false or unrealistic (and therefore unrealized) expectations, while some are meant to test the student's faith and resolve.

In either case, the underlying issue is the relationship of the student's faith to the energy flow of the path. Any expectation that is inconsistent with the purpose, proper methodology, and quality (objectives and character) of the flow will be partially or fully unrealized, depending on the measure of inconsistency. Inconsistencies generally arise from the ego or personality nature which has its own ideas about virtually everything. If the student is personality-centered and under any substantive ego inducement, then the ideas, priorities, purpose, methodology, and quality of the student's approach (activities) (development) (service) are likely to be to some extent at variance with the path and what is intended for the student. But with humility and intelligent (rather than independent) approach (acceptance of consequences (opportunities)), some greater measure of consistency with the path (its flow) is achieved.

The wise student has no expectations other than that all will work out as it must. As the student places his higher faith in God (the soul) (the spiritual path) rather than himself (personality) and his lower faith in his own ability to be responsive to the higher, then independence (separateness) (personality-centeredness) is gradually overcome and adherence is gradually achieved. But that faith must be real and not contrived by the self-deceptive ego (personality). If the student has wants (desires, expectations) other than adherence to the path, then the student is misled by those wants. If the student is relatively free from wants (personal or noble) and attachments (opinions) (beliefs), then the student is relatively free to live within the energy flow of the (spiritual) path.

The student's faith should come from (God) within and as a consequence of and measure of respect for the soul (and not the ego). That (effective) faith should

not be blind or without general understanding and selfless resolve. Without specific or unrealistic (self-centered or self-initiated) expectations, the student still needs a measure of faith in the higher order and his own (necessarily humble) relationship to that higher order and a measure of resolve (determination) to rise above the mundane aspects of personality and life in the lower worlds in order to serve more effectively in the context of the path.

Faith, humility, intelligence, and acceptance go hand in hand with the sensible approach of the student to the path (and as the student continues indefinitely upon that path). Difficult circumstances, personal failures, and other challenges do not disrupt the proper faith of the spiritual student, but they do (properly) cause the student to question his faith (is it proper), his commitment (is it well-founded), his motives and methods (are they proper), etc. The student must ever be open to new ideas and willing to learn from every opportunity (but with intelligent consideration and without carelessly giving up one's place and perspective). Thus the crisis of faith offers the dispelling of false (unrealistic) (personal) expectations and/or the opportunity for renewal of proper commitment (faith) and continued loosening of ego (personal) (personality) influences.

† Commentary No. 726

The Flow 5

In addition to the daily, general, individual flow, there is the overall work-flow of the spiritual student and the flow of ideas or answers to questions (learning realization) (both of which are, by correspondence and degrees, applicable to anyone). Any intention to do something (and every question formulated) generates a flow (or component flow), apparently timely or otherwise (from the perspective of the personality) (always timely from the perspective of the soul) (not necessarily quickly or straight-away, but nonetheless timely).

Work schedules (intentions) and organization (in principle) are generally useful, provided that attention to the schedule and the tendency to be organized does not prevent the accomplishment of what really needs to be done (i.e., one should hopefully be sensitive to and responsive to the flow). In all things there needs to be balance. So "working" needs to be properly balanced with meditation and

contemplation (consideration). Some distractions (but not all) are appropriate. The question in this context is really how to discern appropriateness. Each potential distraction may be “merely distracting” or it may represent a significant “flow” in its own right. All we can do is seek to discern the relative appropriateness of things. That discernment cannot really be objective, for then we become less responsive to higher impression. But neither can it be too subjective, or we lose touch with the outer worlds and the outer appropriateness.

Generally, however, (with sincerity) the work that really needs to be done gets done. And the work that can wait does. The student should have a healthy work ethic (and thereby work earnestly and constructively) but not push himself too hard, for that makes one less effective and less responsive. Ever one should seek to be contemplative as well as objectively useful. Any question mentally formulated generates a flow of energy that provides both the time and timing for its answer (which may as well be an unfolding thread of topical energies for further consideration). Occasionally, when the timing is right for a quick response, the answers or response come almost immediately. At other times (mostly), the “timing” is right for a longer, contemplative period prior to realization (all of which is apparently determined by the flow of other things and our relative responsiveness).

Some ideas (questions, issues) need to be considered (consciously or subconsciously) for weeks or months (and sometimes even years) before the responsive energy can properly emerge. This timescale (whatever it is) is appropriate because we are generally dealing with a rather large body of experience and consideration (several or numerous topics and topical threads, simultaneously and to some extent interactively). No one understands everything, or even anything completely. So the whole process is one (mostly) of subconscious consideration and correlation. Answers emerge whenever they will, which generally means whenever we have all of the necessary ingredients for conscious understanding “and” when we also have a situation that offers appropriateness.

There is the “real” flow of the soul, which is qualitative and qualifying with regard to the personality. There is the “karmic” flow which merely imposes whatever is needed. And there is the “personal” flow of our own personality intentions (desires). If the “real” flow dominates (i.e., if we are responsive to the

higher flow) then we are actively working within and upon the path. If the “personal” flow dominates then we are working for ourselves and not properly within or upon the path.

† Commentary No. 727

Good and Bad Karma

The concept of good and bad karma presents semantic difficulties because “good” and “bad” are oft used in misleading and judgmental ways. “Good” usually indicates something favorable or desirable, as in bountiful, attractive, suitable, pleasant, wholesome, honorable, benevolent, etc., while “bad” usually indicates the opposite, or something unfavorable or undesirable, as in disagreeable, unpleasant, injurious, harmful, unhealthy, sorrowful, distressing, etc. Thus good and bad karma refers to favorable (desirable) and unfavorable (undesirable) consequences, respectively.

But good and bad are relative terms, depending on context, personal perspective (judgment), and appearances rather than underlying reality (truth in some higher sense than the practical reality of day-to-day mundane existence). Thus particular karma (karmic consequences) is good or bad only in the sense of how a person affected (effected) feels about those circumstances and consequences. Intrinsically, karma is neither good nor bad, but merely (and necessarily) appropriate (merited) (warranted) in every (proper) sense.

It is misleading (self-deceiving) (greatly oversimplifying) to think of good karma as a consequence of good works and bad karma as a consequence of bad works, because karma is much more (almost entirely) concerned with the evolution of consciousness, and the concept of good and bad is really limited to the affected consequences rather than the effected consequences. All karma is “good” in the sense that it promotes learning and evolution in consciousness, and is never “bad” in the sense that it is always merited. Karma is necessarily complex because the inputs to the karmic equation are very widely distributed in time (for each individual) and the individual consequences are necessarily balanced by wisdom and the greater context of the race, culture, lifewave, and planetary environment. Thus it is difficult to draw specific (affected) conclusions from specific (timely) consequences. Causal relationships are potentially and

normally very complex and work out in time and combine in so many ways that output (results) (consequences) is not easily or readily correlatable to known inputs (actions) (causes). And causes come as much or more from emotional and concrete mental levels (behavior (feelings and thoughts)) than from physical levels. The causal chain is simply not (generally) very apparent to anyone.

Yet it is nonetheless human nature to understand and accept that good things happen (or should happen) to good people and that bad things happen (or should happen) to bad people. But "bad" things also happen to "good" people and "good" things also happen to "bad" people, because, in a sense (and over the timescale of causes (several to many lifetimes)) "good" people are not all good (nor have they always been "good") and "bad" people are not all bad (nor have they always been "bad"). Good people generally have a great deal yet to learn (as do bad people), and all (experience) contributes to the working out (resolution) (adjustment in consciousness) (learning) of karma in the broader sense.

In wisdom (karmic balance) (fairness), there are also different standards for predominantly good and predominantly bad people, such that the further along the path one proceeds, the greater is the consequence for relatively minor transgressions (actions inconsistent with the intended consciousness) (as karma is essentially a restorative force to encourage all toward evolutionary experience and achievement). In the final analysis, however, there is no good or bad, just experience that is judged and adjusted according to the relative balance between the past, current, and intended quality of consciousness.

Heaven and Hell 1

Most religions, both ancient and modern, contain teachings anent the post-mortem state of the human "soul." These teachings generally describe two possible conditions or localities wherein the soul, after death, may exist. The first locality (state or set of states) being accessible only to those who have lead virtuous, moral, or otherwise "righteous" lives, is called heaven. The second locality (state or set of states), being the unfortunate default position for all who were basically "evil," "sinful," or in some cases simply unaccepting of a particular religious doctrine, is called hell. Various religions have their own terms to represent what the Western terms "heaven" and "hell" used here imply.

Typically, the heaven experience is portrayed by religion as being a blissful fulfillment of the individual's desires or thought life. Descriptions of "roads paved in gold" and "pearly gates" indicate the extreme emphasis on materiality (maya) that some religious groups project into their vision of heaven. Hell, on the other hand, is portrayed as a place or state of torment, suffering, and pain. For orthodox Christianity (and the later Islamic religion), one's assignment to heaven or hell is based on but one lifetime, and the remainder of eternity is then spent either reaping rewards in heaven or enduring punishment in hell. There is one major difference between the heaven and hell of orthodox Christianity and those of Brahmanism, Buddhism, and most relatively unaltered ancient religions and philosophical systems. The heaven and hell of orthodox Christianity are eternal; those of the others are recognized as being transient states experienced between life cycle transitions (reincarnations). As the causes that result in either the bliss of heaven or torment of hell are exhausted, the individual moves on to new experience.

Heaven and hell, from the theosophical (metaphysical) (ancient wisdom) perspective may be considered in several ways. First, the period spent in the lower sub-planes of kamaloka (on the astral plane) is a period of purgation, wherein all matter within the emotional body that is coarse must be shed before the individual may move onward. Most of humanity has, at this time, evolved beyond the extreme coarseness that requires an extensive purgatory experience.

There are those few, however, who have yet to become sufficiently free of coarse lower astral matter (analogous to “evil”). The period spent on the lower sub-planes of kamaloka is, for them, a seeming hell. No longer possessing a physical body to dull the impact of lower emotions, they suffer emotionally with more intensity than we can understand from the physical plane perspective.

The individual may perceive his suffering to be eternal, but it is merely transient (though intense). When the individual passes from the lower sub-planes of kamaloka to the higher, he has entered into a state of consciousness sometimes called first heaven. When he further passes into the lower devachic states on concrete mental levels (second heaven), he experiences more truly bliss and light. If he is sufficiently evolved to experience the devachic states on the abstract mental sub-planes, he may exist or bathe in the presence of his soul (the Christ within), and thus realize his oneness with God.

This theosophical perspective then, does include states analogous to heaven and hell, but they are viewed as merely states through which the individual passes according to the degree of evolution attained. They are purposeful states that assist the individual in further evolving, and are governed (as is all else) by the law of karma. They are not mere states of retributive reward or punishment.

† Commentary No. 729

Heaven and Hell 2

There is a similarity between the transition states of kamaloka and devachan (a theosophical perspective) on the one hand, and the concepts of heaven and hell taught by most world religions (except orthodox Christianity and Islam). There are universal truths or laws which theosophy seeks to embrace. These same truths form the basis of the teaching of all genuine world teachers (initiates), upon which religions later emerge. The problem with religion is that there is a tendency for truths to become diluted (misrepresented) as they are presented by the uninitiated in terms that the masses can understand.

The symbolic nature of a teaching is often misconstrued (or taken literally), and, over time, basic truths may degenerate greatly. These degenerations become

crystallized into dogma that may retain only a "hint" of original truth. There is a further tendency for ideas that are not necessarily consistent with truth to be added on to some original truth, thus converting it into what is basically a superstition (from the Latin "superstitio," meaning to add upon). This is the case for the orthodox Christian teachings regarding heaven and hell in specific, and life and death, in general.

It is a positive sign that many thinking people within mainstream (but not fundamentalist) Christianity reject the orthodox dogma of heaven and hell. It seems impossible to sensibly reconcile the concept that "God is love" with the atrocities and torture of the eternal hell that He supposedly maintains for those who displease or "sin against" Him. Further, how could a sincere individual who endeavors to lead a Christ-like life qualified by love and brotherhood be truly content languishing (selfishly) in heavenly bliss while some of his brothers (errant though they may be) suffer through eternity? A static heaven for the selfishly unaware is a concept that can be seen as equally repulsive as the tortures of hell. While it is a positive sign that these doctrines are being questioned or rejected, an even greater step forward will come as more thinking people consider the basic cyclicity of life (reincarnation) and begin to understand the law of karma and qualifying evolutionary purpose.

From another theosophical perspective, life in physical incarnation on earth can be considered as hell. As man descends (falls) into the material world, he becomes further and further removed from his spiritual source on the higher planes. Union with the soul (the Christ-within) (the monad) is a state of pure bliss. This state of union may be considered as heaven (nirvana). The repeated sojourns of the individual through the (spiritual) darkness of the material world are the just rewards of all who are not as yet sufficiently pure, of all who have not as yet learned all of the lessons that earthly experience (suffering) encourages, and of all for whom there remains the pull of earthly desire. For ages, the individual struggles through lifetimes of darkness and suffering (hell).

Then, as he gradually becomes more self-conscious and begins to consciously tread the spiritual path, he becomes aware that he is able, by his own thinking and responses, to determine his own situation. He may make it a continual hell by persisting in identification with the material world and refusing (or failing) to learn the lessons of life, or he may consciously endeavor to realize the heaven

that lies within. He may consciously align his lower self with his soul and thereby radiate that heavenly light into the darkness around him. This alignment (at-one-ment) is essentially participation in heaven, while yet on earth. It is the symbolic bringing forth of the Kingdom of God on earth.

† Commentary No. 730

Pain and Suffering 1

Pain and suffering are usually misunderstood in the mundane world as unfortunate and often unmerited circumstances. Yet pain and suffering are actually phenomena associated with the natural response or reaction of the human personality to wholly merited (stressing) karmic consequences. Pain and suffering are never inflicted (karmically) without there first being an unresponsiveness on the part of the personality to learning the intended lesson. In fact, suffering is primarily self-imposed (and many circumstances attracted) by the ego or personality-centered nature as a result of attachments or beliefs which are threatened by the learning process.

Those who have substantial attachments to material possessions and mundane principles (money, people, position, power, status) will eventually find these implied values challenged repeatedly until the personality learns reasonable detachment and moderation (balance) in mundane matters. For those whose souls are committed to the spiritual path, this challenge is much more (and increasingly) potent and the consequences of attachment more insistent. Misfortune will not necessarily pass or lessen quickly as a result of changing values (lessons learned), since so-called misfortune is a natural and inevitable (merited) consequence and must run its course, but with growing understanding and composure, the student can moderate his response to misfortune to an attitude of acceptance qualified by a willingness (earnestness) to learn whatever lessons are implied. An open mind (and heart) are necessary prerequisites.

Karma is opportunity for learning. The good and the bad are simply biased ways of looking at opportunity. The circumstances which induce or encourage pain and suffering are simply more dramatic opportunities for more substantial attachments than is otherwise the case. Those who have no attachments, who

are open and honest in their approach to life (and truth), generally do not attract painful circumstances or do not respond so badly to potentially painful situations. Feeling sorry for oneself is one of the less noble activities. One should rather be open to the various learning opportunities and at least recognize that in each element of pain and suffering there is an intended message. In refusing to feel sorry for oneself and in being thankful to God for all of life's blessings (such as they are, necessarily warranted) there is the beginning of openness.

The concept of tragedy is a grand, self-imported delusion. There are no tragedies. There are circumstances which allow karma to be resolved (which encourage the development of compassion and composure) and lessons to be learned (and adjustments to be made). The more dramatic the circumstances, the stronger the message intended (and made necessary by a comparably greater or broader attachment to false ideas (beliefs) (delusions)). And yet, one cannot help properly but to be moved by "tragedy" and respond with compassion and consideration for those affected (effected) (afflicted).

For those who suffer the most, often understand the least (and are generally incapable of consciously understanding the karmic concepts). For those who are not consciously open to the various learning opportunities, or who suffer pain and anguish, the lessons are generally learned on more subtle levels (unconsciously or subconsciously) rather than consciously or directly (as should be the case for those further along the path). Compassion and consideration (rather than imposition or judgment) offer more constructive encouragement toward qualitative learning.

Permanent Atoms 2

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division C) continues its consideration of the nature of the permanent atoms, including their place in the causal body, and the relationship of the spirillae to the causal body. There is substantial significance afforded to the astral permanent atom, since it plays a central role on systemic (and composite) levels as “the recipient of a great flow of force or energy, and receives more stimulation and energizing than any of the others” (at least for the vast majority of humanity (who are emotionally-polarized)).

Humanity (inhabiting the fourth or human kingdom) is emotionally polarized. “From the astral, and through the desire nature, the majority of men (people) inevitably direct and control the physical vehicle.” While the immediate objective of humanity is mental polarization (and a tempering of the astral or emotional nature), the actual (longer-term) objective is buddhic or intuitional polarization (to which mental polarization is a necessary intermediate stage) (as the “astral permanent atom” of the lower self is “superseded by the buddhic permanent atom” of the higher self). Thus a close energy relationship exists between the monad (second level), buddhi (fourth level), and the astral (sixth level). Furthermore, the solar logos is second ray but emotionally-polarized (on cosmic levels), bringing more central significance to the heart center (love-wisdom) and the transmutation of the (untempered) astral toward the (more mature) intuitional.

Since the astral permanent atom is in a direct line of force from higher correspondences which are themselves central, it is no wonder that humanity (with its fourth ray correspondence and astral polarization) should be so directly stimulated by external (astral) forces which play upon the astral permanent atom. Those who become mentally polarized therefore are progressing just beyond the field of principal human endeavor (experience) (and are thereby not so absorbed in the emotional concerns or mundane matters (glamour) and are able thereby to play a leadership role by virtue of position in consciousness relative to humanity) (being also thereby relatively less vulnerable to human weaknesses). Those who are mentally-polarized but not spiritually qualified or responsive merely encourage humanity toward mental polarization. But those

who are mentally-polarized and spiritually qualified encourage also the development of spiritual poise (quality) and the follow-through to intuitive polarization (such poise being unattainable in the emotionally-polarized state).

The three fires of the permanent atoms constitute a microcosm of the three fires of the cosmos, with the energy field (activity) of the physical permanent atom representing the internal fires (fires of friction), the merging and blending of the physical and emotional activities representing the solar fire (of consciousness), and the final upliftment of the physical and emotional permanent atoms into the field of the mental permanent atom representing the upliftment of the lesser fires into the electric or monadic fire.

Each permanent atom is composed of spirillae of particularly qualified atomic matter within a sphere or ring-pass-not. Each of the planes are represented by a permanent atom that energizes (or allows the energizing of) the plane. Each unit of life (consciousness) is represented by one or more permanent atoms depending on its particular place (plane) and complexity within the cosmic (solar) (planetary) evolutionary field. The permanent atoms are the positive nuclei of force of which all else on their respective level is merely induced response.

† Commentary No. 732

Permanent Atoms 3

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division C) continues its consideration of the nature of the permanent atoms. The permanent atoms of the physical and astral planes are characterized by responsiveness, form building power, relative permanency, and heat. Responsiveness (in this context) is the “inherent power” of a permanent atom to respond to the vibration (ray quality) of one or another of the seven logoi (and one or another of the great planar devas), as transmitted via the deva or Brahma aspect. Form building power refers to the manifestation of form as induced by the projection of central force, consequential of “words” sounded by the deva lords. These words of power create and sustain the (respective) plane of consciousness, induce forms from (within) the planar matter, etc.

Relative permanency refers to the duration of existence of the permanent atoms when compared to the transience of forms (incarnations). When planes (lives) are dissolved to prepare for the next cycle, the permanent atoms remain in (cloistered) existence (having assimilated the experience and achievement of the previous cycle and representing the refined nucleus (matrix) of subsequent expression). Heat is a quality of distinction between permanent atoms and atomic matter. Matter (and atomic matter) is vitalized by the life of the third aspect, while permanent atoms are vitalized by the life of the second aspect (having been appropriated). Permanent atoms relate to the active centers (nuclei) and are directly involved in the karmic link, while (other) matter relates to the passive periphery and is merely the means of expression.

With regard to the analogies of planar experience and expression, the frictional fires dominate on the lower three (planes) (sub-planes); the electric fire dominates on the higher three; and the "solar fire, showing forth as the blaze produced by union" dominates on the central plane (sub-plane) (and to some extent on the central three planes (sub-planes)). But each plane (sub-plane) that is central to one life (on some level) is above or below with regard to (some) other lives (on their levels). Thus buddhi (the fourth or buddhic plane) is the (etheric) burning ground for the solar logos, the battleground of the planetary logoi, and (yet) the plane of harmony and triumph for humanity.

The planes of consciousness are the Brahmic fields (third aspect) of experience and expression. Vibrations (induced within planes of consciousness) are manifestations of the second aspect (Vishnu) (experience and expression). When the vibrations cease (as the lives are withdrawn), the planes are dissolved. When great achievements are incurred, the fiery currents are balanced and (esoteric) harmony ensues. Those who bathe in the heat of the lesser (frictional) (internal) fires (of matter) live in darkness and respond not to the light (enlightenment) of the solar fire (the soul) (higher consciousness). While those who focus on the second aspect "enjoy an ever increasing freedom, and vital existence."

The physical and astral (emotional) permanent atoms each consist of seven spirillae while the mental unit consists of four (meaning the mental unit is less susceptible to the lower conditions and is more akin to the higher atoms). The spirillae are "streams of qualified force or second aspect vitality which circulate

geometrically within the circumscribing walls of substance (composed of third aspect force or substance).” “There is no such thing as concretion; there is only force of different kinds, and the effect produced on consciousness by their interplay.” The four lower spirillae respond to the personality ray, while the fifth and sixth (of the seven) respond to the soul ray.

† Commentary No. 733

Pain and Suffering 2

Pain necessarily arises from conflict or inconsistency (while conflict or inconsistency do not necessarily induce pain (they do induce consequences intended to restore the balance or encourage development or evolution in consciousness)). That conflict or inconsistency can be in regard to natural law, attachments, unrealistic expectations, etc., but in each case conveys an opportunity for learning or understanding (i.e., balance or resolution).

Material or personal (mundane) attachments lead a person to identify with the lower world and its varying (associated) illusions (glamour) (maya). The consequences of attachments are (karmic) challenges to unsettle (loosen) the respective attachments. But for those (vast majority) who are emotionally polarized (and for whom attachments are very normal), such challenges generally result in either greater conflict (challenge) or reattachment along slightly different lines (resulting in another cycle of challenge and dissolution). The key is to gradually rise above all attachments, in a constructive manner, such that the student is relatively free from the lesser turmoil (pain and suffering) and able to deal more directly with more subtle matters.

In cultures or peoples in which suffering (bereavement) is glamorized or otherwise encouraged (sensationalized), considerable resistance to learning is prevalent. Such cultures generally exhibit a heavily culturally qualified mass emotional consciousness (inflammation) and polarization (which allows or encourages mass reactivity, fanaticism, etc.) and which actively prevents any manifestation of reasonableness. Or in other words, relative maturity leads to (transitory but not disruptive) sadness or compassion (in the face of great pain or suffering) while relative immaturity may yield bereavement and great or

widespread insensibility (loss of emotional controls) (however necessary in order to release the accumulated or indirect reactive tension).

Pain and suffering (subtle or otherwise) induced (karmically) within an emotionally volatile mass consciousness can be dramatically destructive or revolutionary (in breaking down or through various barriers) and thereby potentially constructive in the long view (albeit difficult to appreciate or realize based upon humanity (human conditioning)). But it may also be a matter of great (grave) mass manipulation (e.g., relatively constructive in the case of essentially good leadership and relatively immature (passive) peoples or relatively destructive (in the sense of evil (ignorance) (self-interest) (bigotry) or alignment with the dark side of human nature or the left-handed path (black magic) (e.g., Hitlerian))) and more complex cause and effect relationships. As all things are karmic consequences, one should both accept the karmic nature of consequences and endeavor to work constructively (consistently with natural or cosmic law).

The spiritual student can effectively be sympathetic and compassionate (even empathetic), experiencing these feelings without loss of emotional control (i.e., there is a distinct difference between feeling some emotion (while being mentally and emotionally undisturbed (coherent)), on the one hand, and being involved in emotion such that the emotion is allowed to dominate or disrupt (not merely distract) the normal (coherent) posture, on the other hand). Ideally, the spiritual student exhibits humility, compassion, and goodwill under all circumstances. Any lack of humility, or lack of compassion, or lack of good-naturedness is an indication of (spiritual) immaturity. Pain and suffering, experienced naturally and consequentially, are ultimately constructive, and encourage these qualities of humility, compassion, and goodwill.

Refinement

Refinement is the effort (process) (activity) of purifying the personality to permit its more effective response to higher impression (i.e., the elimination of coarse vibrations from the personality and its atmosphere (aura) makes a significant difference in the ability of a student to respond to the energy and qualification of the soul (and the path)). The process of refinement is relatively complex and varies considerably depending on the type of individual and his or her relationship to the path. For those who are not really working within the context of the spiritual path, the process of refinement is essentially passive or incidental. The individual becomes more and more refined as a (very gradual) consequence of experience and (very) gradual personality adjustments that are more or less incidental to conscious experience. Thus, one becomes (very gradually) more and more refined as one evolves in consciousness.

For the spiritual student, however, refinement should be a rather more conscious or deliberate process, at least in the early stages of the path (in the later stages, refinement continues largely unconsciously and effortlessly as a matter (consequence) of value incorporation (i.e., the advanced student values refinement and has consciously developed the habits of refinement such that the process can proceed largely unconsciously yet effectively (while the student focuses on other issues))).

In the early stages of the path, the installation of discipline is relatively important (as a fundamental building block for (to facilitate) more advanced work) and so refinement is as well a matter of discipline as the diet is regimented (and other habits established) (later on, when one is capable of self-discipline without serious impediment from the ego or personality, that self-discipline is a reflection of incorporated values and rather easy to implement constructively) (i.e., later on, the dietary discipline (as well as other fundamental habits) is maintained nonetheless (albeit less consciously), not as a matter of discipline but as a matter of values). In the middle stages of the path (as some measure of self-discipline has been achieved), refinement per se is even more important or central to progress.

However, refinement per se in any particular sense will not in itself result in inspiration, realization, responsiveness to higher impression, etc. It is the overall refinement in consciousness that so results in (allows) the student to be spiritually responsive. Thus, becoming a vegetarian or giving up smoking or abstention from alcohol will not directly result in responsiveness (or result in integration or alignment). But these improvements will certainly make it easier (and are ultimately necessary) for the student to make the more overall changes (refinement) that are needed (in fact, not making (and maintaining) these improvements will necessarily preclude any real responsiveness).

Coarseness, natural to the relatively unevolved and materialistic or phenomenistic (sensationalist), is spiritual preclusion. It effectively prevents the integration of the personality and subsequent alignment of the personality with the soul (both of which are necessary objectives of the spiritual student). Thus refinement is crucial to advanced or serious spiritual work (activity). The personality naturally resists this process and will look for excuses to maintain the coarse (e.g., flesh-eating) habits which allow the personality to remain more or less independent. Thus, for serious spiritual work, the relatively refined state is necessary, and any failure of the student to maintain the needed (at least minimum) quality of consciousness will preclude any real (substantial) responsibility or opportunity.

† Commentary No. 735

Discrimination in Activity 1

One of the most formidable stumbling blocks of the would-be aspirant to the spiritual path (including many who consider themselves to be relatively advanced spiritual students) is the enchantment of activity. Modern society offers innumerable ways for people to fill their time. Many people exist in a continuous state of "busyness," a state wherein activity begets further activity in an endless circle. Filling each moment with activity in intense pursuit of business and pleasure is an obsession to many people (third ray personalities being particularly vulnerable).

What sets the sincere aspirant (seeker of truth) apart from the masses of humanity blindly immersed in busyness is his attempt to discriminate, to

distinguish the (relatively) real from the unreal. In other words, within the mind of the aspirant should be the constant questions, "What is really important?" and "What is worth doing?" He should also be asking, "Why is this being done?" From a higher perspective, nothing in the domain of the personality is really important, but there are, nonetheless, some activities which have some relative worth or appropriateness and many other activities which have little, none, or even a degree of inappropriateness.

Time and energy are valuable resources to the spiritual student. There is much work to be done in the context of the spiritual path. There are some activities which are necessary to mere survival and maintenance of a moderately comfortable lifestyle and family relationship. There are other activities which stem from real karmic obligation (as opposed to a presumed obligation, which may be simply an imposition of one person's will (expectation) upon another). The spiritual student is compelled to participate appropriately in mundane activities, such as these.

Many aspirants fail to distinguish between what is indeed compelling mundane activity and what is merely personality self-indulgence, which activities will lead them further along the spiritual path and which will serve to deflect their focus and progress. It is not uncommon to hear aspirants excuse themselves from service activities or a disciplined meditation program because they are "too busy." They can find time to fit into their schedules all of the trivia of mundane life, yet those activities which alone can draw them nearer to reality (the essence of Life), and are therefore the most worthwhile of all activities, are crowded out. In reality, people tend to find time (somehow) to do what they want to do. Activities provide a telling picture of what a person's values and priorities are. If there is no time in the schedule for spiritual work and discipline, it is generally because the aspirant continues to be absorbed in the mundane world and regards the personality life as his highest priority (despite what he may believe or claim to the contrary).

It is not uncommon to hear some of these same aspirants seeking to discover a quick and easy path to enlightenment, because they are so busy that they don't have the time to put forth much effort toward the spiritual goals they desire to reach. The spiritual path is no light undertaking. Progress comes only to those who take a consistent and committed approach to group endeavor and

individual self-discipline. The spiritual path is not for those who are too busy with mundane and social affairs to put forth the required effort. Indeed, one of the crowning examples of arrogance is that an individual should somehow expect God (the Elder Brothers) (the soul or Christ within) to be concerned and aid in his or her development when the individual is too busy to dedicate time or effort in seeking God or serving, in whatever way possible, the Plan.

† Commentary No. 736

Discrimination in Activity 2

While the purpose of physical incarnation is to “experience” in the physical world, this is no justification for indiscriminate activity. The experiences that are karmically merited (needed) will come, whether they are sought or not. These experiences must be faced. The deliberate (conscious) seeking of experience, however, as an end in itself for sensation, thrill, glamour, ego, etc. is a real impediment to personality integration because it perpetuates the reign of the lower nature. The experience of the physical incarnation is designed to lead humanity to the realization of higher consciousness through the renting of the veils of maya. The spiritual student is to deliberately distance himself from as much unnecessary activity as is possible that he may see through these veils rather than further enmesh himself within them. Simplification and discrimination are the keys to this process.

The dedicated spiritual student will generally be as busy as (or busier than) most of humanity, but the activities that he chooses to devote his time to will be of a very different nature than those to which most of humanity devote their time. The rules (governing appropriate behavior and activity) for those who take the spiritual path seriously are very different than the rules for those who are unaware that there is a spiritual path or who are aware but choose to continue primarily along the slow path of gradual evolution with the masses. The spiritual student seeks to simplify his life (eliminating unnecessary activity) and to detach himself from the temporary forms of physical plane existence to whatever extent is possible.

The dedicated spiritual student seeks relationships primarily on the level of the soul, and while he leads a life of active service to humanity, he does not attach himself to its various personality expressions. He continues to fulfill whatever "duty" he may realize, but he tends to withdraw most of his energy from purely personality or social activities that it might be better utilized for spiritual purposes. To those around him, the spiritual student may appear to lead a very dull, uneventful, or even hermit-like existence. He may appear (because he is for the most part) disinterested in most of the "colorful" worldly pleasures and events that enchant the masses. It is impossible for those who see the purpose of life as being the pursuit of happiness through worldly experience and relationships to understand the perspective of one who may have previously sampled some such experience, and in it found nothing that was more than temporary, nothing that to him was or approached reality (substance) (or real value).

Because his life is dedicated to the evolution of consciousness (both individually and in terms of his service to humanity), which he sees as the purpose of the experience in the physical world, the committed spiritual student chooses deliberately all of his activities with spiritual purpose in mind. For example, if given the choice between working to obtain orthodox credentials, laurels, and recognition, or quietly and selflessly participating in an endeavor which he recognizes to have some spiritual merit, the dedicated spiritual student will choose the latter (unlike most of humanity).

The Sanskrit term "sannyasin" describes the dedicated spiritual student who has abstracted the lesson of worldly activity and no longer feels desire for any worldly attachment and distraction. He has freed himself for a life of active, purposeful service to the Hierarchy and humanity. His service may require that he withdraw into a cloistered environment, or he may be more effective remaining where he is within the outer world, yet focused on the inner.

Retrospective Opportunity

For a spiritual student on the path of oneness a useful (necessary) exercise is to recapitulate (retrospectively) earthly experience each day (preferably in the evening). Establishing a daily retrospective exercise aids the student for it allows him to go over daily events and assess the positive and not so positive aspects of the day (from the higher perspective, all experience is positive). With this exercise several things are accomplished. First, by retrospectively each day in proximity to the events (when memories are fresh) adjustments (are possible and potentially easier) can be made as necessary (appropriate), which means the spiritual student is actively (positively) taking control of his destiny. Second, in retrospectively each day the spiritual student reduces (maybe obviates) the need to spend much time in the period of death (life!) between incarnations, thereby (more) rapidly moving (advancing) to the next evolutionary stage or cycle.

Since a spiritual student is likely to live (or have lived) in a variety of places or circumstances, and since the student may not have been actively (knowingly) on the path throughout an incarnation, the opportunity may be given (in addition to normal daily retrospection) (to replace unfulfilled daily retrospection) to go back to previous habitats (in the same lifetime) (from previous lifetimes?) to more effectively participate in the retrospective process. Since at this stage a spiritual student is not concerned with people (family, friends, etc.) (a personality perspective) involved in a previous habitat, the time spent in the retrospective opportunity (a soul mandated function) is spent contacting and assimilating (abstracting) (as possible) the meaningful events (attitudes) (quality) of the time (which can be considerable).

If the process is approached openly (willingly) (receptively) (from a higher perspective), with no undue expectation (of the personality), it can be useful for both short-term and long-term consideration (i.e., much of value may be otherwise lost). However, if the process is heavily involved with the personality, any potential benefits can (will) be negated (at best). In addition, the student should not be apprehensive about the opportunity, due to misgivings about what will be learned (uncovered from the repressed past) (hidden secrets of the past, painful to relive), because for a spiritual student,

such experience (opportunity) is neither positive nor negative, merely a recapitulation of the past from which to better the present (future). The truth must always (eventually) be faced.

This ex post facto retrospective, faced without glamour and illusion can create considerable opportunity for greater insight (awareness) of what happened at an earlier time, how it was handled (or not), which can lead to more effective handling of (comparable) situations in the time to come. If approached from a personality perspective, however, it can not only be distracting but it might also be overwhelming. If it is handled with the abstract mental (intuitive mind or higher), it can be very useful (insightful) in terms of greater awareness (i.e., visit the places that seem most appropriate and meditatively consider the atmosphere (quality) previously created, neither trying to relive the period or influence the experience). Such opportunities (special retrospection) should be considered thankfully and with appreciation.

With such opportunities, the spiritual student is (potentially) able to more effectively accomplish on Earth that which would have to be done between lives (in death). Thus, the spiritual student will reduce the time between incarnations to better serve the Plan and develop the Christ (God-self) within.

† Commentary No. 738

Silence

Silence is the absence of sound, the forbearance of speech or noise, to be mute, still, or quiet (physically, emotionally, and/or mentally). Silence is the essence of the higher self (soul) (Christ within), its only existence, and thus, it is an (absolute) necessary attribute for the spiritual student to achieve as part of treading the path to the greater self.

While silence is easy to define and relatively straightforward in meaning, it is difficult to achieve, for it is the antithesis of the personality, which by nature may be loud, noisy, boisterous, outgoing, exuberant, etc. The difficulty is that the personality is developed to control the lower triad of the physical, emotional, and concrete mental bodies, but once control is established (as a never ending

cycle on the path (i.e., achieve and then give up (let go))), the personality is expected (required) to give up its outward (active, outgoing, robust) nature and turn (and be (willingly) subservient) to the inner self (soul). Since achieving control of the lower nature takes considerable time and the personality is (naturally) reactive towards relinquishing its preeminence (seeming (illusory) position of power), a considerable struggle (in terms of time and effort) may ensue.

The (considerable) issue for the spiritual student is that in order to become (achieve alignment with) the higher self (soul), one must learn to curb the normally noisy manner of the personality, for without some degree of silence any approach to the higher (eventual) self (the Christ within) is not possible. The object is to dampen the lower (personality) self (in measured stages), so that it is possible to effect a rapprochement with the higher. Meditation is an effective way to achieve this end gradually (at first), for the essence of a daily structured (meditation) exercise is to achieve a link (thread) between the higher and lower entities. Beyond the structured meditation period, the student is expected to carry this undisruptive attitude (atmosphere) into daily life, propagating it beyond the formal meditation period.

In effecting a link between the higher and lower selves, silence has other (short term) (more immediate) benefits. By its very nature, the noisy or exuberant personality is prone to say and/or do things unintentionally (or not), in the best of circumstances. However, when the lower self is weakened due to disease and/or being tired (due to warranted circumstances) (karma), the normally (unfortunately) outspoken personality is even more prone to say and/or do things that are unintended (extremely disruptive) (in the long run), but due to compromised circumstances beyond its immediate control (nothing should ever be beyond the qualified self-control of the spiritual student), this outspoken tendency may contrive to make a bad situation even worse.

Thus, among other things, silence encourages a more patient (caring) disposition (existence) (concerned about how one affects others), which can lead to harmlessness and a predisposition to right speech (compared with any flippant or otherwise painful (unacceptable (to the soul)) expression of the personality), which are a few of the needed prerequisites of the student on the path. The practice of (relative) silence can also be beneficial in everyday life for

the student's approach to those around him will naturally become more gentle (less disruptive), and the student will be further on his way to achieving a silent demeanor, which then leads to the Voice of the Silence (the kingdom (working arena) of the soul). May a silence (reticence) pervade the aura of all students on the path so that the united state may be achieved with the higher, greater self.

† Commentary No. 739

Permanent Atoms 4

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division C) continues its consideration of the nature of permanent atoms and their relationship to the order of manifestation. At the lower levels of manifestation, the "natural order" is much more complex than is the case for the higher levels. Each successively higher level (plane or sub-plane of consciousness) is progressively less complex (or, more correctly, the realm of higher order (real) causes is relatively simple (in principle), while as manifestation proceeds and progresses to successively more concrete (material) (objective) (lower) levels, each (successive) level (of effects) is relatively more complex) (this is due to the nature and necessary complexity (diversity) of effects).

This pattern of relative simplicity pertains to both life and form and the nature of interactions (field) between lives and forms (i.e., consciousness). "The closer the approach to reality, the simpler will be found the arrangement of the spirillae" and the simpler will be found the involvement or manifestation in terms of permanent atoms (i.e., higher lives are generally manifested through fewer and simpler permanent atoms). "As the permanent atoms become radioactive in due course of evolution, the result within the center is a marked increase of vibration" culminating in liberation (release).

All is (are) interrelated. All is energy (force) manifesting within the spectrum (dimension) of spirit-consciousness-matter. There are countless and diverse lives, almost all of which simultaneously embody lesser lives and are embodied within greater lives. The permanent atoms provide a crucial link as points of contact with the various forces (of each plane, planet, chain, scheme, system, etc.). Yet all of human manifestation, from the monad through the soul on its

several levels (atma-buddhi-manas) to the personality (on mental, emotional, and physical levels) remains within the lowest cosmic plane of manifestation (i.e., the cosmic physical).

There are (at least) three major components (dimensions) to the solar (cosmic physical) manifestation (via permanent atoms): logoic (schematic) lives, planar lives, and ray lives. The various planar and ray lives serve, from the human perspective, primarily to qualify the various schematic lives in the various cycles of manifestation. The various logoic (schematic) lives include the solar logos, the planetary logoi, the lives responsible for (and manifesting as) each globe, chain, kingdom, lifewave, race, species, etc. The closer any of these lives are to their source, the simpler is their constitution and manifestation (considering composite structure (relative complexity) to be consequential).

The (initial) creative impulse of any manifestation (or cycle) is relatively simple albeit qualified with (generalized) purpose. That impulse induces successive ripples of increasing complexity (structure) (dynamics) as its effects become secondary causes and as the various effects interact with each other. Yet the pattern per se remains relatively simple. Thus those who study the world of effects (e.g., the material world) generally see diversity and complexity. With some measure of insight, the patterns are perceived and the beauty (simplicity) is progressively realized. As man (humanity) evolves, he becomes more (better) integrated (holistic) (and his energies more coherent and consistent) and eventually aligned with the greater (the soul) (ultimately, the monad). As this (evolution) proceeds, forces are resolved or balanced, and the various permanent atoms fully developed (utilized) (and ultimately overcome or dissolved).

The Egoic Lotus

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division C) concludes with consideration of the Egoic lotus (where "Egoic" refers to the soul, not to the ego or personality). The lotus represents a more proper view of the causal body, from the point of view of its own plane and the perspective of cosmic fire. Human evolution proceeds (from this point of view) through seven (ten) chakras or energy centers of which the three main centers are (1) the head, relating to the monad and the first aspect or ray (spirit), (2) the heart, relating to the soul and the second aspect or ray (consciousness), and (3) the throat, relating to the personality and the third aspect or ray (matter).

These three paramount centers "eventually synthesize the other four (seven), or absorb their force or energy" producing "their eventual obscuration" or dissolution. Greater and lesser correspondences relate to these three centers and the evolutionary process of their resolution. As each center is properly developed (as a consequence of experience (evolution) and quality (not as a consequence of artificial development) it becomes better able to link with (relate to) the underlying vitalizing ray and logocic aspects. These centers are the "focal points of active force, manifesting to the vision as fiery wheels or the flaming petals of a lotus."

The causal body is from the monadic point of view the monadic heart center, "a flaming wheel of fire within the monadic auric egg (embracing the five planes of monadic manifestation" and appearing as a twelve-petalled lotus. The central three petals are embryonic or unrevealed, while the remaining nine demonstrate as a fiery wheel of "nine spokes or whorls." Only when the monadic energy comes into direct interplay does the lotus become fully functional (in its twelve-petalled manner). The "nine-petalled egoic lotus unfolds each of its petals in groups of three upon the three sub-planes of the higher mental. Their unfoldment is worked out through the evolutionary process, undergone on the three planes in the three worlds, or within the three Halls of Ignorance, of Learning, and of Wisdom."

The first group of petals (knowledge petals) pertain to the physical plane experience and include a petal of knowledge, a petal of love, and a petal of sacrifice, for the physical plane. Through physical plane experience in the karmic field, knowledge is gained, love of self is gradually transformed to love of others, and low desire is gradually transformed into aspiration, respectively. The second group of petals (love petals) pertain to the astral or emotional plane experience and similarly include a petal of knowledge, a petal of love, and a petal of sacrifice, for the astral plane. Through emotional experience, ultimately, the pairs of opposites are balanced and causes are comprehended, love becomes more focused on the real, and gradual enlightenment leads more and more to group focus. The third group of petals (sacrifice) pertain to the mental plane experience and also include a petal of knowledge, a petal of love, and a petal of sacrifice, for the mental plane. Knowledge is gradually transformed into understanding or realization. Love leads to serving humanity in an increasingly selfless manner. And the personality is ultimately "sacrificed" to the soul.

"The permanent atoms relate to matter or substance, while the petals of the lotus" relate to consciousness and the "central nucleus, or the three inner petals" relate more directly to spirit. The unfolding of the lotus is progressive and varies by ray type (and other factors), but all are mutually interactive.

† Commentary No. 741

The Passive Mind

From one point of view, the development, utilization, and subsequent mastery of the mind involves the distinction and relationship between the concrete mind of the lower self or personality and the abstract mind of the higher self or soul, and the process by which one becomes centered in the higher mind and released from the attachments and distractions (thinking, reasoning, etc.) of the lower mind. From another point of view, that development, utilization, and subsequent mastery involves the measure and character (quality) of mental activity or process rather than the objective (concrete) and subjective (abstract) aspects of the mind per se. These two points of view are complementary and each conveys insight into the nature of the problem (process).

From the point of view of relative (and qualitative) activity, the first stage of mental development (experience) (expression) is that of the passive mind and is governed or qualified by the third ray or the seventh ray. In this first stage the emotions dominate and the person (not yet a student in the spiritual sense) suffers emotional attachments and strong feelings. In this first stage, mental activity is almost overwhelmed by the preponderance and intensity of emotional activity (without being aware of either that preponderance and intensity or the fact of being overwhelmed by same). Whatever thoughts there are (in this first stage) come either from or are induced by external sources (via (primarily) the astral (emotional) plane or (secondarily) the concrete mental plane) or (more likely) are induced by emotional activity in response to those external forces (impressions of the lower nature).

In this early stage (recapitulation) of mental development (experience) (expression), a person is necessarily emotionally polarized and relatively passive to external impressions, meaning that the person reacts (naturally and mostly involuntarily) to emotional experience and therefore lacks any real objectivity or even any capability for objectivity (i.e., the concrete mind (kama-manas) suffers and has yet to develop its inherent characteristic objective nature). In this first stage (which characterizes the bulk of humanity), thinking is a passive experience (expression) since one's thoughts (at this stage) are not really one's own. There is a net inflow of lower (emotional and concrete mental) energies and one is imposed upon by the (emotional and concrete mental) environment and whoever is active therein.

The problem, from the standpoint of the spiritual path, is that people at this first stage are passive and very easily manipulated. That manipulation is generally incidental since most people suffer the same mental passivity, but there is still a considerable amount of direct (indirect) and deliberate manipulation by those who are stronger mentally (but who do not yet realize the ethical conflict). Examples of manipulation include religious doctrine, commercial advertising, political campaigns, etc. In a predominantly mentally passive society (as all human cultures are today), the few tend to manipulate the many. Where that manipulation is deliberate it is considered a more serious imposition. However, most people at this stage are self-deceived and have no awareness or realization that they are not really thinking for themselves.

This first stage in mental development is nonetheless stimulating and conveys considerable and extended opportunities for (passive) learning (corresponding to involuntary experience). The real leaders of humanity do qualify the mental environment of the planet, but not to the extent of imposing upon the minds of humanity. Their qualification allows those who become responsive to embrace the ideas that will lead from this stage to the next.

† Commentary No. 742

The Active Mind

While the first stage is characterized by mental development (in the face of emotional preponderance), the second stage is characterized by mental utilization (in the face of mental attachments or opinions). The first stage is a very lengthy process involving the gradual cultivation of the mind (through qualification and karmic experience (stimulation)) and leads to some relative balance between the demands of the emotions and some basic abilities of the mind to process sense-impressions (while being rather biased by the emotions).

The second stage begins with that precarious balance between the mind and emotions, leads through a period in which the mind dominates the emotions (and the entire personality), and ends with some moderation of that mental dominance. The second stage of mental development, utilization, and subsequent mastery is that of the active mind and (that process) is governed or qualified by the second ray or the fourth ray (with the mind ever qualified by the third ray and the fifth ray). In this second stage the concrete mind dominates and the personality becomes integrated. Thinking (in this stage) results primarily from the evaluation of impressions and the mind learns to discriminate and eventually overcomes the emotions. As the concrete mind begins to dominate it acquires (mental) attachments (opinions) that induce or manipulate emotional attachments or strong feelings. There tend to be cycles (lifetimes) of questing for knowledge and understanding, times of reflection and assimilation, and times of more active expression of what one has learned or what one believes.

At its peak (illusion of independence), the concrete mind (persona) can be rather opinionated and impositional, potent and unresponsive to higher qualification. Those who are able to moderate this phase (due to experience prior to the current recapitulation) have less difficulty with opinions and avoid imposing their ideas upon others. In any event, during the second stage thinking becomes a very active experience (expression) and there is a net outflow of personality energy as the immediate astral and concrete mental environment is conditioned by the (imposing) thoughts (and induced feelings) of the active (probably self-centered), concrete mind.

At this stage (of relative immaturity and imbalance between head and heart), one naturally (albeit wrongly from a higher point of view) imposes oneself and one's views upon others, i.e., the active mind tends to manipulate and orchestrate those (majority) in the first stage and compete with those (minority) others in the second stage. This second stage is one of more active learning rather than passive (although one still learns a great deal passively) and corresponds to (active) evolutionary experience and expression rather than involutory experience. As the emotions are overcome and the personality is more properly integrated, one tends to think more and more clearly (and one tends then to impose that thinking upon the immediate environment). However, the second stage mind is still subject to a large extent to embracing or reacting to external thought-forms (without any awareness of distinction between one's own thoughts and those brought in from the external world).

With deeper, inner growth, that mental activity tends to become channeled toward more noble causes than one's own apparent welfare (i.e., the attention is directed away from self-centered value expression to more humanitarian values and causes). With further growth, the student gradually replaces discrimination by discretion and the mind and activities are gradually restrained. In this stage one ultimately learns reticence and the practice of non-imposition (and of course somewhere along the way some measure of humility must be embraced).

The Quiet Mind 1

The quiet mind is characteristic of the third and final stage of mental development per se (beyond which the mind plays a minor or incidental role (and ultimately no role at all)), that in which the abstract mind and intuition dominate and in which there are no emotional or mental attachments (i.e., no substantive emotional or mental bias and no opinions). The third stage is governed or qualified by the first ray (as the higher self finally imposes its (higher) will (need) upon its instrument (the properly and fully prepared personality) (i.e., as the personality is finally able to fully submit to the wisdom and quality of the soul)). While the first stage primarily involves development (experience) and the second stage primarily involves utilization (more active experience and expression), the third stage involves self-mastery and the complete qualification of the mind by the soul such that thinking per se does not even occur (i.e., thinking is replaced by realization).

The achievement of the quiet mind is a major goal of the spiritual student and comes only as the mind is stilled and the entire personality becomes fully responsive to the soul. It is not really an achievement or an accomplishment, as it is "achieved" not by effort but by allowance. The effort is required in preparation (as one cannot "allow" until one is properly prepared (refined) (qualified)), but ultimately one learns to allow the higher self to manifest as it will (and in so doing one ceases to exist in any separative or independent sense) (this is a "great" sacrifice as far as the ego is concerned but nothing at all to the soul per se). Thus the quiet mind occurs only as the ego is wholly overcome and the noise of the mind disappears.

The quiet mind is an indication of the perfect peace of the soul, of perfect balance between head and heart, between mind and soul, between God and individual existence (i.e., between God transcendent and God immanent). While the first stage is predominately passive and the second stage is predominately active, the third stage is predominately reflective and expressive only in the higher sense and on higher levels. The presence of the quiet mind induces considerable qualification on lower (etheric, astral, and concrete mental)

levels, but that inducement (induction) is not the result of mental activity or effort. It is, rather, a result of quality and existence (being).

In the beginning of the third stage, the emotional and mental biases are carefully qualified or programmed out of the personality. The resulting emotional freedom (third aspect) is desirelessness while the resulting mental freedom (second aspect) is selflessness (the first aspect is the ultimate object or being). The fundamental concern (in this sense) is the progressive embrace (and demonstration through quality) of truth (true service) and that embrace requires considerable refinement in the lower consciousness to enable the higher consciousness to manifest unimpeded by coarseness, attachments, distractions, ego, etc.

As the student achieves progressive refinement and overcomes the inherent bias of the material bodies (etheric, physical, astral or emotional, and concrete mental) and their natural reactivity to environmental forces (i.e., as the personality is fully qualified by higher impression (which is the same thing as undoing the material qualification and replacing it with more "advanced" programming)), greater freedom in thinking is attained (meaning that thinking becomes first unfettered, then primarily abstract and subjective (as in realization), and finally entirely reflective as the independence of the mind is fully overcome).

† Commentary No. 744

The Quiet Mind 2

In the (nominally) first and (primarily) second stages, on necessarily lower levels and through lesser channels of energy (and information content), the sincere student endeavors to reflect whatever truth he or she can sense or embrace. But that is necessarily (and heavily) biased by the emotional and mental nature (the noise of relative coarseness and relative self-centeredness) (or the noise of worldly absorption (experience) and personal expression (ego)). As the student becomes more and more refined (properly integrated) (more responsive to the higher nature), that noise is progressively eliminated and the student becomes more and more able to respond to (embrace) higher truth and in higher ways

(unimpeded by ego or personality considerations (e.g., unimpeded by feeling or thinking)).

This is not the lack of feeling or lack of thinking of earlier cycles (where the lack indicated inability), but the lack of feeling and lack of thinking that comes from having developed the capabilities of the emotional and mental natures to the point where they can now accurately reflect the energy of the higher self. As the capabilities for feeling and thinking are developed over many lifetimes the personality necessarily acquires a considerable measure of independence (noise) (extroversion) (or even spiritually unresponsive introversion (compared with spiritually responsive introspection)). On the major turn of the spiral following that development and utilization (i.e., the third stage), the noise is eliminated and the capabilities for reflective (non-distractive) emotional and mental expression are achieved.

At each major and minor turn of the evolutionary spiral attachments give way to new freedoms. Those who are emotionally absorbed eventually become thinkers. Those who are mentally absorbed eventually become intuitive. At each major and minor turn of the spiral, that which is closely held is recognized (even unconsciously) as unfulfilling, and the individual passes on into a new sphere of experience and relative activity. The major spiral is fulfilled with the achievement (more properly the realization) of the quiet mind, and a new spiral (beyond humanity) is thereby afforded.

The means of achieving the state of consciousness or ability implied by the quiet mind includes (1) refinement and qualification (initially), (2) proper (thoughtless) meditation and contemplation (in the intermediate phase of this third stage), and (3) illumination and inspiration (in the highest sense) (in the final phases). From the higher point of view, the human aura is rather noisy and coarse during the first stage (that of the passive mind), relatively noisy and relatively coarse during the second stage (that of the active mind), and rather quiet yet blazing forth (in its quality and silence) during the latter phases of the third stage (that of the quiet mind).

These means and measures of achievement are indicated in Patanjali's seven (six) stages of meditation ((1)(0) mundane absorption (not normally enumerated), (2)(1) aspiration, (3)(2) concentration, (4)(3) meditation (proper),

(5)(4) contemplation, (6)(5) illumination, and (7)(6) inspiration) (of course what Patanjali means by aspiration, concentration, and meditation (and more particularly, by contemplation, illumination, and inspiration) is not what these words normally convey). These words mask considerable processes and substantial adjustments in consciousness, leading ultimately to the quiet mind (and the light of the soul). Considerable insight into the process of cultivating the quiet mind can be found in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and in particular Alice A. Bailey's commentaries on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras entitled The Light of the Soul.

† Commentary No. 745

Custodianship

One of the more powerful of the lower (earthly) (material) drives which offers considerable (lower order) experience is the need or desire to own or possess things (money and/or property). Extremes in "ownership" exist from those who possess very little (the material poor) to those who possess a great deal (the material rich) (those who appear to be rich may in fact be quite poor spiritually and vice versa). However, these inequities only (seem to) exist in the short view (and are nonetheless warranted based on karmic requirements) and each individual will have ample opportunity at various levels of ownership in order to evolve beyond that level of expectation (i.e., to develop beyond greed, avarice, control, domination, manipulation, etc. (and all that these qualities imply)). In addition, being poor or rich is not so much the issue as how one acts (reacts) (responds) in the circumstances which exist (and have been created by prior activity). The attitudes toward material existence and whatever resources we are afforded makes a big difference in our effectiveness for both learning and contributing to the growth or (proper) development of humanity.

While most of humanity are involved in some measure or aspect of ownership or possession, that is not so true for the (proper) spiritual student. At any time, a (very) small part of humanity is appropriately comprised of spiritual students and workers, who are not necessarily rich (from a mundane perspective) and who are not poor from a higher point of view (and are not concerned about their own measure of material wealth or mundane status). Spiritual students do not (or desire to) own or possess much beyond that which is needed for basic

maintenance and performance, and thereby fulfill the earthly duties of caretaker (custodian) of whatever resources they are afforded.

In fulfilling the caretaker (custodial) role (in which there is no (worldly) owner), the spiritual student acts to effectively utilize (conserving, sharing, channeling, maintaining, or protecting as appropriate) the property (resources) in fulfillment of whatever aspects of the evolutionary plan he or she is able to perceive and (appropriately) participate in. For the spiritual student, owning and/or possessing something is merely part of a process to fulfill some higher objectives, and thus, it is not an object in itself but a means to some object. The (spiritually-motivated) caretaker (custodian) knows that (in the higher sense) nothing is owned (possessed), but rather one merely uses the physical vehicle (body) (home) (personal finances) as a way of fulfilling one's duty (dharma) rather than for one's own comfort or satisfaction.

As spiritual students (disciples of various degrees) are (essentially) custodians of the esoteric philosophy and much of the qualifying energies for humanity, and as most of the world's material and financial wealth is "owned" or controlled by others, it is more often the role of the spiritual student to qualify or moderate the application of resources than to participate in the ownership process per se. In either event (leverage or ownership) (and more likely some measure of both), the student is fully accountable for his or her effectiveness in utilization of afforded material and personal resources.

The accumulation of wealth or material resources without effective utilization eventually brings about substantial limitations. While the bulk of humanity may not understand ownership in the same sense as the spiritual student, the lessons of earlier experience allow the (proper) student to embrace resources impersonally and consistently with responsibility. Custodianship is (effectively and necessarily) a dynamic process, as the responsible student embraces the middle ground of moderation and balance between the extremes.

Territoriality

One of the characteristics of human nature is territoriality or the persistent attachment to a specific or generalized (physical or non-physical (conceptual, categorical, psychological)) space (scope) (territory) and the pattern of behavior associated with the defense of that territory or scope. Territoriality (attachment and defensiveness) is inherited to some extent from the animal kingdom and is related to the positive polarity of the human lifewave (vis-à-vis the deva lifewave). People are more or less territorial, depending on their relative character, ego measure, and (in its higher sense) a need for privacy. Territoriality is also closely related to possessiveness and separateness (exclusivity).

In each lifetime, the personality develops according to genetic (karmic) conditioning and exposure to the manners of the mundane world. That outer (psychological) environment tends to favor or encourage territoriality and the formative individual is normally naturally somewhat territorial (a formative personality is rather exclusive in nature (having limited extension beyond the immediate physical self) and primarily (even if unconsciously) concerned with its development and self-preservation). While being territorial is part of our (human) basic nature, i.e., how we have developed (evolved), it is (was) only meant to be a means of helping to achieve the required evolution (and as is usually true in life, one must then evolve beyond what one has developed); thus, territoriality is not meant to be an end in itself. However, people tend to be attached to their acquired characteristics and this affords more challenges in the need to overcome the attachments and permit further growth (expansion).

With evolutionary progression our point of reference (horizon) has progressively extended to include family (relatives), neighbors (clan, tribe, village, etc.), town, city, state, race, nationality, community of nations, world, and eventually more. The ring-pass-not becomes more all-inclusive (less exclusive), which means that the person slowly (and in a very limited manner) identifies more with the soul (real self) and less with the personality (the non-self). This process then progresses from the lower (limited) self identifying with the personality alone, to the personality and soul together, and eventually to the soul alone.

The transition from territoriality (in its lower sense) to inclusiveness can be a difficult time for the emerging spiritual student, for a personality-oriented identification can be quite difficult to overcome, particularly for as long as the personality is primarily in control. By nature the personality tends to be exclusive (restrictive) and any effort to be more inclusive (include more than the immediate) (the soul) will tend to be resisted both from within and without (i.e., the personality will tend to be defensive (reactive) (territorial) to any perceived external pressures and tend to undermine any internal efforts to progress along these lines). However, as the personality gradually comes under the (natural) sway (guidance) of the soul, the reference frame naturally extends (becomes less limited). In addition, since the soul is less exclusive and non-defensive (inoffensive), the ring-pass-not will naturally gradually extend farther and farther.

Some aspects of territoriality are yet appropriate in this world, such as scope of responsibility (accountability) and some measure of physical and/or psychological privacy, provided that privacy is not primarily defensive or separative. But as humanity evolves and consideration and moderation become the norms then even the need for privacy in the conventional sense is obviated.

† Commentary No. 747

Thought-Forms 1

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) is entitled "Thought Elementals and Fire Elementals" and begins with a consideration of thought-forms. The three basic functions of thought-forms are "(1) to respond to vibration, (2) to provide the vehicle for an idea, and (3) to carry out specific purpose."

"The whole object of human evolution is to enable the thinker to respond to every (meaningful) contact, fully and consciously." The principal "human thought-form is the one the soul creates through which to function" (i.e., the human personality (form) and its various aspects (bodies) are built by the power of thought (induced within matter) and are the best that the soul can evoke at

the time (quality, characteristics, and capabilities of personality being determined by the experience and capabilities of the soul (and the accrued karma))). The form (personality) is viewed as the external indication or manifestation of the thought-form. Similarly, the apparent manifestation of the solar logos is simply (more correctly) the systemic thought-form.

There are many types and forms and sources of vibrations that the systemic thought-form must respond to, including (1) those of the cosmic physical plane (pranic and akashic fluids and currents), (2) those of the cosmic astral plane "as they affect the physical form of manifestation," (3) those of the solar "emanating source" or higher self (and its relationships), (4) those of the cosmic mental plane relating to Sirius, and (5) those other external and internal vibrations arising from more subtle or more esoteric sources. The methods "whereby vibratory response is brought about" include "(1) the factor of time in evolution, (2) extra-systemic stimulation and intensive training, and (3) the process of initiation." The types and forms and sources of vibrations that the human thought-form must respond to are analogous.

"Vibration is the result of subjective impulse and makes its appeal to the subjective consciousness through impact upon whatever may be understood as substance; this impact is transmitted direct to the inner life and in due turn is retransmitted to substance in the form of recognition or realization. An analogous process involves the nerve reactions of the physical frame and their alliance with brain consciousness." In addition to vibratory response is the whole concept of incarnation (activity) (existence) in the sense of providing a body for the expression of some idea. The fullest expression along these lines is found on physical levels where organization, structure, etc., are most fully developed (i.e., are most complex). "As the logos achieves liberation from physical matter, the whole objective system will come to be regarded as an idea or concept clothed or veiled in more subtle matter than the physical." As man becomes more creative on mental levels, the (lower) sex impulses are transformed into higher (and the hold of the physical and emotional planes are lessened and eventually overcome entirely).

"The sex aspect and the whole process of reproduction is one which man shares with the animal kingdom and is based upon his animal instincts and his dense physical nature. When he is totally emancipated from the animal kingdom, and

the third (animal) and fourth (human) kingdoms stand distinct from each other, then the sex nature will be viewed in a very different manner. Creation will eventually be the result of thought impulses and not desire impulses. An embodied idea is literally a positive impulse emanating from mental levels and clothing itself in a veil of negative substance." These two factors are emanations of a unity (the coherent thinker) expressing purpose.

† Commentary No. 748

Thought-Forms 2

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of thought-forms. The utilization of thought-forms is in support of some specific purpose (being evoked by the will aspect (e.g., the will to be)). Several factors are attributed or related to the purposive nature of thought-forms.

The factor of identity relates to the source, mission, method(s), and objective of some "conscious intelligent existence." "All thought-forms emanate from a mind, are built for the purpose of carrying out some active work, demonstrate under set rules and laws, and have a definite goal or expected consummation." The factor of time relates to the grand cyclic panorama of evolution in its various stages and details. Time consumes three relative periods, "(1) the period of construction wherein the form is built, (2) the period of utilization wherein the form is occupied, vitalized by a central life, and employed, and (3) the period of dissolution wherein the form is devitalized, destroyed, and dissipated." The objective, informing life is spiritual (manasic) (elemental) for cosmic (solar) (human) thought-forms (respectively). The quality of a thought-form ultimately reveals its inherent purpose. "Each form reveals by its color (vibration) (direction) (keynote), the nature of the inner life, the quality of its vibration, and the nature of its goal."

The factor of karma relates to the effects produced by thought-forms (and the causes (considerations) leading to their creation). Karma relates primarily to those who are self-conscious and therefore responsible for their actions (feelings) (thoughts). In the karmic panorama (manifold) (causative chain), thought-forms can be either causes or effects (or both). The factor of the lesser builders (devas)

(elementals) (passive lives) relates the “specific purpose of a thought-form with the type (quality) of deva essence of which it is constructed” and the type (quality) of elemental life which is the “vitalizing agency of the thought-form.” “All of the kingdoms of nature are forms of thought; all have body, vitality, quality, and purpose, and all are sent out by a greater life than their own upon a specific purpose.” Thus while man is a thinker who vitalizes the substance (informing lives) of physical, etheric, astral (emotional), and concrete mental levels, the logos is a thinker who vitalizes the entire fabric of human evolution (i.e., humanity exists as a thought-form of the logos).

A number of questions are formulated to stimulate consideration of higher (logoic) purpose. “What is the purpose of the present solar incarnation? What is the purpose of our planetary logos and planetary scheme and how does it differ from others? What is the purpose behind the relation between Earth and Venus? What is the purpose of the animal kingdom as a whole? What is the purpose of the current root-race? What is the purpose behind the differing national forms?”

Similarly, there are a number of questions anent lower (human) practice for each to discern or consider. “In what type of matter do I usually formulate thoughts? What is the psychic quality of my thought-forms? With what specific purpose do I use mental matter? Do I work in mental matter consciously or unconsciously? Do I vitalize my thought-forms with a high or a low order of entity? Do I study the laws of construction and realize the power of the will to vitalize? Do I destroy thought-forms when they have accomplished their purpose by a conscious act of the will? Do I make forms which bring karmic effects or do I build those which go to the good of the group?” “In the study of thought, man learns the laws of being.”

The Dark Side

Inherent within every human personality is a dark side of the human nature. This dark side is rooted in the material and egoistic aspects of the human form, on physical, emotional (astral), and (concrete) mental levels. The dark side is further rooted in the ignorance (lack of humility) of the self-centered nature and the animalistic tendencies of the human form.

The dark side manifests itself in a number of ways, in attachments on physical, emotional, and/or concrete mental levels, in pursuit of self-centered interests, in self-indulgence, and in a wide variety of self-defensive, reactive, and egoistic tendencies. In one extreme, the personality becomes so absorbed in its self-centeredness that it allows the evil (ignorant) (self-centered) nature to dominate the waking-consciousness and all behavior (feelings) (thoughts). On more modest levels, these tendencies (vulnerabilities) are neglected or ignored (thus aiding in their overcoming). Yet, at all stages of (merely) human evolution these vulnerabilities exist in some measure or another and must (ultimately) be reckoned with.

For the spiritual student there are (at least) three aspects of the dark side, (1) one's own dark side in its internal posture (vulnerability to one's own materialistic or egoistic tendencies), (2) one's own dark side in its external sensitivities (vulnerability to external materialistic (egoistic) (darker) forces that find some resonance or similarity within one's field of consciousness), and (3) the dark side that others must contend with (in the sense of one being patient and understanding of others). Through self-qualification one can gradually purify and uplift the personality nature to minimize one's vulnerabilities to internal and external dark forces (egoistic or self-centered distractions or absorptions). But one must ever be vigilant or wary of one's own motives or tendencies. Thus self-observation and compensating qualification is ever the rule for the spiritual student. While the personality (form) can be disciplined, purified, trained, qualified, etc., it should not ever be wholly trusted (because of its inherent materialistic (egoistic) (self-centered) nature). And yet that (human) nature is a natural part of the human being and cannot be entirely eliminated while one is embodied.

The keys to one's own dark side (in its internal and external postures) are acceptance and self-qualification. One cannot deny one's own nature and expect to overcome or rise above it. But if one accepts it as a natural part of oneself (as part of the whole or integrated human being) and if one is sufficiently qualified and determined, then one can fully temper one's own dark side such that it provides only minor (minimal) (occasional) (transient) distraction. As one is pure in mind and heart (character and temperament), then the darker tendencies will be relatively lighter and will have little hold or influence. One is still (always) fully self-responsible for one's own condition (temperament), but with patience and persistence (and acceptance) one can rise above (and overcome) the dark side of one's own human nature.

One can likewise rise above the dark side of others, in part by realizing that others are similarly self-responsible and that their dark side is similarly a natural or inherent obstacle or challenge to the human evolution (conveying lessons by virtue of compound or complex limitation and weaknesses). One should not only be wary of one's own darker nature and qualify it, but refuse to be discouraged by one's own dark side and that of others. By looking for the (inherent) good (light) in oneself and in others, one strengthens or encourages that goodness (light side).

† Commentary No. 750

The Grey Field 1

While the dark side is rooted in the inherent material and egoistic nature (of the form or personality) and while the light side is rooted in the inherent spiritual nature (of the soul and the monad), human consciousness exists and functions within the grey field of psychological experience and expression that exists between the dark side and the light side. This grey field for human manifestation (experience) provides for freedom and destiny, for harmony through conflict, for development and evolution by virtue of the challenges and conflicts (tension) that exist in the grey field.

Every human being is subject to the impelling dark side of materialistic, egoistic, self-centered, self-indulgent, sensational experience and expression and

is simultaneously subject to the (similarly) impelling light side of spiritual existence (self-realization) and associated expression (service). But the balance between one's dark side and one's light side can vary a great deal from lifetime to lifetime or from cycle to cycle even within a single lifetime (and even from moment to moment for those who are less stable). When one begins the human evolution (from the point of individualization or beginning of self-consciousness) one is predominantly subject to the dark side in the form of the material nature of the human form.

As the human being develops through experience and expression (karmic involvement) (cause and effect relationships) (the lessons of life), the personality becomes stronger and begins to dominate the form and the person becomes more and more predominantly subject to the dark side in the form of the (self-centered) psychological nature (ego) of the personality (form in a broader sense). But in both of these early stages, the dark side dominates but not completely, for the light side albeit subtle is nonetheless present in the form of qualification, encouragement, and potential. The karmic forces ever impel one from darkness (ignorance) (absorption within the dark side of one's own nature and subject to both internal and external darker forces) toward light (relative freedom from the dark side, alignment with the higher nature) (closer to God, the source).

As one develops further one naturally (generally) emerges beyond entirely self-centered or self-concerned existence to embrace broader concepts and more humanitarian and spiritual values. Some however align more and more with the dark side and may become so absorbed therein that they fail to respond to recurring evolutionary forces and must be destroyed, and some however progress quite rapidly toward the light (truth) (reality) such that the dark side loses its grip almost entirely. But more generally the progress is gradual but definite, and the grey field becomes (for them as they progress) lighter and brighter while the influence of the dark side is lessened and minimized.

The grey field is thus an evolutionary panorama of conflicting opportunities (tendencies) (forces) that allow the human being to experience and overcome the darker, more materialistic and egoistic tendencies in ultimate pursuit of the lighter side and self-realization (relative perfection). All the various pairs-of-opposites must ultimately be resolved within this grey field. Yet no matter how far along the path one may be, for as long as one exists within the grey field

(incarnation) there is a dark side (hopefully subtle and not too distracting) and a light side (of spiritual encouragement) with which to contend. The choice is that of the mind of the integrated personality, yet the choice is, ultimately and necessarily, lightness over dark (as one passes beyond the grey field).

† Commentary No. 751

The Grey Field 2

Another way of looking at the grey field is from the point of view of the various forces and the characteristics, tendencies, etc. that are evoked by those forces. First of all there are the forces of manifestation that provide the structure (patterns) and basis for manifested lives. These are the forces associated primarily with the form (matter) and it is the identification with these (dark) (material) (unresolved) forces that is natural for the personality, its several bodies (dense physical, etheric, astral, and concrete mental), and the composite material (matter).

Secondly, there are the forces of manifestation that are more concerned with nurturing consciousness, the forces of evolutionary pressure and purposive balance. Identification with these forces becomes more and more common as the individual progresses in experience and evolves in consciousness (particularly in the case of conscious collaboration with the evolutionary forces). Thirdly and finally (eventually), are the forces of liberation (withdrawal) (fulfillment) which play a role toward the end of human evolution (both in the case of individual (group) ascension and in the case of the latter stages of overall (systemic) manifestation).

Thus it matters with which set of forces one identifies. Those who identify (consciously or unconsciously) with the material forces are much more vulnerable to the dark side (those who identify unnaturally with the dark side will likely fall prey to the grip of black magic). Those who identify (consciously or unconsciously) with the evolutionary forces (or the forces of consciousness) are relatively less vulnerable to the dark side and more responsive to the light side. In this context, ego is related primarily to the material forces and only secondarily to the more progressive forces. Another major factor (condition)

(influence) is the relative coarseness of the matter of the various bodies and the measure of integration as a personality. Relatively unevolved people are relatively coarse (their (physical, emotional, and concrete mental) bodies are composed of more coarse material) and necessarily more vulnerable to the dark side of their own nature (and comparable external forces (temptations)). Conversely, relatively evolved (properly integrated and refined) people have little coarseness within their form (character) (temperament) to contend with (although the material nature will pose more subtle challenges via the ego and its natural resistance to the evolution of consciousness).

Or in other words, we each respond differently, according to degree and measure of consciousness (character and temperament and values), to the various impelling forces. For example, in response to a stimulating external force one might be aggressive and imposing (allowing the darker side to manifest) while another might demonstrate cooperative or collaborative (constructive) initiative and non-imposing encouragement (allowing the lighter side to manifest). For those who are more self-conscious (relatively aware), the choice (identification or alignment with (self-centered) material or egoistic forces versus identification or alignment with more altruistic and progressive forces) is more conscious and deliberate.

Thus the spiritual student is one who stands relatively free from the dark side of materialism and egoism and who consciously and deliberately cooperates with the evolutionary forces, becoming a more and more effective beacon in the night of time, demonstrating through character and temperament and values (quality of consciousness) the bright light of the higher self (and God within) and irradiating the grey field with constructive (non-compelling) encouragement.

The Light Side

While the dark side is found both within and without, in the material aspect of the human form and externally in the manifested (material) world, the light side is found only within and beyond the human form and ego (self-centeredness). The light side of the human nature is just as inherent as the dark side, if not more so as the dark side is transient and limited to material manifestation while the light side endures far beyond the various cycles of human incarnation.

The light side exists within every human being (and within every living creature and within every atom of matter) (though one must distinguish between the (lesser) light of matter and the (greater) light of consciousness), yet manifests only dimly and in subtle ways unless or until it is cultivated and nurtured into more apparent manifestation (or more correctly unless the form (personality) is cultivated and nurtured (purified, qualified, trained, disciplined, and otherwise cultivated and prepared) to enable the light side to be revealed to the heart and mind of the evolving human being). Almost the whole scope of the spiritual path is focused upon the preparation for and ultimate revelation of the light side, albeit relatively gradually and progressively (incrementally).

The source of the light side of human nature is the soul or higher self (God within) (upper triad of atma-buddhi-manas) drawing upon (within) logoc resources (light, love, and power) and group context. The light of the soul is manifested on (apparent to) personality levels only to the extent that the personality is at least mentally polarized, properly integrated, and qualified (refined) sufficiently to be receptive and responsive to that light (and concomitant energies). Otherwise the light is manifested only partially and intermittently in temporary (partial) alignments or coincidence.

The light side is fundamentally important because light is the medium through which other energies and associated forces are manifested or revealed. Love in the higher sense (of the soul and spiritual nature) cannot manifest properly in or through an unenlightened vehicle (personality). Power in the higher sense (purpose, qualification, encouragement) likewise cannot be properly or fully conveyed without a properly refined vehicle. Untempered higher forces

naturally destroy or severely damage any relatively coarse vehicles with which they come in contact. Thus these higher forces manifest partially and subtly in most forms and more fully and more potently in the more refined and responsive forms (of properly cultivated personalities). Thus from the standpoint of the spiritual student, the spiritual path is concerned with the proper preparation for and the proper manifestation of the light forces.

One must rise above the dark side in order to more fully manifest the light side. One must ultimately overcome the inertia of matter on every level (physical, etheric, emotional (astral), and concrete mental) and dimension or aspect (form, personality, ego). In this process of progressive enlightenment (revelation of the light side), the role of the student is to progress through his own development, evolution of consciousness, and proper expression (service), thereby providing encouragement to the (human) race (and all lesser lives), and to cooperate with the evolutionary forces as they qualify the (grey) field of manifestation. But that grey field remains ever grey, for the lives to follow must necessarily need a field of challenge (not necessarily the same but at least similar in principle) through which to be tested and through which to progress and evolve. Thus the link (collaboration, interaction) between dark and light persists, and only the balance is shifted, relatively.

† Commentary No. 753

The New Age 1

“New age” (used as an adjective) is a term popularly used to describe a wide range of diverse elements from esoteric philosophy, theosophy, metaphysics, meditation, and yoga, to mundane astrology, psychism, channeling, past life regressions, and other “phenomenal” practices and interests. The term is often applied to anything metaphysical in nature. In actuality, little of what is called “new age” is really new except to those who were otherwise not familiar with the “new age” material or concepts. The more mature aspects derive from what is more accurately referred to as the ancient or ageless wisdom. Every major and minor cycle of manifestation brings “new” and varied conditions for experience and expression (learning, development, evolution, and service), but these new conditions are evolutionary and recapitulatory (in a progressive way) rather than revolutionary.

There are many aspirants who are caught up in the pervasive glamour of the so-called "new age movement." Due to the variety of groups and activities associated with the term "new age," such association often reflects negatively on the more mature spiritual groups who prefer to distance themselves from the varied flakiness, glamour, promotionalism, and sensationalism that has become common in the "new age movement." The relatively less mature metaphysical (not generally spiritual) groups attempt to "cash in on" (literally and figuratively) any apparent upsurge of interest in the metaphysical. The more mature groups simply endeavor to "do what is before them to do," to fulfill their responsibility (dharma) relative to humanity and the spiritual path without resorting to trendiness or "popular appeal."

While most all of what is generally called "new age" has been available to (qualified) humanity for centuries (aeons) in one form or another, there seems to be occasional popularization of and interest in the metaphysical and supernatural. This increased (periodic) interest is often inaccurately interpreted by sincere (yet emotionally polarized) aspirants as indicative of masses of humanity standing on the threshold of some major evolutionary leap forward. The spiritual student should not make such superficial appraisals. It is the quality of consciousness that determines whether or not humanity (as individuals and as a whole) is indeed nearing certain evolutionary goals. Increased interest in various metaphysical phenomenon may indicate little or nothing about suitability for treading or even approaching the spiritual path.

Progress in consciousness comes only as people mature in experience and realization, not by virtue of exposure to "new age" concepts (although one may be exposed to "new age" concepts as a result of progress in consciousness, such exposure does not necessarily (and does not generally) indicate any progress in consciousness). The real indicators are quality of consciousness (mental or intuitive polarization, a strong conscience and an unimposing nature, freedom in thinking, etc.).

There are many sincere and talented people in the "new age movement," but there are also many more charlatans who prey on others' naiveté. And there are many more who are sincere but wholly unconscious with regard to the higher truths (i.e., which leads often enough to the blind leading the blind). The

serious enquirer would well be advised to proceed cautiously, even suspiciously, and be wary of claims and demonstrations. The higher truths are not phenomenal, nor are they associated with self-proclaimed leaders or masters. Dominating or egoistic leaders are not indicative of quality of consciousness or spirituality (nor are large numbers of followers (members) (students) so indicative).

† Commentary No. 754

The New Age 2

The rapid technological advances of recent years are also often mistakenly interpreted as being indicative of the dawning of the “new age,” compelling humanity rapidly onward. It is certainly true that the recent years have seen a leap forward in scientific and technological development and sophistication, but this does not imply that the quality of consciousness of humanity has taken a similar leap forward. Rapid technological development has come about to some extent due to an intensified fifth ray influence working out through the current fifth sub-race of the fifth root-race.

Given this fifth ray influence, scientific and technological advancement is predictable, but in terms of consciousness, most of humanity is still struggling (and will continue to struggle for thousands of years to come (or more)) with taking that significant next step from emotional to mental polarization. That is the work at hand for this root-race, and the timescale of a root-race is far greater than most realize. Yet there are those who, caught up in the enthusiasm and glamour of the “new age movement” seem to believe that humanity can somehow skip over this step and forge ahead into intuitional (buddhic) consciousness (when most are not even mentally polarized). The current (fourth) round (cycle) is concerned with emotional stabilization with real mental development (polarization) to come in the next (fifth) round. It is only the current (minor) (fifth) root-race that emphasizes the mental development preparatory to the next (fifth) round of mental polarization. Thus the emphasis on mental stabilization is primarily for the pioneers within humanity (who ever must precede humanity by preparatory (inductive and preceding) development of what is to come. Thus (in this sense), the “new age” is not really designed for

the masses of humanity anyway (though the sincere and curious multitudes may benefit nonetheless).

Evolution proceeds ever gradually, one step at a time. Apparent breakthroughs or "leaps forward" are only superficial indicators. They are actually simply outer indications of gradual accomplishment or development. Even earth changes that appear suddenly are the result of aeons of evolutionary pressure (and only one (superficial) component of an endless causal chain). Anything apparently dramatic or sensational should be viewed with caution. Significance is not so readily apparent as many people seem to think. Signs are for consideration and discrimination, without assumption of application, personalization, or other presumed significance.

This is not to say that humanity (or individuals within humanity) is (are) not progressing. Indeed, the incessant flow of evolution pushes continuously and continually forward. "The heart of humanity is sound." There can always be optimism about the future, but with the recognition that the pace of humanity's progress is simply slower than most people like to think it is. Thus, the "new age" is more accurately viewed as just a part of a continuing (continuous) process, rather than as a unique or special period in the evolution of humanity.

What is needed in this "new age" is the patience and persistence to work constructively without glamorization or absorption in personalities, phenomena, or sensation. The real leaders of humanity work patiently and persistently, behind the scenes and without attribution, encouraging whatever positive and constructive endeavors and opportunities are presented in (to) each "new age" or minor turn of the spiral. The dawn (of new or improved consciousness) is continuous and continual (in its various aspects) and covers hundreds if not thousands of years in each minor cycle.

Cosmic Laws

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the nature and subject of thought-forms, and the role of various cosmic and systemic laws. The three great (fundamental) cosmic laws applicable to our (solar) system (by virtue of our systemic participation in the manifestation of the cosmic logos) are (1) the law of synthesis, (2) the law of attraction and repulsion (interaction), and (3) the law of economy. A fourth great (intermediate) cosmic law is (4) the law of karma (balance).

The law of synthesis demonstrates the essential unity or oneness of all things (lives, consciousness, forms) (objective and subjective) (abstract and concrete). The law of synthesis derives from (and governs) the integral (singular) thought-form that is cosmic manifestation, the "sum-total, the center, and the periphery, and the circle of manifestation, regarded as a unit." The law of synthesis (at this (cosmic) level) implies pre-existence and the differentiation (manifestation proper (the flow)) that proceeds from and within that pre-existing unity or centrality. In the broader sense, synthesis involves both the precursor to differentiation and the successor (which is integration or re-integration (with abstraction, assimilation, and (apparent) final synthetic process (union or reunion))). This first law (synthesis) relates to the will aspect or the first ray (aspect) of the greater trinity (the three cosmic rays).

The law of attraction and repulsion or interaction "describes the compelling force of attraction that holds our solar system to the (parental) Sirian (system); that holds our planets revolving around our central unit, the sun; that holds the lesser systems of atomic and molecular matter circulating around a center in the planet; and that holds the matter of all physical plane bodies, and that of the subtle bodies, coordinated around their microcosmic center." This law (attraction) (interaction) is, in the higher (cosmic) sense, a matter of purposive cohesion and relatedness, within the framework of manifested existence. This second law (attraction) relates to the love aspect or the second ray (aspect) of the greater trinity.

The law of economy “is the law which adjusts all that concerns the material and spiritual evolution of the cosmos to the best possible (evolutionary) advantage and with the least expenditure of force.” It “carries all onward, and upward, and through, with the least possible (practicable consistent with purposive) effort, with the proper adjustment of equilibrium, and with the necessary rate of rhythm.” The law of economy means that every effect (and every effort) is multidimensional, that all are interrelated in purpose and accomplishment or fulfillment of that purpose, that in the higher sense there is no wasting of time or energy or materials. This third law (economy) relates to the activity aspect or the third ray (aspect) of the greater trinity.

The law of karma (on cosmic levels) is “an intermediate law, which is the synthetic law of the system of Sirius.” It “predicates the (very definite) effect the Sirian system has on our own solar system” (and our somewhat negligible effect on the Sirian system). Karma is concerned both with balance (equity) and the fulfillment of evolutionary purpose, and is therefore adapted or qualified at the levels of the cosmic logos and systemic (solar) logoi. All of these (four) cosmic laws are related to the conceptually purposive albeit incredible abstract thought-form of which all of cosmic manifestation is but (yet) a shadow. The first three laws are fundamental and underlying. The seven systemic laws are concerned with activity and application (manifestation). And the intermediate law (karma) ties them all together.

† Commentary No. 756

Systemic Laws 1

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the nature and subject of thought-forms, and the role of various cosmic and systemic laws. The seven systemic laws applicable to our (solar) system are the laws of (1) vibration, (2) cohesion, (3) disintegration, (4) magnetic control, (5) fixation, (6) love, and (7) sacrifice and death. Each of these seven systemic laws correlates with the respective ray (of the seven rays at systemic levels), plane and sub-plane of consciousness (likewise), as well as with the seven planetary logoi and their relationships with our planetary logos.

The first law, the law of vibration, is “the basis of manifestation” as vibration begins and ends on the highest (atomic) plane (and successively on the highest (atomic) sub-planes) and conveys purposive qualification (evolutionary conditioning). Vibration conveys the “key measure” of light or fire, of differentiation and subsequent integration (synthesis), of involution (passive experience and expression) and evolution (active experience and expression). Vibration is the means by which energy (qualification) is conveyed on every level of manifestation. The law of vibration is “the law of progress, of movement, and of rotation.” It also relates to the utilization of forms (as in building, qualifying for flexibility or adaptability or cultivated responsiveness).

The second law, the law of cohesion (coalescence), is directly related to the cosmic law of attraction (via the second ray and the (2:4:6) relationship). This law affords the ingathering or coalescence of matter, “that tends to coherence, that results in adhesion, and leads to absorption.” The law of cohesion is “the basis of the attractive quality that sets into motion the molecules and draws them into the needed aggregations” and affords sub-planar manifestation (i.e., through differentiation and aggregation). It provides “color” for each of the planes and affords atonement subsequent to aggregation, form-building, and utilization.

The third law, the law of disintegration, “governs the destruction of the form in order that the indwelling life may shine forth in fullness,” and is related to the cosmic law of economy (via the third ray and the (1:3:5:7) relationship). While the forces associated with the law of cohesion hold a form in place, the forces associated with the law of disintegration afford activity (the adaptation of matter). In fulfillment (at any level) comes the (eventual) need to pass beyond (that) usefulness, and so this law (its forces) evokes the release of life (consciousness) for further evolution (and the disintegration of the form to permit its constituents to be made available for further utilization by other lives and consciousness).

The fourth law, the law of magnetic control, is “the basic law controlling the spiritual triad” or soul. “Through this law, the force of evolution drives the soul to progress through its cycle” of activity (incarnation), experience, expression, etc., and return (preparation for reincarnation). This law relates a higher self (on some level) to its reflection or expression (on its level) and the interaction

between the two. In the case of the human being, it relates the monad to its (coherent) soul and the soul to its (coherent) personality. It implies the coherent application of controlling or qualifying forces and their fulfillment (and feedback via assimilation). "It is the law of love, in the three worlds, that holds all together, and that draws all upward. It is the demonstration, in the (upper) triad (the soul or higher self), of the law of attraction."

† Commentary No. 757

The Four Aims of Life

Life experience and expression in the lower (objective) worlds of human incarnation (from the point of view of personality or lower self) generally consists of fulfilling one or two of the four aims of life, namely, in Sanskrit terms, artha, kama, dharma, and moksa. There are, more properly, seven aims, where the intermediate aims of artha-kama, kama-dharma, and dharma-moksa are included. The intermediate are important in the sense that most people consciously or unconsciously pursue one or another of the intermediate aims.

The first and most primitive aim is that of artha or the accumulation of material objects, comforts, and/or wealth. The underlying driving force for this aim is the animal instinct for survival. This aim is only really pertinent for those who are absorbed in materialism. Some rationalize their materialism (e.g., providing for the welfare of the immediate family) but by "spiritual standards" there is no need for such materialism. For the spiritual student, being focused on material goals is a great distraction, and for those who focus on higher, more worthy aims, the material needs (not necessarily desires) are incidentally and naturally fulfilled. Yet many of humanity function at the artha level, gathering whatever (primitive) experience may be gained thereby.

Many (of humanity) also exist and function at the kama level (while the bulk of humanity exist and function according to artha-kama in pursuit of both material wealth and (sensual) pleasure). Kama or the desire for sense impression (expression), the pursuit and fulfillment of pleasure or emotional experience, is the second of the four aims, and to a large extent affects most of humanity in one way or another (at the artha-kama, kama, and/or kama-dharma levels or the

tendency to function on these (lower) levels even when primarily established on higher levels). The underlying driving force for this aim (kama) is the (animal) desire nature and the overwhelming pressure of (astral) glamour and associated (emotional) stimulations. Most people are absorbed in various emotional polarizations and have minds and bodies largely overcome (biased) by the potencies of the desire nature. Kama is also the realm of personal (possessive) (relatively exclusive or self-centered) love. By “spiritual standards” there is no need for such (emotional or egoistic) materialism, as being self-centered in the desire nature is also a great distraction, although kama can be adapted or utilized consciously by the aspirant to reach kama-dharma levels (just as it was utilized unconsciously to reach beyond artha).

The third aim is that of dharma or spiritual duty or responsibility (in the lower sense, religious and moral duty, in the higher sense the obligations (discipline and service) of the spiritual path). While kama-dharma (the desire or aspiration toward spiritual responsibility) is preliminary to the path, dharma in the higher sense is the spiritual path. Dharma (in this higher sense) does not embrace either physical materialism (artha), emotional (egoistic) materialism (kama), or mental (egoistic) materialism (dharma in the lower sense). It does, however, carry the student above and beyond the materialism and egoism of the personality and into the realm (field) of the soul.

The fourth aim is moksa or redemption (spiritual release) and is only operational at soul levels. Those who “feel” a drive toward redemption are actually functioning on kama-dharma levels. The first two (four) of the four (seven) aims functionally involve only the personality, while the third and its subsequent (dharma and dharma-moksa) involve both the personality and the soul (and their relationship). Moksa is not a noble aim of the personality. The spiritual student should instead be focused essentially upon and within dharma.

Root Races and Rounds 1

The human lifewave is currently developing (experiencing) (evolving) within the conjunction (coincidence) (correlation) of the fourth round (passage through the seven globes or planets) and the fourth globe or planet within the fourth chain of our planetary (evolutionary) scheme. Humanity is expressed during this conjunction (of globe and round) in the form of seven great root races and their various sub-races and branch races.

Two of these seven root races are currently being manifested, the fourth or Atlantean and the fifth or Aryan. Somewhat detailed information anent previous root races (the first or Polarian, the second or Hyperborean, and the third or Lemurian) (as well as previous rounds and globes) is available through the akashic records (memory or nature) but is not particularly useful except in principle (concept) in understanding the scheme of races and rounds and globes. Besides, whatever is useful is generally incorporated in conscience (and in the genetic materials from which our bodies (physical, emotional, and mental) are formed).

What is more (quite) pertinent is an understanding of the concepts of correlation, qualification, and recapitulation (in this context of root races and the current round). The numerical (numerological) correlation of the seven rays (and their associated energies (character) and qualification (via planetary logoi and the ray lords) (and ray-planar correlations (i.e., the special qualification of each of the seven planes of consciousness by the corresponding (respective) rays (logoi)))) is paramount (in this context). Each correlation or conjunction implies substantial qualification or stimulation along respective ray lines (i.e., the type of energy qualification, objectives, and effects is so determined by correlation). In the current (practical) field of human evolution there is a triple fourth ray qualification in the coincidence of the fourth or Atlantean race, the fourth round, and the fourth globe, and there is a double fourth ray and single fifth ray qualification in the conjunction of the fifth or Aryan race, the fourth round, and the fourth globe. During the course of the seven rounds and seven globes are many recapitulations (of particular development or qualification), each building upon reinforcing the previous.

No wonder then that the fourth ray (harmony through conflict) (of emotional experience and expression) should dominate human experience at the present time (for the past and future tens of thousands of years), with some (substantial albeit secondary) fifth ray influence (not to mention the correlation of humanity as the fourth lifewave passing through the fourth kingdom of nature). Thus the great bulk of humanity respond primarily to the fourth ray qualification (stimulation) and are (thus and thereby) emotionally polarized (and with little hope of becoming mentally polarized in the current round).

For the bulk of humanity, the fifth ray influence is preparatory (anticipating the next round), while for the few (those upon the spiritual path) who are not so absorbed in the broad fourth ray influence (and who are because of their previous achievements more able to respond to the more subtle (advanced) qualifications of the next round) the fifth ray influence is an opportunity to demonstrate its potential (and so provide leadership). There are of course other correlations (single and double) that provide influence (e.g., the solar or second ray influence, the planetary or third ray influence, and the various particular personality and soul rays), but for the bulk of humanity it is primarily the fourth ray (and to some extent and for some the fifth ray) that drives human experience in the current era.

† Commentary No. 759

Root Races and Rounds 2

One must make an important distinction between racial body (form) and racial consciousness. The majority of human forms are, at the moment, fourth ray or Atlantean, with a substantial minority of human forms being fifth ray or Aryan. However, while almost all of the Atlantean forms exhibit (predominantly) Atlantean (emotional) consciousness, some (relatively few) people having Atlantean racial forms have nonetheless achieved Aryan (mental) consciousness. And yet, the bulk of people having Aryan forms are still Atlantean in consciousness. This is not to say that the bulk of humanity are not able to think or exercise some mental expression, but it does mean that the bulk of humanity do not really think (clearly) because of emotional and personal bias.

What this also means is that having an Aryan racial form simply makes it easier to respond to mental stimulation (it does not imply that the Aryan form has necessarily achieved Aryan consciousness). Almost all of humanity (in Atlantean or Aryan forms) are responding to fourth ray (emotional) impression or on emotional levels to fifth ray (mental) impression, while a few in Atlantean bodies and a (larger) few in Aryan bodies are responding on mental levels to mental impression or qualification. Thus particular racial form and corresponding racial consciousness are not necessarily coincident.

Although most people (of Atlantean and Aryan racial forms) are able to think or utilize their minds to some extent, they are nonetheless predominantly experiencing and expressing themselves emotionally and their thinking processes are substantially influenced (biased) (prejudiced) by their emotional temperament. The pioneers of humanity are those (of Atlantean or Aryan form) who are able to rise above the predominant fourth ray influence and respond primarily to the fifth ray influence.

These pioneers are of two types, those who lack the real quality of consciousness but are able to function mentally (more or less rationally but substantially self-centered) and those (true pioneers) who have achieved some real quality of consciousness and are able to more properly function mentally (more or less selflessly) and to some extent intuitively. The first type simply helps to pull humanity toward mental development (in preparation for the fifth round) while the second type (the spiritual student) helps to draw (some) people toward and upon the spiritual path (in preparation for even greater fulfillments (e.g., spiritual qualification of humanity)).

Another previously important distinction is no longer very distinct, that of racial forms per se. In early times, races were relatively isolated one from another and racial forms (and their associated characteristics and capabilities) were relatively well-defined. One could hardly confuse a Polarian body (racial form) with a Hyperborean or Lemurian form, for example. But with the growth (diversity) and interrelatedness of humanity that has occurred over the course of the last two root races (Lemurian and Atlantean), it is now not so easy to distinguish between the various racial forms (nor should it be necessary to do so). There has been so much intermingling of racial forms that it would (now)

be wrong to assume that a particular body (person) belongs to a particular root race by virtue of color of skin. What is vastly more important (in evolutionary context) is the level and quality of consciousness (which is not, ultimately, limited by particular racial characteristics (though racial tendencies and capabilities vary, they can be overcome)). Those who concern themselves with racial purity or supposed superiority (instead of focusing on quality of consciousness and encouraging all of humanity) are simply fooling themselves.

† Commentary No. 760

Horizons 1

A horizon is a range of secular or worldly perception or experience (in the normal sense of cultural or geographic horizons) or a range of experience in consciousness (in the more metaphysical sense of spiritual horizons). The two aspects are interrelated, however, as the mundane horizon may have a bearing on the range of less mundane opportunities in consciousness.

In the early stages of human experience the cultural or geographic horizons are fairly limited, both in the sense that people do not generally need any (wide) range of conditions over the course of a single lifetime (i.e., their needs for experience can be accommodated more or less locally) and in the sense that most people (in the early stages) are fairly attached to their family, culture, local geography, etc., and are therefore reluctant to embrace new or broader horizons. In the intermediate and later stages of human experience the cultural and geographic horizons may be substantially broadened (in the form of opportunities) as the pace of experience is increased according to the individual's capacity (and karmic consequences).

As the environment and opportunities of the world period (coincidence of globe and round) progress, they become relatively more diverse and (apparently) more complex. This coincides necessarily with the needs of more and more of humanity for more diverse experience and the need for karmic fulfillment that only such (apparently new or different) conditions can bring about. But there is a substantial difference between the needs of humanity as a whole (i.e., of the

bulk of humanity) and those of the spiritual students (pioneers) within humanity.

The focus of the bulk of humanity is upon experience and expression, of seeking, experimenting, growing, etc. through physical and emotional (and to some extent mental) experience and expression (i.e., via sense impression and sense expression). Thus, the horizons for the bulk of humanity are relatively limited to that context of experience and expression (and are broadened (superficially and appropriately) to accommodate more (apparently) needed experience and expression) while taking advantage of the pace of human complexity and diversity. Yet much (all) (limitation and opportunity) is driven by karma in the sense that the (apparent) needs and opportunities afforded are merely created by (generally) previous actions (behavior, feelings, thoughts). Thus the apparent diversity is not so significant, but simply within the bounds of karmic limitations.

The focus of those of humanity who are committed to or approaching the spiritual path is, however, relatively different from that of the bulk of humanity. The need for breadth or diversity of experience is less for the spiritual student. The need for general karmic fulfillment is also less for the spiritual student, as spiritual students are (hopefully more unconsciously) more concerned with specific karmic fulfillment and relatively rapid liberation from ordinary karmic bounds. Their real focus is more impersonal (the path per se and the relationship of humanity to the path (i.e., the unfolding evolutionary plan)). Thus to a large extent, on one hand, those on or approaching the path have far fewer (karmic) restrictions and therefore considerably more freedom (and opportunity) than the bulk of humanity, while on the other hand, those on or approaching the path have no real need for diversity of experience (as they are not primarily experiential like the bulk of humanity but are more thoughtful (introspective and/or contemplative) and service-oriented rather than self-centered or absorbed in personal energies and associated pursuits).

Horizons 2

While it is common (normal) to remain located in close (reasonable) proximity to one's place of birth (i.e., move little or not very far from one's immediate (recognizable) (safe (protective)) home territory), that is not necessarily true (need not be true, but can be) of spiritual students and the more mobile of humanity. A limited territorial reference (horizon) exists (persists) for much of mankind who are either in the process of developing the personality or have only recently done so, and the personality (the limiting factor) is primarily concerned with (psychological) self-preservation (i.e., maintaining the status quo).

Since personality-centered people are (usually) totally immersed in the support required of this self-centered entity, it is important, if not absolutely necessary to nurture the sustenance offered by the family, community, etc., and in the process maintain limited horizons. This need for personality support can (will) persist, even in extreme adversity, i.e., limited prospects beyond the status quo, which can be (and often are) quite bleak. Thus, the (unconsciously) perceived challenge (threat) (in not maintaining the status quo) (real to the personality) can cause immobilization (stifled outward expression) and undermine anything that might better the situation, in order to maintain an egocentric existence.

While maintaining the norm may be necessary in the initial formative, building phases of the personality, a time comes (hopefully) when the facade (the personality itself) is not needed, even if (especially if) the personality does not (would not) agree. This is the time when the spiritual student within comes to the fore (usually, but not necessarily, struggling (from the perspective of the personality)). At this time, when the personality is strong and in control, it will (must) (sooner or later (free will!)) subjugate itself to the soul. At that time, the individual becomes more an entity of the world (in the oneness of the soul), rather than of a specific, limited locale, or the ring-not-pass is enlarged to encompass a greater area (the potential always existed, as is true of all knowledge (evolution) (development) (esoteric now, exoteric later)), but the individual was not ready to avail itself of the circumstance. At that time, one's point of reference is not so limiting, but rather it is more comprehensive, encompassing more than seemed ever possible.

At this time, the individual is not locked into a limited horizon, due to personality restrictions (the need for personality support), but can move about freely, over a far greater area, being useful by way of service, i.e., the individual's roots go beyond immediate circumstances. Until that time is reached, when individuals think (are) beyond the immediate location (limited horizon), they are of limited use, for spiritual students must (and will) be open and willing to move (relocate) as and where needed, rather than where and when it is personally convenient.

This willingness (ability) to pass beyond one's roots is possible, because the individual has gone (is striving to go) beyond the limiting, constraining, exclusive personality. Under these circumstances, no matter the location, the spiritual student is at home, at peace, at one. While it may seem like a big step (i.e., the willingness to broaden one's horizons), it will only seem so depending on one's depth of personality involvement. If the immersion is great, then the step will (seem to) be considerable, but as one becomes more at one with the soul, the step will be of little (less) significance, as are all steps, once proper preparation (qualification) is in effect (complete).

† Commentary No. 762

Horizons 3

The spiritual student needs the ability and willingness to adapt or adjust appropriately to opportunities, moving (relocating) as appropriate based on understanding the needs of the plan (flow), as expressed by the soul (in service). This freedom from limited horizons is not possible if the individual is still immersed in satisfying personality needs, with its self-centered perspective, which is further hindered by the limitations that local support groups provide (i.e., family, friends, clubs, profession, etc.) (since they are all (mainly) involved in the self-serving exercise of the personality).

The willingness to move (relocate) based on soul qualification (rather than (often capricious) personality mandate) can be a considerable incentive to accomplish endeavors not possible with the old personality-centered constraints (limitations). In essence, it is a chance (opportunity) to leave the past behind,

and start out with a fresh, non-limiting perspective based on current (soul-colored) understanding, which is likely to be quite different than the old, if the individual has been practicing a reasonable spiritual life (i.e., meditation, retrospection, contemplative study, quiet demeanor, vegetarian diet, etc.). The spiritual student can immediately form (create) (reshape) a lifestyle at a (hopefully) higher level of awareness, which (at worst) may not have been possible in the previous circumstances (old surroundings), due to the (natural) apathy (of the personality) that existed when the old (previous) lifestyle was created.

When such opportunities are presented (occur) (more often than is (usually) recognized), the student will find it much easier to start out new (with a fresh perspective), than it would have been possible to change the old, for well-ingrained habits in the previous environment can be difficult, if not impossible to restructure, and it may take a considerable effort of will to break old (well-ingrained) ties (situations). In essence, it is an opportunity based on the creation (dissolution) premise inherent in the first ray, i.e., when the first ray extracts (abstracts) the essence from the past, it often first destroys the old forms (habits) (concepts). This is a difficult concept for the personality-centered romantic (traditionalist) to grasp (in its correct reality) (for nothing is ever really lost (destroyed)), let alone accept, for one may want to stay in the present at best (least), and more likely prefer the past, which is in opposition to the reality (truism) of evolution (i.e., we must be ready for (accept) change and be able to live in (for) the future).

Thus, the spiritual student looks forward to and accepts the prospects of change (relocation). Of course, this recognition depends on the depth of soul contact, which will then allow change to be interpreted as a positive, constructive (unhindered) step on the path, rather than the immobilizing, traumatic perspective (exercise) that may exist at the personality level.

Another advantage of relocating based on soul-suggestion, is that such opportunities offer (an almost) immediate (or at least more rapid) chance to maintain the momentum of soul-fulfillment and expand the service opportunity. Such opportunity is made available as often as necessary (more often than we normally realize) for the self-fulfilling spiritual student, the only limitation being the individual involved. Taking advantage of these opportunities is only

limited by how much (how little) the individual is in contact with the soul (out of contact with the personality). For the personality wants to (must) maintain the status quo to remain in control, but the soul must be in concert with the plan (God), which is by definition, movement, change, progress, evolution, etc.

† Commentary No. 763

Systemic Laws 2

The fifth law, the law of fixation, is “the governing law of the mental plane” and is closely related to the law of karma. While karmic consequences result from a person’s thinking, feeling, and acting (on mental, emotional, and physical levels, respectively), they result directly or indirectly from a person’s thoughts (or lack thereof), since one’s physical and emotional behavior (demeanor) are according to one’s thoughts (i.e., the quality and character of one’s mentality is reflected into one’s feelings and actions). In most cases, the mind is not a substantial or positive (constructive) influence on the emotions and behavior. To the contrary, in most cases the mind (thoughts) is (are) heavily influenced by the untempered desires and feelings of the emotions (astral body). The fifth law is concerned with “the capacity (potential) of the thinker to shape his own destiny” and to (eventually) stabilize and overcome (qualify) the emotions and lower nature. In the next (fifth) round, those who succeed in this (mental) quest will pass on to the next level, while those fail (who allow the emotions to continue to dominate) will be held over for the next cycle or opportunity.

The sixth law, the law of love, relates too to the transmutation of the desire nature, but complementarily to the law of fixation and from the standpoint of the higher magnetism of the mystical side rather than that of the occult side (both of which are equally necessary in the esotericist). The law of love relates to love on personality, soul, and monadic levels, from base selfish, personal (exclusive) love, to the more divine, unselfish, impersonal (group) (inclusive) love (and to true love which is merely analogous to what is understood by impersonal love). Under the operation of the law of love, love becomes ever more inclusive (all-embracing) (universal), and evolves from the lower (emotional) expressions to the higher (intuitional) levels and beyond. In the higher, more proper, sense,

it (love) relates to evolutionary motive and progress, to the balancing of male and female (human and deva) aspects.

The seventh law, the law of sacrifice and death, is related to the first, third, and fifth laws (1:3:5:7) and to the progressive release of life (consciousness) from the transience of form on the various (concrete and more subtle) levels. Each form is sacrificed in turn, to enable life (consciousness) to proceed with its evolution (having experienced what was needed in material expression). Everything progressive is cyclic and progress comes (appropriately) as the forms have served their purposes and are released to the processes of disintegration (enabling reformation).

The seven systemic laws (and the three cosmic laws) are necessarily encomplexed within the greater progressive, cyclic panorama of planes and rays and logoi, and of rounds and globes and chains and schemes. Much has to do with correlation or the (meaningful) coincidence of the various cycles and sub-cycles. As seen from above, "the rays, schemes, planets, chains, rounds, races, and laws form a unit, where the whole moves in unison and is geometrically accurate." Even the rays circulate (resonate progressively), under the law of karma.

A principle of mutation is demonstrated in this vast (patterned and purposive) continual "changing and shifting," through "an endless interweaving and interlocking, and a ceaseless ebb and flow, in the dramatic interplay of the forces that stand for the dual synthesis of spirit and matter." Each race demonstrates some correlation and achievement (preparation or recapitulation in the case of minor correlation, fulfillment in the case of major correlation).

Agni

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of solar fire (the fire of mind) and its relationship to thought elementals and fire elementals. In the context of our solar logos or (one) God (for all practical purposes on systemic levels), Agni is the lord or ruler of fire or “the life of the logic personality, with all that is included in that expression.” Agni is “the vitality that energizes and the life that animates, the fire that drives, propels, and produces the activity and organization of all forms” (within the solar context).

Agni is “the life and the lives” (the sum-total of the Gods) and the lord of the mental plane. “He is Vishnu (Christ) and the sun (son) in his glory; he is the fire of matter and the fire of mind blended and fused; he is the intelligence which throbs in every atom; he is the mind that actuates the system; he is the fire of substance and the substance of the fire; he is the flame and that which the flame destroys.” And yet, in this context, Agni is merely the personality or lower expression of the logos. But all of our planetary existence and manifestation is just part of that expression.

Agni is the energy of matter (fohat), the wisdom of the soul, and the psychic quality or emanation of the logos. But Agni is, from a more practical standpoint, lord of the mental plane and the driving force behind mental development and maturation through the various cycles. “All potentiality lies in the vitalizing, energizing power of Agni, and in his ability to stimulate” (consciousness). “Objectivity is an inevitable result of an inner, conscious, subjective life.” In earlier cycles the Lunar Lords (of matter) have (has) dominated the human experience and expression. Now it is time for Agni, “the solar lord of life and energy,” to assume his place (the significance of consciousness in human evolution).

Agni is the triple fire and “the threefold logos in a subjective sense.” On more human levels, man is a triplicity with each of the three aspects (monad, soul, and personality) in turn having three aspects. While “seven is the number which governs the evolution of substance and of form building in the solar

system, nine (three times three) is the number governing the (triple) development of the consciousness within that form. This is seen in the sevenfold display of logocic life through the planetary scheme and the nine-fold nature of soul unfoldment." As man is the microcosm, by correspondence, the evolution and unfoldment of human consciousness parallels (and contributes to) the subjective development and evolution of the logos.

Thus in a sense, man is an imitation (reflection) (microcosmic correspondence) of (to) Agni, viewed from the standpoint of consciousness rather than matter (and it is that distinction in point of view, from that of being absorbed in materialism (and egoism) to that of a being in consciousness, that affords the (slightly enlightened) human being the opportunity to relate more directly to the fires of consciousness and gain some measure of control over the fires of matter) (in this context, the fires of matter relate to the lower self or personality of physical, emotional (astral), and concrete mental expression). While Agni is a dominating aspect of the logos (with regard to consciousness, the life and the lives), he (it) is but that aspect of the logos and that logos is much more than all (apparent) solar manifestation in terms of substance and consciousness. Agni thus (with regard to consciousness) is better considered a significant and almost compelling perspective on (aspect of) the logos, but not as an end in itself.

† Commentary No. 765

Shiva

Shiva is the third aspect of the Hindu trinity (of Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva), the god of dissolution and destruction, the destroyer of ignorance (attachment) (worldliness), and God transcendent (the supreme reality) (total divinity) (the Absolute). In the broader context of the esoteric philosophy, Shiva is the first aspect of the trinity (of Shiva-Vishnu-Brahma) and the creator (in the higher sense) of Vishnu and Brahma. Shiva is considered to be beyond manifestation and not at all distracted by or involved in manifestation except (to some small extent (assimilation)) through its intermediary (Vishnu) and its reflection (Brahma). Shiva is predominantly indirect and subtle in its manifestation.

Thus Shiva is the first aspect when viewed from above (in the esoteric tradition), in the context of precursor and creator, from which all else (necessarily lesser) follows, and the third aspect when viewed from below (in the traditional religious context), in the context of (the aspiration of) manifested life returning to its source. In the context of the seven rays, Shiva is the underlying first ray (life) (creation) (purpose) (law) (precursion) (will) and the underlying seventh ray (manifested life) (order) (organization) (ceremony) (the field of consequence(s)) (but not the first ray or the seventh ray in any manifested sense). The pole of Shiva is the relationship(s) between the first ray (life) and its reflection in matter (the seventh ray).

Shiva is the creator-destroyer in the sense of (1) having purpose, (2) evoking manifestation (without being that manifestation) in order to serve and fulfill that purpose, (3) providing the fundamental, underlying rules (order) (organization) of manifestation (without being those rules or order), and (4) eventually (and periodically) destroying the form (forms) (manifestation) whenever and however the intended purpose is (incrementally) accomplished (or whenever and however the incarnated (induced) life has gone sufficiently astray (from serving the intended purpose(s) of manifestation). Shiva is the periodic forcing function (from which the cycles of Brahma are evoked) in a number of ways (cycles within cycles).

From the higher perspective, Shiva-Vishnu-Brahma form a hierarchy with Shiva superior, Vishnu intermediate, and Brahma inferior or lesser. From a more moderate perspective, the three aspects are equal, with each dominating a sphere or realm (in aspect or in turn). In this sense, Shiva is more remote and more subtle in its working (influence) and operates on a vastly longer timescale than either Vishnu or Brahma. Shiva works through Vishnu and Brahma (rather than more directly in manifestation). Thus Shiva provides qualification (of Vishnu and Brahma) and yet remains uninvolved in the working out of its energies (i.e., Shiva sets the stage (the field of manifestation), plants the seeds (life) and establishes the rules (underlying order), then remains withdrawn while its indirect influence upon manifestation (through remote qualification) enables the working out of its purpose, and finally (Shiva) withdraws (assimilates) the fruits of manifestation (as it recalls all of the manifested lives).

In the human context, Shiva is represented by the human monad on its level. In this (monadic) sense, Shiva creates Vishnu (represented by the soul on its level) which in turn creates or evokes Brahma (represented by the personality or form on its level). The monad lives indirectly through the soul, while the soul lives indirectly through the personality. When the personality has served its purposes it is released (dissolved) by the soul. Likewise, when the soul has fulfilled its purpose, it is released by the monad.

† Commentary No. 766

Vishnu

Vishnu is the second or intermediate aspect of the Hindu trinity, the sustainer (preserver) of manifestation (and of life in the (lower) worlds of consciousness), and the guardian of dharma. In the broader context of the esoteric philosophy, Shiva (the father) is the underlying spirit, Vishnu is (intermediate) consciousness, and Brahma (the mother or Holy Spirit) is matter (manifestation per se). Thus Vishnu serves to maintain the balance between spirit and matter, between cause and effect, between the creator (Shiva) and its manifestation (Brahma), and between purpose and its fulfillment. Vishnu is the aspect of consciousness, and in the case of all manifested lives, Vishnu (Christ) is the indwelling and/or overshadowing consciousness that animates the vitalized matter of the manifested universe.

Vishnu is the second aspect when viewed either from above (in the esoteric tradition) in the context of preserving or sustaining manifestation or from below (in the more practical religious or spiritual sense) in the context of evolving consciousness (and the spiritual path). In the context of the seven rays, Vishnu is the second ray of love-wisdom (underlying consciousness) and its reflection through the fourth ray of balance and the sixth ray of idealism and religion. While Brahma provides (is) a field of manifestation (a field of consequences) and manifested lives, Vishnu provides (is) the means of evolution and evolutionary pressure (through consciousness). The pole of Vishnu is the relationship(s) between the second ray, the fourth ray, and the sixth ray.

Vishnu is the preserver in the sense that it provides the connection or relationship between the precursor (cause) (Shiva) and the field of consequences

(manifestation) (effects) (experience) (Brahma). Without that connection (consciousness and evolutionary pressure through consciousness) there would be no activity in manifestation, nor any growth or development (evolution), nor any learning or assimilation. Without that connection there would be no means of qualification or manipulation (adaptation) of matter and material forces (and no adaptation in consciousness). Thus the connection (intermediary) is crucial to all of manifested life (and the field of manifestation for evolutionary forces).

Thus, of the three aspects of the trinity, Vishnu is the most important with regard to humanity (and the evolution of human consciousness). From the point of view of humanity, Shiva is sufficiently remote to be unreachable in consciousness. Brahma, on the other hand, is quite close (in manifestation) and provides considerable opportunity for absorption in matter (and mundane matters) to challenge and test consciousness and its ability to rise above the material aspects of manifestation. Brahma (matter) pulls human consciousness toward the material (including maya (on physical and etheric levels), glamour (on emotional levels), and illusion (on concrete mental levels)). Shiva (spirit), through Vishnu (the medium and underlying qualification of consciousness), pulls human consciousness away from the material and egoistic, toward the spiritual.

In the human context, Vishnu is represented by the soul on its level. In the beginning of human manifestation, Brahma (material forces) dominate and Vishnu (the soul) struggles to (indirectly) qualify the manifested (absorbed) life (personality). As evolution proceeds and progress is made through experience, Vishnu grows stronger (in its influence (not intrinsically)) and the balance gradually and progressively shifts toward spiritual forces (through the forces of consciousness). When the soul has evolved sufficiently, the personality is released and the cycle is repeated on the next higher level (i.e., between the soul absorbed in consciousness and the monad on its level).

Brahma

Brahma is the first aspect of the Hindu trinity, the (immediate) (apparent) creator of the (manifested) universe. In the broader context of the esoteric philosophy, Brahma is the manifested universe (all of (the aspect of) matter and the underlying forces of material manifestation), the third aspect of trinity, while Shiva is the real creative impulse (and first aspect) that results in (evokes) manifestation and the creative forces (Brahma) in (of) manifestation. Brahma is the field of manifestation (substantial existence) and the immediate (direct) source of light and the immediate (indirect) source of life (through induction, from Shiva), while Vishnu is the field of consciousness and the immediate source of love (indwelling or overshadowing consciousness) (through induction, from Shiva).

While Shiva is wholly detached from involvement in manifestation and while Vishnu is reasonably detached (indirectly involved), Brahma is wholly (directly, albeit impersonally) involved in manifestation. In the context of the seven rays, Brahma is both the third ray and its reflection (the fifth ray), and the four rays of attribute (fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh rays). The pole of Brahma is the relationship(s) between the third ray and the fifth ray as well as the relationship(s) between the first ray and the third ray (and through the third ray with the four rays of attribute).

While Shiva is the father (aspect) of manifestation, the progenitor of all that is (manifested), and while Brahma is the mother (aspect) of manifestation, enfolding all of life and consciousness in the womb of manifested existence, Vishnu is the son (aspect) or that which is born of the union of spirit and matter (i.e., consciousness) and that which relates the two. Thus Brahma is the sun (solar system) and the earth, while Vishnu is the son (consciousness) that overshadows the sun and all (of the children of God) that is (are) manifested within the system.

Brahma is the realm of effects and of the working out of (causal) (karmic) forces (tension) (law(s)). Those effects and law(s) derive both from higher levels (i.e., spirit in the sense of overall purpose and consciousness in the sense of the

interactiveness between spirit and matter) and from within the realm of effects (in the sense of being consequences and/or derived consequentially from higher sources) (and in the sense that effects are in themselves secondary causes or induce secondary causes). Brahma does not qualify. Rather, Brahma is qualified. Brahma is the personality of the soul which is Vishnu, while Vishnu is the soul of the monad which is Shiva. Shiva qualifies (indirectly), while Vishnu qualifies more directly.

In the human context, then, Brahma is represented by the personality, which is the instrument of the soul for experience and expression within the (material levels of the) field of manifestation. The personality is created (evoked into manifestation) by the soul within the substance made manifest by the monad, just as the soul was created (evoked) by the monad (more directly) within the substance of consciousness. Each (monad, soul, and personality) (Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma) has a role to play within the evolutionary panorama of manifestation. Identification with Brahma is identification with matter (God immanent in the lower sense) and (purposive) (consequential) material forces (i.e., involution). Identification with Vishnu, on the other hand, is identification with consciousness (God immanent in the higher sense) and the evolutionary forces. Identification with Shiva is identification with spirit (God) transcendent.

† Commentary No. 768

Seeking Love 1

Humanity seems to devote much of its effort to seeking. Some people are aware of what it is they seek, while others may be partially or even totally unaware. That which is often sought is some intangible feeling which may be identified as “fulfillment” or “love.”

Seeking fulfillment (as an end in itself) is generally done by looking to some external source, such as a career or another person to gratify the desires of the personality or the mandate of the ego for a superficial sense of self-esteem. The search for fulfillment becomes a search for personal love when an individual believes that he or she may find this fulfillment through an affectionate relationship with another person. The problem here is motive, of seeking for

oneself. The quality of love exchanged with this motive is not very pure and is often characterized by bartering (e.g., one person loves another to the extent that that love (ego bolstering) is reciprocated; if one person's affection or attention wanes, disdain and contempt often ensue on the part of the other). This lower form of personal (emotionally fluctuating) love is what most of humanity actively (albeit not necessarily so consciously) seek, without recognizing it for what it is (a lesser form of a much purer energy).

Apart from the problem of selfish motive is the fact that one person (with associated weaknesses and imperfections) cannot be truly fulfilled by another person (likewise with weaknesses and imperfections). And yet, people look to others to provide their happiness and self-esteem for them, to somehow make them complete. Within the mass consciousness of humanity there exists a relatively pervasive glamour of romantic love which suggests that if one can only find the right mate, somehow that relationship will be perfect and lead to "happiness ever after." There may indeed be a "right" mate for an individual, but based on karmic relationship or obligation (appropriateness), and not on a glamorous potential for idyllic bliss.

Aspirants to the spiritual path may further ensnare themselves in the glamour of seeking a "soul-mate." This search is little different than that of the non-aspirant seeking a companion or mate, except that it is compounded by the additional glamour of the spiritual path and the mistaken belief that one individual is mated on soul levels to another. Certainly, when the spiritual student is sufficiently evolved to be affiliated with an ashram, he will find the encouragement and support of brothers on the path of light and group co-workers (with whom much experience and work have been shared over time) on soul levels. These relationships do not, however, manifest in terms of personalities catering to the desires of other personalities. It is the service endeavor and group good that is always primary.

Love is a force that, on systemic levels, results from the cosmic law of magnetism and attraction. On these levels, it manifests as the attractive force between spirit and matter, a pure aspect of the quality of the second ray. On most levels and ways, love is related to polarity in one form or another. In relation to the spiritual human, love is the quality of the soul. It is through love that the soul seeks to draw the personality into alignment and realization. This

love emanating from the soul is entirely of an impersonal nature. It is constant, unchanging, and ever an inner source of strength and encouragement. Thus, the real "soul-mate" lies within. The true "beloved" is actually God relating through the soul of the individual, and the sublime marriage symbolically takes place between the positive soul and the receptive form or personality (which is negative relative to the soul).

† Commentary No. 769

Seeking Love 2

Love manifested on emotional levels is generally tainted by personal (selfish) desire. The personality absorbed in personal love tends to narrowly define (albeit dynamically) who it will and will not include in its projection of love and seeks or even demands a return of personal love. While personal (transient) love may provide sensual experience and excitement (feeding the coarser nature of the emotional body), it serves little spiritual purpose.

On physical levels, the attractive force (love) (sex) results in the urge which tends to unite male and female for the purpose of procreation. Apart from the physical sensual experience, the sex instinct has its primary root in the fear of isolation. Have not most individuals on this sojourn through the lower worlds felt the pain of presumed aloneness, and knowing not where else to turn sought to assuage this pain through physical and emotional relationships? This is not necessarily wrong in that it (the sex instinct) has resulted in the carrying forward of humanity through the provision of forms. Similarly, the personal, emotional love that characterizes most family relationships is appropriate to the current evolutionary state of humanity, and provides some (albeit limited) degree of stability. Physical and/or emotional relationships can, however, prove to be very distracting and draining of valuable energy. The spiritual student should endeavor to use his energy resources wisely.

The spiritual student should not necessarily eschew personal relationships, but he or she should exercise proper discretion in determining whether particular relationships are appropriate and harmonious with the primary (spiritual) commitment. While, most of humanity select a marriage partner based upon mutual physical, emotional, and/or (in some cases) mental attraction, the

spiritual student should base such selection (more properly, realization) on spiritual and mental rapport. A healthy physical and emotional rapport may be helpful to the relationship, but should not be the basis of it. Since there are (relatively) so few serious spiritual students, finding a partner with whom there can be a real rapport on spiritual levels may be difficult. The spiritual student should be patient and be without expectation, trusting that should such a relationship be appropriate, it will be realized. He or she should resist the influence of the lower desires and the impress of the mass consciousness.

In the search for fulfillment, the task before the spiritual student is to go beyond the level of the mass consciousness. The student does this by directing the focus of the search inward, by looking to the soul, and not to one's own or another's personality for gratification. Is there truly any other earthly being or thing that can compare with the magnetic attraction of the soul upon the awakened personality? This is the seeming intangible which humanity unknowingly seeks amid all the worldly distractions and personal loves.

The spiritual student should seek to love in a selfless, impersonal manner, rather than seek merely to be loved (which is selfish). The student can affirm that he will "act as a channel for compassion and an instrument for love until he knows himself to be love itself." In doing this he essentially infuses himself with the pure second ray quality (love) of the soul (thus, becoming love). He then radiates that quality outward to those around him and to humanity. This is done impersonally with no expectation of acknowledgement or return. The unwavering love, goodwill, and compassion that the spiritual student silently radiates wherever he is can be a very real source of subtle encouragement and help to others in that environment. In the final analysis, the spiritual student does not seek love. He seeks to be love.

The Fire Devas 1

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of solar fire and begins consideration of the fire devas. There are essentially two groups of devas, the greater builders or fire devas who are evolutionary and conscious (albeit not in the self-conscious sense of human beings), having (are themselves) positive (active) force, and the lesser builders who are involutory and (relatively) unconscious, having (being) negative (passive) force. In both cases, the deva builders constitute electrical phenomena (in its positive and negative aspects, respectively).

The two groups of devas (two types of force) are, in their sum-total, "substance in its totality, the intelligent active form, built for the purpose of providing a habitation for a central subjective life." Thus are they also the solar pitris (greater builders) (father aspect of humanity in the sense of the race (form)) (and likewise the lunar pitris (lesser builders) (mother aspect)). The human ancestry (in the sense of form) involves (is involved from) the initiatory (third aspect) life impulse or "that subjective activity which produces objectivity, and concerns those emanatory impulses which come from any positive center of force, and which sweep the negative aspect into the line of that force, and thus produce a form of some kind."

The spiritual student should thus keep in mind that each human being is (primarily, in the positive or active sense) a human spirit and consciousness and (secondarily) a deva life in consciousness and form, in the negative or passive sense. Those who identify with the personality or ego (the body) (or its emotions (or even its concrete mind)) are therefore identifying (in ignorance or lack of wisdom) with the form or deva aspect rather than the human aspect. Those who identify (more properly) with the soul can (eventually) recognize the cooperative distinction between the human and deva components (and even between the solar and lunar pitris) and rise above the illusion of the form (i.e., begin to live above the personality or ego).

The form (on any level) is created by the interaction of the positive and negative (deva) forces. The human being is essentially (properly) a positive force center

acting on the negative (material field). It is therefore relatively easy to confuse the human life and consciousness with that of the associated solar angel (greater deva). "An adept of light works with force in substance, viewing substance as that which is negative, and therefore occultly to be moved, and he can do this because he has (in the three worlds of his endeavor) achieved unity, or the point of balance and equilibrium, and can therefore balance forces and deal with positive and negative energies as appears best in the interests of the plan of evolution." On the other hand, "the brother of darkness, knowing himself to be a positive force in essence, works with negative substance, or with the lesser builders, to bring about ends of his own, incited thereto by selfish motive."

The greater builders are aware in their own (non-self-conscious) way of the evolutionary plan and the creative qualification (rules of manifestation). They therefore (always) act cooperatively and consistently with the plan. The lesser builders, in a sense like the relatively unevolved of humanity, are ignorant and unaware of the rules and proceed blindly according to whatever positive (active) forces are applied (and in some ways much like the weak (passive) (ignorant) (easily manipulated (through glamour or illusion)) or the strong (egoic) (egocentric) (yet also ignorant) of humanity are victims of external forces and/or their own (personal) desires and will).

† Commentary No. 771

The Fire Devas 2

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the fire devas. Man (humanity) is ever cautioned to "refrain from the manipulation of these forces of nature until such time as he knows himself, and his own powers, and until he has fully unfolded (realized) the consciousness of the soul. Then and only then can he safely, wisely, and intelligently cooperate (directly and actively) in the plan." Until then it is much better for man (and even the spiritual student) to work indirectly (helpfully and cooperatively) (without imposition). Those who invoke and/or evoke occult forces from the level of the personality work counterproductively. Those who rather seek union with the soul (and subordinate the ego and personality to that soul) are able to work productively by allowing the higher forces to flow through themselves

(rather than through (ignorant) evocation). Those who work forcefully on personality levels are (relatively) doomed, for the fires of matter are quite potent and uncontrollable on those (personality) levels.

“The building devas (uncorrupted by ego or self-centeredness) are the universal mind. They contain within their consciousness the plan logoic, and inherently possess the power to work it out in time and space, being the conscious forces of evolution. They not only embody the divine thought but are that through which it manifests, and its actuating activity. They are essentially motion. The lesser builders are more particularly the material form which is actuated.” In another sense, “the greater builders are the Holy Spirit, or force overshadowing and fecundating matter, whilst the negative or lesser builders correspond to the Virgin Mary.”

Those devas which form the logoic etheric body are considered arupa or formless, while those devas which form the logoic dense physical are considered rupa or with form (body). From the human perspective, the arupa devas function on the abstract mental plane and above (beyond), while the rupa devas function on concrete mental levels and below. The abstract mental region is therefore considered positive, while the concrete mental region is considered negative. It is the focusing role (medium) of the mental plane (from abstract levels through concrete levels to the planes below) (i.e., positive (active) (purposive) force focused through the mental plane) that allows (results in) “the formation of force centers on the causal levels, those force centers being soul groups in their various divisions, and the concretion of substance, or the building of the dense physical body of the logos.”

A significant correlation or correspondence exists between the mental plane (with regard to logoic manifestation) and the physical plane (with regard to human manifestation), the upper or abstract levels of the mental plane corresponding to the upper or etheric levels of the physical plane (and likewise the lower or concrete levels of the mental plane corresponding (analogously) to the lower or dense physical levels of the physical plane). In a sense, the human etheric centers correspond to the groups of souls on causal (abstract mental) levels. Prana, too, has its occult correspondence on the mental plane.

“The solar pitris and devas find their force expression most adequately through man and are the source of his self-consciousness, while the lunar pitris and lesser builders find their fullest expression in the animal kingdom.” The human being is, of course, a human soul (corresponding to the solar pitris) living through an animal body (corresponding to the lunar pitris). The relatively unevolved of humanity identify with the lower (lunar) self, while the relatively evolved identify with the higher (solar) self.

† Commentary No. 772

The Fire Devas 3

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the fire devas. The deva lifewave runs parallel to the chain of lifewaves that includes the human. The lunar pitris “are the product of an earlier solar system” and therefore do not represent a principle (i.e., “the physical body is considered no principle and the lower nature is considered evil” in the sense of having unresolved forces (residue) or inherited qualification not directly related to the current cycle (but nonetheless a liability and commensurate opportunity)).

In this context, “evil is that which can be controlled and subdued but which is permitted to govern. The positive can always manipulate the negative. When the negative line is followed and the line of least resistance to that which is no principle, is pursued, then we have evil.” In the earlier solar incarnation the lunar pitris or lesser devas dominated, while in the current system the solar pitris or greater devas are beginning to dominate (within their field). The mother aspect has nurtured the forms and associated lives and now those lives are beginning to emerge to properly won freedom (spirituality). Those who identify with the old order (where matter dominates) (ignorance and relative unconsciousness) are involved with evil, while those who identify with the new order (where consciousness supersedes matter) (relative wisdom) are involved with goodness.

The evolutionary process is, however, a spiral of progressive cycles within cycles. So although self-consciousness has emerged in most of humanity, that self-consciousness is still predominantly self-absorbed (in maya, glamour, and illusion) (in ego and self-centeredness (short-sightedness)). As man evolves

beyond this myopia, he becomes more a (conscious and worthy) participant in group consciousness.

All of this evolutionary panorama is contained in the thought-form of the logos (which (thought-form) is the (entire (manifested)) solar system). The logos is manifested on (practical) human levels in three ways. The first aspect is reflected onto or through the mental plane where the (human) causal body resides and man (properly) performs his work through the mind and (creative) will. The second aspect is reflected onto or through the astral plane where "materialization proceeds through desire" either as a consequence of emotional activity (in the lower sense) or as a consequence of mental activity evoking emotional (astral) expression (energy) (force) (in the higher sense). The third aspect is reflected onto or through the physical plane where the "thought-form appears in activity" or objective manifestation per se. That manifestation remains vitalized by the astral and (hopefully) more mental forces.

"All this becomes possible through the action of the devas who are that which embodies thought, and that which give it its separated energy, as distinct from the purpose which will work out to fruition as the form becomes adequate as a medium of expression." Much of the preliminary occult (spiritual) work and training involves improving or refining (purifying) (qualifying) (training) the vehicles (physical body, emotions, and concrete mind) to serve as effective instruments and learning the rules and practices by (through) which more serious occult (spiritual) work can be accomplished. It is only through such refinement, discipline, and training that the student in incarnation can rise above the ego and personality (and all of the lunar (lesser) qualification) and even begin to respond to the solar (higher) forces (of or through the soul or higher self).

Shiva Dharma

The Shiva Dharma is the role or responsibility (duty) of the first aspect of the logos. Shiva Dharma embraces life in all of its fundamental attributes and characteristics. Shiva is the provider of life and is primarily and fundamentally responsible for the orchestration of the various cycles (birth and death, manifestation and pralaya, etc.) and activities in the more fundamental (basic) sense (of existence rather than applied manifestation).

Shiva releases each first (greater or lesser) emergence from the Godhead, and Shiva recalls each (relatively fulfilled) emergence at its appropriate time and circumstances. It is Shiva that provides the underlying “life” behind and/or within each manifested life-form. Thus Shiva Dharma involves creating (inducing) and releasing (and recalling) each fundamental “spark” of divinity. Since Shiva is the first (highest) aspect, its manifestation is more subtle and indirect (by reflection). Thus Shiva Dharma is not properly concerned with consciousness (the second aspect) or with form (the third aspect).

Human life is (fundamentally) (merely) monadic. What appears within the human form is a rather dim reflection of the monad (while the human monad is actually the more direct expression of Shiva). The monadic life induced within the human form is “life” only in its fundamental sense. It is not consciousness nor is it the form in any sense (the monadic life that “is” the (constituent elements of) form is an entirely different (and much more primitive) dimension of Shiva-monad). The human soul is a more direct (but still reflective) expression of the Shiva-monad, but only in the sense of “life” (not in the sense of consciousness) (the soul is the higher aspect of consciousness, while the monadic life of the soul merely underlies that consciousness (as it underlies the form) (and as consciousness also underlies the form)). The monad (and Shiva Dharma) is only interested in (concerned with) sustaining the life (and recalling it appropriately). It is not interested in or concerned with the actual manifestation or working out of that life except in the sense of the overall purposive and karmic qualification of manifestation.

Shiva Dharma manifests as a network and panorama of sparks (lives) on monadic levels much (analogously) like the etheric web on the physical plane. All lives (greater and lesser) are linked (overlap) on monadic levels, sharing the same fundamental qualification (vibration) (energy) of life, without mutual tension. The only tension that exists or manifests on monadic levels is the tension of the existence of Shiva (relative to its non-existent or absolute (unmanifested) state). The Shiva-energy is thus equally available and shared by all indiscriminately on monadic levels. On reflective levels, however, there is considerable discrimination as cause and effect (karma) is worked out. But on the more fundamental levels of existence there is only (one) life and no conditioning or qualification.

Shiva is the precursor. Thus Shiva Dharma is precursive (precursion). In the sense of life Shiva Dharma is directly concerned with ordered existence (and associated rules). In the sense of consciousness Shiva Dharma is concerned (indirectly) with assimilation (and the rules of assimilation). In the sense of form Shiva Dharma is (even less directly) concerned with appropriation and utilization (and dissolution). Shiva is not really concerned with learning (as is Vishnu). But Shiva (and Shiva Dharma) is concerned with the growth of the spark into more fiery manifestation (substance). Thus Shiva Dharma is the fanning of the flames of existence (through the intermediary of consciousness (learning) and the reflection into matter), and the conveyance of life.

† Commentary No. 774

Vishnu Dharma

The Vishnu Dharma is the role or responsibility (duty) of the second aspect of the logos. Vishnu Dharma embraces consciousness (the reflection of life in its intermediacy) in all of its attributes and characteristics and workings. Vishnu is the provider of consciousness and is primarily responsible for its manifestation and growth (expansion) (higher qualification). While Shiva is concerned with manifestation in the higher precursive sense and while Brahma is concerned with manifestation in the lower more practical sense (i.e., its working out), Vishnu is concerned with linking the two aspects of manifestation (spirit and matter) (life and form) intelligently and purposively.

Vishnu is both the provider of consciousness and consciousness (*per se*). Vishnu Dharma involves all of the intermediate aspects of manifestation, of cause and effect relationships, of qualification for the stimulation, growth, refinement, and expansion of consciousness, of preserving or sustaining manifestation to afford the working out of whatever precursive qualifications there may be (i.e., each cycle of manifestation has certain goals or objectives to be achieved in consciousness (not in matter nor in spirit)). In a sense, Vishnu is dharma (and Vishnu Dharma is dharma dharma) and thus links all of conscious and unconscious manifestation together, on its level, with and/or through responsibility (duty). Vishnu is also the spiritual path in all its glory (and Vishnu Dharma is properly and primarily fulfilled in the context of that path for all lives (consciousness)). The Vishnu Dharma is evolutionary pressure in all its aspects and attributes and working out.

Human life is (practically) the combination and interaction of the personality (lesser and lower) consciousness and the soul (greater and higher) consciousness. What appears at these two levels is primarily consciousness expressed through the respective forms (i.e., the causal body of the soul and the (integrated or otherwise) form of the personality (the concrete mind, emotions (astral body), and physical-etheric body)). The Vishnu Dharma is expressed (fulfilled) on human levels via the experience that takes place on personality levels and the learning and assimilation of experience that takes place on or nearer soul levels. While Shiva and Brahma involve karma in the more fundamental sense, Vishnu involves karma in the more practical sense of involvement and learning (assimilation).

Vishnu Dharma is the conveyance and qualification of consciousness. While Shiva Dharma manifests as a network and panorama of (fundamental) lives, Vishnu Dharma manifests as a network of distributed and interacting consciousness. While Shiva is non-discriminatory and Brahma is discrimination (in its primitive sense), Vishnu is moderation and the application of wisdom. Thus Vishnu Dharma is concerned with balance and adjustment, of moderation and modification, of refinement and harmonization, of growth and assimilation. The individual lives (consciousness) within the second aspect are not important fundamentally (as individual lives) but are (much more) significant collectively. Vishnu is the expression in consciousness of the logos.

Thus all lives (as consciousness) are part of Vishnu and subject to Vishnu Dharma, and fulfillment is primarily collective, as the individual and group contributions are balanced and blended together on behalf of the greater life.

While Shiva-energy (life) consists of the sparks of electric (monadic) fire, Vishnu-energy (consciousness) consists of the flames of magnetic (solar) fire. The soul is the ultimate (human) arbiter of consciousness and the link to Vishnu Dharma. All human lives participate more or less directly in Vishnu Dharma.

† Commentary No. 775

Brahma Dharma

The Brahma Dharma is the role or responsibility (duty) of the third aspect of the logos. Brahma Dharma embraces the form (matter) (material existence or manifestation) (the reflection of life in its more fundamental sense) in all of its attributes and characteristics and workings. While Vishnu is concerned with the field (medium) of manifestation, Brahma is concerned with manifestation proper. It is Brahma Dharma that results in the working out of the various creative impulses and provides the opportunities for the emergence and cultivation of consciousness (but not the actual work of consciousness which is the assimilation of experience).

The entire panorama of deva life is largely orchestrated within the Brahma Dharma (while the workings of the human evolution (and the greater devas) are primarily within the Vishnu Dharma). Where Vishnu is concerned with the wisdom aspect of karma (i.e., actual learning and assimilation), Brahma is concerned with the registration (enforcement) (resolution or fulfillment in manifestation) of karma. Thus Brahma Dharma is evolutionary pressure at its most basic level (material manifestation), while Vishnu Brahma is evolutionary pressure in actual consciousness. It is Brahma Dharma that embraces the development and cultivation and utilization of all forms (in response to the stimulation (creative and destructive impulses) provided by Shiva).

In a sense, Shiva is the God of the monad (spirit), while Vishnu is the God of the soul (consciousness), and while Brahma is the God of the personality (form)

(matter). In this sense, those who identify with Brahma (the Holy Spirit) are thereby identifying with the form aspect of life, with the personality (ego), the material world (and the working out of forces in the material world) (and mundane or personal matters), and things which are beneath the evolutionary field (which is counterproductive for those who are on the spiritual path). Similarly, those who identify with Vishnu (Christ) are thereby identifying with the soul and the evolution of consciousness (and the spiritual path). And those who identify with Shiva (the Father) are thereby identifying with the monad and things that are beyond the evolutionary field (which is counterproductive for those in incarnation).

Human life is (practically) the combination and interaction of the personality (lesser and lower) consciousness and the soul (greater and higher) consciousness. Those who live as personalities are governed by the Brahma Dharma and therefore are very much subject to external (material (etheric, astral, and concrete mental)) forces (and the rules of worldly existence). Those who live within the influence of the soul (who have predominantly risen above the personality) are governed by the Vishnu Dharma (the responsibilities and associated rules of the path). While assimilation of experience is a matter of consciousness (Vishnu), experience per se and absorption in the mundane world are matters of form (Brahma).

In the higher sense, the Brahma Dharma embraces enlightenment (and the conveyance of light) while the Vishnu Dharma embraces realization (and self-realization) (and the conveyance of love-wisdom). Brahma Dharma manifests through the (differentiation and) manifold of forms and the fanning of the internal fires. Vishnu Dharma embraces the solar fire and the blending of the internal fires. And Shiva Dharma embraces the electric fire and the final abstraction of the solar fire. Although the responsibilities (dharma) differ in many respects, the three aspects of the logos (Shiva-Vishnu-Brahma) are ever ultimately complementary and fully coordinated.

Mundane Realization 1

Realization in the lower sense is the action of realizing or the state of being realized. To realize is to bring into existence (at whatever level) (both in an exoteric and esoteric sense), to cause to seem real, make appear real, to conceive as real, or to be fully aware of. The ability to realize (create) (at any level) is a common, natural, and necessary part of (experiencing) (evolving) life (existence), and it is a considerable part of differentiating man from the life-forms of the other kingdoms (exoteric and esoteric).

In the early part of personality-dominated incarnations (lives), the realization process is mostly self-centered (appropriate at that stage of evolution), and more concerned with self-indulgent activities, interests, and personal comfort. However, with increasing higher-order awareness, the process becomes (more) centered beyond the personal "I" (and increasingly affected and effected by the influence or qualification of the soul), and less personal (more service oriented) considerations are evoked. While it may be (usually is) some time (incarnations) before the soul is able to guide consciousness away from the personality-oriented self to the greater (higher) self, in time, under the unending (gentle) (pervasive) (appropriate) guidance of the soul, the lower self comes into coherence (cooperation) with the (evolutionary) plan.

In the course of evolution, the student (spiritual) (of life) (man) makes innumerable realizations, which is another way of saying that evolution (life) (progress) is occurring. One of the more meaningful (significant) (consciousness expanding) realizations a spiritual student makes in this process is the (higher-order) recognition of living in but not of the mundane world. With this realization, the spiritual student participates in incarnation only as required to achieve the necessities of life, and otherwise, he exists on the periphery of incarnation (or beyond) to accomplish the more meaningful (esoteric) (service) duties in response to a higher calling. This realization is often compelling to the spiritual student, resulting from the student's awareness of not wanting anything in the lower, mundane world (as an end in itself) (illusion). Furthermore, the student eventually realizes that he (she) may not even like (care for) (look forward to) earthly existence, especially with regard to the

quality of life that one is expected to live at this level (time) of consciousness (i.e., primarily a physical and/or emotional existence).

The realization of relative disinterest in mundane life may be (forcefully) (meaningfully) (appropriately) brought to consciousness in a context, such as “What am I doing here (in earthly life (existence))?” Or, the recognition may take the form of the (sinking) feeling (from a personality perspective) of “Is this all there is (or, surely there is more?)?” This realization (awareness) (however perceived) generally occurs when the lower (personality) self is reasonably well integrated and beginning to be qualified by the higher self (soul), and only then after the refining process has occurred over a reasonable (necessary) period of time.

Under these circumstances of higher-order (necessary) (appropriate) qualification, the process may be thought of as a (normal) transitory (initiatory) step (test) (trial) on the (unending) (spiral) path (of life). If the step (call) is not taken it probably indicates a lack of (personality) readiness (qualification) to willingly cooperate (subjugate the lower self) to the higher (inevitable) principle of the soul. However, in the way of evolution, appropriate circumstances will be recurringly evoked (as called for), so that the next step (for those called) may be taken.

† Commentary No. 777

Mundane Realization 2

The process of being able to realize (understand the (true) meaning behind) the concept of living “in” but not “of” this world is usually (potentially) (often) a precursor of the personality sublimating (or beginning to sublimate) itself to the soul. While the actual process is not (need not be) difficult (it is really quite natural) (i.e., life to death and vice versa (death of the personality but greater awareness of the soul (life))), making the step can involve a period of conflict (turmoil) (upheaval) for the student in (during the) transition period (due to personality resistance).

As part of the realization process, considerable procrastination and rationalization (concrete mental, reactive avenues of expression) (used to

undermine the process) can be (unnecessarily) invoked by the personality to defend its (supposed) domain of control (sovereignty). This reactivity occurs because the personality perceives the situation as a loss of control (which is contrary to its normal position of dominance, unless the lower-self is reasonably soul-qualified). In this process, besides loss of control, the personality fears letting go of the familiar (as to the unfamiliar, greater self), again because the process of soul-infusion is incomplete and/or the personality is still quite powerful and resistant to (necessary) (appropriate) change.

The realization process (of “What am I doing here (in mundane existence)?”) can occur even if the familiar (world of the personality (interaction with other personalities)) is undesired (without attraction) (as is quite possible at this stage of individual evolution). Under these circumstances, the personality is (probably) playing games (invoking “lip service” to accepting the situation (i.e., “apparently” transferring control from the lower (personality) to the higher self (soul)) without really meaning it) (as the personality is wont to do), being not willing (unable) (temporarily) to take the next logical step (i.e., make the necessary commitment).

Basically, the conflict of control (only from the perspective of the personality) (the soul does not act (is not responsive) at this level) comes down to believing what one means (what one thinks one means), being firm in one’s conviction (as possible) (yet hopefully without attachment), and being able to act accordingly in a consistent, sustained (higher-referenced) manner. While this realization may (seemingly) involve a difficult transition period (initially), if the mundane (false) (illusionary) existence created by (for) the personality holds no real meaning (attraction) and mainly entails only circumstances of disinterest, is there really any choice?

If the realization (awareness) (in consciousness) exists based on soul-infusion or qualification (i.e., the apprehension of the (new) higher world is considered in lieu of disinterest in the mundane world combined with a real interest in service (the motive of the soul)), the realization process will (readily) evoke or involve the accepted (all-inclusive) consciousness, once the inevitable, all-illuminating (non-threatening to the personality) realization (of not really wanting to be either in or of this world) naturally floods and (positively) infuses (fully qualifies) (is embraced by) the lower self. All of this suggests that rather than

fighting the situation (a normal personality reaction), the spiritual student should instead endeavor to accept (the natural) world of the soul, especially if the alternative (lower world existence) no longer holds its previous attraction and access to the higher world is warranted (appropriate).

† Commentary No. 778

The Fire Devas 4

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the fire devas. "They are the devas who are the dual force-substance of the lowest cosmic plane, the cosmic physical" which includes the seven planes of consciousness within the field of human endeavors and aspirations and particularly the three worlds of principal concern from the standpoint of manifestation and human experience (i.e., the dense physical and etheric, the astral or emotional, and the concrete mental) (the worlds of form). In these lesser realms devas embrace both force and substance and are the "automatic, subconscious builders" of (objective) manifestation.

"The hope for the devas and for the form aspect lies in the fact that each of the sub-planes of the cosmic physical plane comes under the direct influence of cosmic forces, originating on the six other cosmic planes." This refers to the relationship that exists between each plane of consciousness and its correspondent on greater and lesser levels. For example, there is a relationship between the (systemic) astral or emotional plane (of human activity) (which is an etheric sub-plane from the perspective of the cosmic physical) and the cosmic astral. Similarly, there is a relationship between the so-called "liquid" sub-plane of the (human) physical plane and the astral or emotional plane of human expression. The higher relations, with cosmic planes beyond the cosmic physical, are beyond human experience (and even beyond "human" potential) and so the effects of those relationships are perceived to be rather subtle and properly indescribable.

The force from cosmic mental levels appears to vitalize the manasic permanent atoms, animating the aggregations of causal bodies, and bringing about manifestation in the three worlds (physical, emotional, and concrete mental).

The force from cosmic astral levels appears to utilize the systemic astral in the sense of a systemic nervous system and provide the astral light. The force from cosmic physical levels of "the solar system itself and its environing space" is analogous to cosmic prana.

These qualifications of the realms of interest (of human activity) by higher forces (devas) provide a balance between higher conditioning (for the working out of karma and consequential evolution of consciousness) and lower conditioning (entrapment or absorption in material and mundane forces). As the lower conditioning (on etheric, astral, and concrete mental levels) is overcome, so are maya, glamour, and illusion (respectively). But one should ever realize that there are conditionings beyond that which are relevant to human experience and expression, e.g., the unresolved forces (karma) of earlier solar incarnations and of non-human life (manifesting within or through physical, etheric, astral (emotional), and concrete mental substance). It is not the deva lives or substance that is this unresolved "evil" but that (evil) is subtly involved in material forces nonetheless. And for those (consciously or unconsciously) working along the lines of the dark side (left-hand path) (selfishness) who tamper with the lesser lives (substance) the consequences are generally quite dramatic and counter-evolutionary.

Thus "man" must ultimately realize that this is not "his" world (merely), but that it is shared with many other lifewaves of close and distant relation, and that this is by no means a world of human dominion. Yet man has developed and is developing the powers and potencies for interference. So too must he learn the wisdom of temperance in the use of those powers and potencies, else face directly the unconscious wrath of (far greater) unresolved forces.

The Fire Devas 5

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the fire devas. "In connection with the three lower planes and their many groups of devas, their polar opposites are to be found in the great devas of the highest three planes." In addition to the reflective relationships among the planes, i.e., (1-7), (2-6), and (3-5) are the associative relationships of (1-5), (2-6), and (3-7). Thus the divine plane (first cosmic ether) affects the fire of the mental plane, the monadic plane affects the akasha or astral light of the astral plane, and the atmic plane affects the aether (ether) of the physical plane. Many such ordered relationships exist between the various classes and groups and types of deva lives, apparently more so than is the case for human lives (as deva lives are relatively passive) (and as deva lives demonstrate a more obvious continuum of related lives over the various planes). A major key to the relationship between the fire devas and humanity is revealed (eventually) on the buddhic plane or the fourth cosmic ether.

In the sense of the greater (more intelligent) builders in relation to the lesser, (1) "As electric fire the logos manifests as the seven aspects of will, spiritual impulse, or purpose," (2) "As solar fire he manifests as the seven rays, the light of wisdom, the consciousness radiating through the form," and (3) "As fire by friction he manifests as the seven sons of fohat or the active heat of intelligent substance." The great devas who (that) constitute the sevenfold electric fire are related to the cosmic lower mental and the cosmic atmic planes and provide "the dynamic force or will lying back of all manifestation." The great devas who (that) constitute the sevenfold solar fire are related to the cosmic astral and the cosmic buddhic planes and provide the qualification of the seven rays (magnetism) (quality). And the great devas who are the seven brothers of fohat (sevenfold fire by friction) are related to the cosmic physical and the cosmic higher mental planes and produce the fires of the seven planes (electricity) (form).

While the lesser devas lack self-consciousness (yet are nonetheless intelligent), the greater devas are individualized, self-conscious, real, and vital entities (existences) (not in the same sense of self-consciousness that humanity has

achieved but in a greater, broader, different sense (as the deva experience and methods of achievement of self-consciousness are vastly different than that of humanity)). Each of the three groups of seven great self-conscious deva lives are further differentiated into forty-nine fires (rays) (spirits) [respectively].

While humanity is generally thought of us being self-conscious, the work of humanity is more or less unconscious as man generally lacks awareness of his true nature and purpose. The greater devas, on the other hand, work much more consciously (deliberately) and are much more fully aware of the plan and their role or responsibility. Even those devas who are at levels comparable to man have more awareness and deliberateness in their service.

Part of the reason for this is humanity's immersion in material manifestation (and coincident practical separation of consciousness between personality (manifestation) and soul (precursion)). This leads to false identification with the lesser (manifested personality) and (generally) a lack of awareness of and lack of responsiveness to the higher. This is further complicated by the presence of ego which binds and blinds humanity (binds humanity to material and mundane immersions (attachments) and blinds humanity to its true nature). Devas lack both a sense of ego and the sense of separateness.

† Commentary No. 780

The Fire Devas 6

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the fire devas. The three groups of devas of interest are the Agnichaitans, the Agnisuryans, and the Agnishvattas, concerned (respectively) with the physical, astral, and mental planes and ruled (respectively) by Kshiti, Varuna, and Agni. These three groups, collectively, represent and manifest the (systemic physical) health of the logos. These three groups are primarily planetary in their outlook and responsibilities, with appropriate relevance by analogy to human levels and interests. In each of the three cases, the greater devas embody and embrace the lesser builders on their respective levels. Thus, in each case, the greater devas provide the conscious and intelligent direction (qualification) of the activities of the lesser builders. In the higher sense, the greater devas embody the (psychic)

centers or energy vortexes, while the lesser devas embody the remainder of material existence.

The Agnichaitans are the builders of the Earth and of all aspects of systemic physical plane manifestation, existence (vitality), and expression (and physiologically represent the systemic circulatory system). The Raja-Lord is Kshiti, the life of the physical plane. The consciousness of the Agnichaitans is represented by (manifested through) three groups concerned with (1) "the force or energy of physical substance (that electrical aspect which produces activity)" (functioning on the first (etheric) sub-plane), (2) "the construction of forms" and the transmission of prana (functioning on the second, third, and fourth (etheric) sub-planes), and (3) "the internal heat of substance which nourishes and causes reproduction" (functioning on the lowest three sub-planes). The third (lowest) group of the lowest devas "are very destructive where man is concerned, for they embody the final and therefore powerful vibration of the past system, the conscious activity of dense matter." The Agnichaitans are further differentiated into forty-nine groups or fires.

The Agnisuryans are the builders of the systemic astral plane (and physiologically represent the systemic sympathetic nervous system). They form the vehicle of the deva-lord Varuna and animate all of the lives of the astral plane and provide the means of expression of emotional energy (desire, feelings, aspirations, etc.) for more sentient lives. "Consciousness expands through contact, through intelligent appreciation of that which is contacted, and through realization of that which is to be gained through a specific contact. That which is contacted depends upon reciprocal vibration, and the place of desire and of feeling is of real importance. They put man constantly in touch with deva substance of some kind or another."

The evolution of human lives and deva lives are complementary. "Man is evolving the inner vision, while devas are evolving the inner hearing. Man is evolving by means of contact and experience (expansion), while devas evolve by means of the lessening of contact (limitation). Man aims at self-control, while devas must develop by being controlled. Man is innately love, while devas are innately intelligence." Man interacts more or less unconsciously with deva lives on physical, emotional, and concrete mental levels, yet since humanity is primarily emotionally polarized the contact is primarily astral. As man evolves

the contact on astral levels will be moderated or tempered (by intelligence and wisdom) and contact will shift more to mental levels.

The Agnishvattas are the builders of the systemic mental plane and are particularly significant in that they are the builders of the body of consciousness (corresponding systemically to the brain).

† Commentary No. 781

Conveyance of Life 1

The conveyance of life is the role of Shiva and is considered in its three aspects. The first aspect is that of fundamental, underlying (unmanifested) life and monadic reality. The second aspect is that of non-incarnated manifested life or the impersonal reality of the soul. And the third aspect is that of incarnated manifested life or personal (personality) (mundane) reality (expression on objective levels).

Although life in the first aspect is differentiated and induced within or reflected onto lower levels to provide a basis for life in its second and third aspects, life remains undifferentiated on its own (monadic) level, so that what appears to be discrete life on lower levels is merely the shadow of the underlying, more fundamental life in its first aspect (real life). However, in contrast with manifested consciousness, differentiated life does not overlap except in the higher (unified monadic) sense and except hierarchically (i.e., each element of differentiated life is merely compositional). The "life" of a human personality, for example, is discrete from every other human "life" on its (mundane) level, yet forms an element in the compositional "life" of humanity, which in turn forms an element in the compositional "life" of the planetary logos, etc. On higher levels, however, the discreteness of life is shown to be a convenient illusion.

Life in the first aspect is Shiva and monadic existence. Shiva conveys life (somehow analogously to induction but not by induction or reflection) to the monad. The monad conveys life by induction to the soul (the second aspect) and by reflection through the soul to the personality (the third aspect). In the higher (proper, more permanent) sense, life is coincident with the existence of the monad. Neither the soul nor the personality is alive in any fundamental

sense. Life thus precedes and precursus the appearance (and disappearance) of the soul and the incarnation (and withdrawal (dissolution)) of the personality. The dance of Shiva is the dance of life and death, of appearance and manifestation and of disappearance and withdrawal (assimilation).

A significant distinction is thereby made between life and its manifestation. Humanity knows nothing of life per se but (potentially) knows a great deal concerning the manifestation of life. For all practical purposes there are eight "levels" of life, one of unmanifested life and seven of manifested life (existence). The seven levels of manifested life are (1) the monad, (2) the soul on its own level (the soul matrix (archetype) and its permanent atoms), (3) the soul incarnated (induced), (4) the personality on its own level (the personality matrix (archetype) and its permanent atoms), (5) the personality incarnated (reflected), (6) the level of compositional life, and (7) the level of elemental existence.

Real life is unmanifested. Real life in its practical sense is monadic. Every other level or aspect of life is derived from the monadic and contingent upon monadic existence for its own (secondary) existence or manifestation. Life per se can never be created or destroyed, but it can be manifested and withdrawn from manifestation according to the will (first aspect) of the higher existence or whatever corresponds to will on the level of that higher existence. Thus the soul incarnates (as a soul) according to that which is analogous to the will of the monad, and the personality incarnates (as a personality) according to the will of the soul. The "will" of the personality has relatively limited application and only as far as the interaction of the incarnated personality with the karmic parameters of the specific incarnation is concerned.

Conveyance of Life 2

Life in the lower (practical) sense is that of incarnated experience and expression, through the means of consciousness and form (body). In this sense life is conveyed by the monad through the soul to the incarnating expression (personality) at conception. It is at conception that the commitment is made by the soul and at which time a connection is made between the monad, the soul, the personality, and at which time their karmic equation is adjusted accordingly. The karmic equation relating to conception includes both of the “parents” as well as the incarnating “life” (and whoever else is karmically “close” to any one or more of the three parties).

Prior to conception, there is intention (karmic momentum) but not commitment. At the moment (envelope) of conception, the commitment is made along with the associated particulars of incarnation. That commitment is actually made by the three participants, the soul of the incarnating personality and the souls of the parent personalities. The soul of the incarnating personality takes “advantage” of the incarnation opportunity offered or afforded by the “parent” souls through their respective personalities. Of course the opportunity is merited by the three-fold karma (of the parents and the incarnating personality) and any subsequent events or adjustments are likewise afforded by the respective karma. But at conception, a three-fold commitment is made nonetheless respective of that karma.

At the moment (envelope) of birth, that commitment is partially fulfilled and the preparation phase is concluded. The period of time from birth to death is the actual activity phase of incarnated (evolutionary) experience and expression, but the actual “incarnation” is measured from conception (prior to birth) until the various bodies are released or dissolved (after death). It is thus only midway through the afterlife that the commitment is actually fulfilled and the assimilation phase is ended. However, it is not the parents of a person who convey life, nor is it their respective souls who convey life. It is the monad through the soul that conveys life. The “parents” are nonetheless karmically involved in the process, either obligated by their souls to provide the incarnating opportunity and/or subsequently obligated (as parents) to the incarnated “life”

until it is able to function more or less responsibly on its own. The bond of responsibility continues more or less in accordance with that measure of self-responsibility (yet other bonds may also be factored). Although people (incarnated personalities) do not (and cannot) convey life, they are nonetheless responsible for their actions under (karmic) law.

A person errs in thinking that he or she is the body or that he or she owns the body. The body is "owned" by the soul and provided for personality experience and expression. Thus a person has neither the right to take his or her own "life" nor that of any incarnating (conceived) personality. But a person does have a measure of freedom of choice (and necessarily the obligation to face the consequences (timely or otherwise) of exercising that freedom of choice). Thus the freedom of choice implies and conveys responsibility (and consequences). Personal (specifically parental) ignorance is not an (acceptable) excuse, but it is a factor in the subsequent karmic consequences.

A person is (both parties are) responsible for the consequences of any sexual encounter, including the consequences of precautions. Consent to abortion likewise conveys consequences for which the parent(s) is (are) responsible. Similarly, adoption conveys responsibilities. And although personal ignorance may be a factor, responsibility cannot (ever) be evaded.

† Commentary No. 783

Conveyance of Love-Wisdom 1

The conveyance of love-wisdom (consciousness) is the role of Vishnu or Christ (the soul in its greater (broader and general) or lesser (more specific and particular) aspects) and is effected through the medium of Christ-consciousness or That (consciousness (particularly on soul levels)) which relates spirit (the monadic existence) to matter (the more or less objective (at least mundane) worlds of the personality). It is the love and wisdom of Christ (Vishnu) that pervades and stimulates all of manifested existence and it is the measure of love and wisdom realized by each lifeform on its level that contributes to the greater whole.

Thus consciousness is conveyed by and through the soul or second aspect of the trinity. Consciousness is not so much a differentiated quality as life or form is differentiated, but consciousness does substantially interpenetrate or overlap with and through all lives in manifestation, and thereby affords the opportunity for life (at some level) to participate (actively and consciously, or otherwise) in consciousness well beyond the scope of the individual. This also means, of course, that one receives considerable "assistance" via consciousness, through group qualification and through exposure to the field of consciousness on the various levels. For humanity, that exposure is "higher" through alignment with the soul (i.e., on abstract mental and intuitional levels) and "lower" through participation on concrete mental, astral or emotional, and etheric levels.

The underlying consciousness of all manifested lives relates directly to the soul and to That (Christ-consciousness). Although the human being does not and cannot convey life, the human being can participate substantially more directly in consciousness (than in life per se) and actually participate in the conveyance or cultivation and refinement of consciousness having a scope well beyond that of his or her own. Through the aspect of consciousness, one can touch the life aspect of any (manifested) lifeform and depending on the relative measure of that life-form's responsiveness (susceptibility or vulnerability), one can (apparently) help or hinder that life-form's progress in consciousness. With wisdom, however, the process of working with life and consciousness is tempered by awareness and discretion (appropriateness (dharma)) and one's actions are ever consistent with the evolutionary plan and one's own (group) role and responsibilities.

While mutual life is the highest bond between all lives, consciousness is the more practical bond as all lives relate with one another more directly through consciousness. While active lives do not convey consciousness, they can work with consciousness, stimulating and cultivating and qualifying and refining consciousness wherever it is found (and wherever it is appropriate). In fact, the role or dharma of human evolution is a combination of increasing or expanding (refining) human consciousness (self-development through experience and expression) and working intelligently and selflessly and cooperatively with other (comparable or lesser) lives in service for their (appropriate) evolution in consciousness. This must be performed wisely (and consistently with the

evolutionary plan), for man has the power to induce and manipulate consciousness artificially and dangerously.

The crux of consciousness is awareness and realization leading to service (love) which leads in turn to greater awareness and realization (wisdom). It is the lotus-fire of consciousness that is man's real measure of existence, and that measure consists of quality of (or) consciousness (love-wisdom).

† Commentary No. 784

Conveyance of Love-Wisdom 2

But how does one convey love or wisdom, if not consciousness per se? First of all through the sharing of energy and (participation in) consciousness, then by respect and realization (a higher form of sharing of energy and qualification of consciousness), and finally through being (the highest form of (indirectly) sharing energy and participation in and qualification of consciousness). In each successive case it is a matter of service and progressive quality of consciousness, and in no case is it a matter of personal energy or love in any mundane or personal (conditional) sense. One can certainly love in the mundane and personal sense, but one cannot convey love in that sense. One can only convey love (or wisdom) in the impersonal and unconditional sense.

In the lower sense, love is conveyed through kindness, compassion, and consideration, either directly by involvement with other people (e.g., teaching) and/or indirectly through more occult methods (e.g., creating helpful thought-forms). As one grows in quality of consciousness then one naturally begins to convey love through these means. Separative, impositional, or destructive (critical or judgmental) thinking is gradually eliminated and the heart center is allowed to pour forth its natural energies. But this is not the false or lower heart of emotional involvement; it is the true or higher heart of impersonal kindness, compassion, and consideration. It is a sharing of energy through consciousness and by virtue of the relative measure of consciousness and relative awareness.

In the intermediate sense, that sharing of energy through consciousness becomes more a matter of respect and realization than (yet without foregoing)

kindness, compassion, or consideration. The love attribute is blended with the wisdom attribute to form the aspect of love-wisdom, which naturally takes into consideration the awareness of factors in consciousness. Or in other words, there is a realization that each of the lives that one would serve is bound or conditioned both by karmic forces and evolutionary factors. The object becomes far less one of minimizing pain or suffering and far more one of encouragement for those lives in consciousness to achieve sufficient awareness to deal directly with their own karma and conditions in consciousness. In short, through true respect for others' self-determination (and love for their true nature), one plays a relatively quiet and encouraging role, affording and conveying energy more or less indirectly and without any sense of imposition.

In the higher (highest) sense one conveys love and wisdom through being, rather than (or far more so than) through any direct qualification or encouragement. The further one progresses along the spiritual path the more this is so, but one can thereby never fail to share energy (love-wisdom); it just becomes very much more an unconscious aspect of service (being) rather than a direct or indirect involvement. This is in no sense a lessening of one's responsibilities or a lessening of one's role in the sharing (cultivation) of consciousness. It is, however, increasingly a matter of allowing the higher self (the soul) to manifest its energies through the properly refined, integrated, and aligned personality without the hindrance of ego. The lower and even to some extent the intermediate stages of conveyance of love and wisdom are involved with the personality and the ego, while the higher stage is (relatively) not at all.

True service is ever a matter of indirectly sharing energy through some participation in consciousness. The methods and means are increasingly tempered by wisdom as the student evolves and progresses in quality of consciousness.

Conveyance of Light 1

Although love and light are more often referred to as going hand-in-hand, it is actually life and love that are the more closely and more fundamentally related. Life induces love (consciousness), while light is a secondary quality (by reflection) (and a quality of matter). Induction is a stronger (higher) (more fundamental) process than reflection. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the spiritual student in incarnation, it is love and light that takes precedence (although reverence for life takes precedence over respect and appreciation for love and light).

Light is, in a sense, a lesser quality than love. Love pertains to consciousness and is induced by the monad (life), while light pertains to matter and is reflected by love (consciousness). Love (in its proper form) relates more to the soul than to mind, while light relates more to mind in its higher (abstract) and lower (concrete) forms. Yet each is fundamentally important (and both are collectively important) to the evolving human being and to the spiritual student in service of humanity. For light is a means of sharing of energy on levels and in ways that love affords insufficient response, or in ways that directly and substantially complement and supplement the conveyance of love (wisdom).

Light is a matter of knowledge (in the lower sense of matter) and of understanding (in the higher sense of consciousness), while love (properly) is a matter of realization and wisdom (and a matter of the soul more so than the personality). The proper conveyance of light requires a properly cultivated and tempered mind, while the proper conveyance of love requires a properly cultivated and tempered heart (as well). Yet light is a more practical means than love, particularly for the uninitiated. For light can be more objectively visualized and conveyed thereby, while love is more subjective and requires more training (and temperance) in order to convey. And yet love provides the necessary and appropriate motive and qualification for any (proper) light work.

In working with “lower” or non-self-conscious lifeforms, the conveyance of light is an actual enlightenment of those lifeforms (or more properly, an enlightenment (or light enfoldment) of the material nature of those lifeforms),

with relative permanence depending on relative receptivity and other factors. In working with “human” or other self-conscious lifeforms, the conveyance of light is simply an encouragement toward enlightenment. The actual work resulting in enlightenment must therefore and thereby be one’s own. Yet humanity evolves collectively as a lifewave and any (evolutionary) progress (in consciousness) by one element is a contribution to the progress of the whole.

As a quality of matter, every manifested lifeform consists of and/or manifests light in some manner or another. The elemental atoms that form the composite bodies of a lifeform on each of the (relevant) planes of consciousness consist of or have as an attribute light. The more highly evolved (composite) lives actually radiate or share that light and thus afford communication (on whatever level) with other species (and others of their own kind). All lifeforms thus “have” light, while some lifeforms reflect light, and the more highly evolved (on each plane) actually radiate or convey light. Human beings in incarnation can be categorized in those same three ways. There are those (relatively unevolved) who merely have (dull) light on the base, material levels. There are those who reflect light by virtue of their activities and involvements. And there are those who actually radiate light and share their energies (and quality) by virtue of their being.

† Commentary No. 786

Conveyance of Light 2

But how does one actually convey light, and how does one achieve or accomplish one’s own enlightenment? Self-enlightenment is actually an easier and more straight-forward process than conveyance, while conveyance of light is made easier by virtue of one’s measure of enlightenment.

Self-enlightenment is a natural step in the process of gradual and progressive self-purification and self-refinement. The coarseness of matter is an impediment to exhibiting (expressing) (sharing) or receiving (absorbing) light. As a person tempers, disciplines, qualifies, and otherwise purifies and refines the (matter of the) personality (the physical body, the etheric double, the astral or emotional body, and the concrete mind), that refined “matter” is then able to manifest its “light” quality more clearly (with purity and therefore potency) and

is then substantially more receptive to further (higher) conditioning or qualification by or through light (enlightenment).

A person's relative ability to comprehend and understand (i.e., enlightenment in a higher sense) is directly related to the measure (quality) (lightness and purity) of the material (matter) that forms the mind and the emotions and the body. The relative strength (independence) (coarseness) of the physical and etheric bodies, the emotions, and the mind, is a significant factor because that independent strength (coarseness) is separative and provides bias that impedes the ability of a person to learn (i.e., to transform knowledge into understanding and to transform understanding into realization). Any form of lower conditioning is a bias that prevents or impedes enlightenment and self-realization. As the bodies are purified they become more susceptible to integration. As the bodies are further refined and properly integrated they form an integral personality that affords its elevation to and alignment with (and responsiveness to) the soul (and its light on its level). Real "enlightenment" then is conveyed by the soul to and through its responsive personality (mind).

Light is therefore conveyed by the soul to the mind and personality (1) by reflection (in the lowest sense), (2) through qualification (in the intermediate sense), and (3) through realization (in the highest sense). The mind on its level, imitating the soul, is able to convey light to others (1) through reflection or projection (lower head-centered or occult conveyance), (2) through visualization or direct qualification (intermediate head-centered or occult conveyance), and (3) through rapport (higher occult and mystical conveyance). Although one may have the ability to impose light, one should, at this level of awareness and realization, also have sufficient wisdom to avoid imposition or any other inappropriate (or unwarranted) conveyance of (light) energy.

Light is both discrete and a continuum, depending on perspective. The light of the soul and the light of "enlightenment" and the light of matter is related to the physical-plane phenomenon of light and to the electromagnetic spectrum of radiation. But one should exercise great caution before relating these phenomena directly. For the forces inherent in matter are quite potent and very few of humanity have the ability to temper those forces adequately. The real work of humanity deals not with the light of matter, but with the light of consciousness (which is of higher (safer and more appropriate) order than that of

matter). Where light and love are combined (integrated), then the work (conveyance) (dharma) proceeds even (ever) more appropriately and effectively. In the final analysis, one cannot really separate the factors (operators) of light and love, nor even the factors of love and life, for all is one.

† Commentary No. 787

The Fire Devas 7

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the fire devas. The Agnishvattas are the fire devas of the mental plane and the solar angels to whom humanity is directly related. The solar angels “concern man’s own essential nature and are also the creative power by which he works.” While the lunar pitris relate to the lower vehicles and principles, the solar pitris (solar angels) (Agnishvattas) relate to the higher vehicle (causal body) and principles (atma-buddhi-manas) and provide relationship between the human soul and the body logoc.

These fire devas of the mental plane are the great lives who take possession of the human forms developed through the work of the lunar pitris and who “stimulate them into self-conscious life and separated existence” at the point of transition between involutory (preparatory and passive) experience and active evolutionary experience and expression. Subsequently, man learns “to control, guide, and use the deva substances of which his lower sheaths (bodies) are made.” This goal involves the development of full self-consciousness, which is brought about through the (cooperative) agency of the solar angels or builders and vitalizers of the causal body. In the current solar incarnation (system), man “has to mount by putting his foot upon the serpent of matter. He rises by domination of matter and becomes himself a serpent of wisdom. In the next solar system, he will mount upward by means of the serpent of wisdom, and by the domination and control of the Agnishvattas (solar angels).”

Every major evolutionary step on behalf of humanity corresponds to the more significant (relative to humanity) step forward of the logos. The last great human step forward was “human individualization or the emergence of the self-conscious units on the mental plane.” The next great step forward will be group

initiation (of humanity as a whole). All of the intervening human endeavors within the context of the spiritual path (over the many millions of years) merely constitute preparation and qualification for that next step. The planetary logos (on its level) is emotionally polarized. Therefore the next step forward (analogously) is that of (logoic) transition from emotional to mental polarization (or the integration of the logoic personality) (on its level).

The fate and progress of humanity is for conceivable time ever related to that of these fire devas of the mental plane. In a sense the Agnishvattas are far superior to humanity, having evolved substantially (to levels analogous to self-conscious humanity) in the last solar incarnation. And yet the human monads and the monads of the solar angels are found on the same levels and are thereby comparable. And in another aspect (polarity) does humanity have an advantage. What is implied here is that humanity, by nature of its active polarization, evolves more directly and more rapidly than the corresponding deva lives. Yet the two are ever complementary and it would be quite misleading to imply any real superiority on either behalf. There are distinct differences between the two lifewaves and the objective measure of one's progress cannot properly be compared to the other.

What is far more important is that both humanity (as humanity) and the fire devas of the mental plane (solar angels) (Agnishvattas) form interrelated components in the lower consciousness of the logos and that all of human and deva activity is conditioned and qualified by that higher (logoic) purpose. The two lifewaves (human and deva) are a logoic manifestation in energy and consciousness and participate in the logoic adjustment to manifestation.

The Fire Devas 8

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the fire devas. “Impulse or the will-to-be, emanates from the (higher) mental plane. Then desire, emanating from the astral plane, produces manifestation on the dense physical.” This occurs for individual human beings, for humanity as a whole (lifewave), and for the logos of which humanity is an aspect. As the logos proceeds toward or through some aspect of manifestation (evolution), so are relatively great forces released through the body (of consciousness) of the logos which appear as great stimulations for the composite lives (i.e., deva and human). Of course the timescale of these phenomena is vast, yet the manifestation through human levels of consciousness affords considerable albeit coincidental (purposive) qualification.

Although the concepts of emotional and mental experience on human levels are wholly different from those of logoc levels, there is a correspondence and analogy between the two levels (human and logoc). All of human and deva existence (experience and expression) on (in) the seven planes of consciousness takes place within the cosmic physical plane. So what is understood of logoc existence is tempered or biased by familiarity with only the lowest aspect of that logoc existence. Understanding or comprehension of the higher levels is by analogy and inference and only (reasonably) possible where there is no attachment to the lesser. The mental plane is central to human existence (manifestation, experience, and expression) (being the intermediate level of the seven planes) as it relates the higher world of the soul and the lower world of the personality. So too is the (human) mental plane central to the “physical” existence of the logos, being the intermediate level of “physical” existence. But the (human) mental is related as well (analogously) to the (cosmic or solar) mental plane.

“All of the planes of our system, viewing them as deva substance, form the spirillae in the physical permanent atom of the solar logos ... All consciousness, all memory, all faculty is stored up in the permanent atoms ... This permanent atom of the solar system, which holds the same relation to the logoc physical body as the human permanent atom does to that of a man, is a recipient of force,

and is, therefore, receptive to force emanations from another extra-systemic source. Some idea of the illusory character of manifestation, both human and logioic, may be gathered from the relation of the permanent atoms to the rest of the structure. Apart from the permanent atom, the human physical body does not exist."

The Agnishvattas "produce the union of the spiritual triad (soul) and the quaternary or lower self ... They are the transmuting fires of the system and are those agents who pass the life of God through their bodies of flame as it descends from the higher into the lower." There are three closely related and harmonized groups of solar angels, representing the three primary rays and the three higher logioic centers of consciousness (the head center, the heart center, and the throat center). Ever the relationship between humanity and these devas is the balancing of the forces that work out (cooperatively) through the two lifewaves.

The evolutionary devas "are the positive energy of the atom, cell, or subhuman form, while the electrons or lesser (involutionary deva) lives within the form are negative." Humanity operates "through" atomic existence, while the devas "are" atomic existence. Thus are humanity and the deva lifewave effectively inseparable.

† Commentary No. 789

Advaita

Advaita is the notion or perspective of non-dualism. It is the deeply ingrained (habitual) perspective of duality (separateness) that engenders separateness and separativeness and tends to sustain the grand illusion (of separation from God and of the relative separateness of the various lives). Advaita is a point-of-view that counters the grand illusion and encourages the realization of the truth (which is that all lives are one) and subsequent practical manifestation. Although the earth (evolutionary field) is subject to the fourth ray of harmony through conflict (which encourages the sense of dualism), one must overcome that illusion with the realization that all conflict is internal and therefore eminently resolvable.

The natural illusion of separate existence (independence) is rooted in the materialism (material coarseness) (maya) of the body (form) and compounded by glamour (emotional bias) and (concrete mental) illusion. The principal human proponent of duality is the ego, which generally and naturally seeks to protect its own (apparently (but not truly) separate or independent) existence. Thus dualism is a matter of appearance, while advaita is a matter (quality) of truth. Dualism is manifested in the sense of separateness or distinctness that most human beings feel one from another and in the sense of separateness that most feel with regard to God (who is generally viewed as separate and greater). Dualism promotes the sense of differentiation (differentiatedness) and exclusion, while advaita promotes the sense of unity (integration) and inclusion. Advaita is the general solution to the ego and of all of the natural egoistic (selfish and self-centered) tendencies.

The concept of “looking out for oneself” is a notorious example of dualistic thinking and feeling. In the discrete perspective (dualism), cooperation and collaboration is engendered or rationalized by perceived mutual advantage, whereas in the integral perspective (advaita), cooperation and collaboration are not limited by self-interest but, rather, are engendered by a realization of inherent oneness. God lives through all lives. If one is living in harmony (oneness) with God, then one is living through all lives, and the distinction of each life being or having a separate existence is revealed as folly. Contrast is merely a perspective and conflict is inherently illusory (and both are overcome in advaita).

Advaita is inherently consistent with the notion of karma and even clarifies and broadens the sense of dharma. Karma is both individual and collective, but essentially wholly interdependent. The karma of one is part of the karma of all. The good (or evil) that one does (and the consequent learning or realization (progress in consciousness)) affects all, since one is inherently part of the collective consciousness and karma. The spiritual student (one of dharma) serves the collective cause (not of humanity or of any special interest group, but of God) (that collective cause being evolution in consciousness).

Noble activities (e.g., service to humanity) are fundamentally consequences of advaita. The pursuit of self-interest is generally spiritually and collectively counterproductive. Noble (relatively selfless) pursuits are generally much more

effective (spiritually and collectively). In helping others (via encouragement rather than imposition) one is helping oneself in the sense that one is part of the collective whole (God). But one is never helping oneself (in this sense) exclusively or at the expense of others. Motive is crucial to proper dharma in the sense that service must be sincere and selflessly motivated to be true service and therefore in fulfillment of dharma.

† Commentary No. 790

Egolessness

Egolessness refers to the relative absence or quiescence of the human ego or that aspect of the personality (ego) that demonstrates primarily as self-centeredness, separativeness, defensiveness, reactiveness, etc.

The ego is the independent strength of the personality in contrast to the spiritual strength (humility) of the soul. That relative independence is developed as a product of personality development and peaks with the full integration of the personality (where the lower or concrete mind integrates and subordinates the entire personality). The ego is the successor to the more primordial (animal) instinctiveness of the unintegrated and relatively coarse personality (and the precursor of the manifested (spiritual, inclusive) strength of the soul (the animal strength (quality), the ego strength (quality), and the soul strength (quality) are each substantially different from each other).

Thus egolessness characterizes the beginning and the end of human evolution. In the beginning of human experience there is (only) the human animal, full of instinct and lower intelligence. As a person evolves, the personality develops and unfolds more human characteristics (including emotional and concrete mental development) and is eventually perfected (relatively, insofar as human existence and expression is concerned) as the higher faculties (abstract mind and intuition) are unfolded and realized (i.e., as the soul wholly qualifies the responsive personality). Thus, at the end of the human experience the ego is fully overcome and egolessness is achieved. That (eventual) egolessness implies that the true strengths and positive (higher) characteristics of the personality are actually available to or abstracted by the soul (and conversely, that the illusory strengths of the ego are not abstracted). It is not a simple matter of

abstracting the good (desired, intended qualities) and leaving the bad; for the soul carries forward (beyond the human experience) with the matrix or fully-developed archetype of human experience, and therefore, it is a matter of eliminating (overcoming) (sublimating) (qualifying) (refining) those aspects of the personality (namely the ego (and coarseness)) that are not warranted (or are not applicable) to higher experience.

But in the meantime, through the various stages of the spiritual path, the presence and activities of the ego and the cultivation of egolessness are quite significant and substantial concerns (for the spiritual student). The principal objective is to maintain the integrity and capability (positive strengths) of the cultivated and relatively refined personality while gradually reducing the independence of that personality. It is not, however, a matter of the soul merely breaking through to the personality and compelling adjustments and changes. It is, rather, a matter of the personality taking responsibility for aspiration (refinement) and uplifting itself toward the soul (and the energy qualification of the soul).

The soul does not compel the personality. The soul offers qualification and encouragement (guidance) that the personality is (or is not, relatively) responsive to. It is up to the spiritual student as a personality to seek the realization of that soul encouragement (i.e., bringing about the responsiveness of the personality). The ego stands as the principal hindrance for the relatively well-developed personality in its quest for spirituality (and higher consciousness). The ego naturally resists any endeavor that undermines its influence in the personality. Thus the entire spiritual path can be viewed as the battleground (struggle) of (between) the higher and lower aspects of the personality (more so than between the soul and the personality).

Status Quo

Present human consciousness spans from that of those on the lower physical/emotional end of the spectrum to that of those having reasonably well developed personalities to that of those working on the higher mental (and intuitive) capacities as a precursor to soul infusion. Most of mankind lies between the extremes.

For those at the lower end of the continuum, life may be (or may appear to be) a struggle to merely maintain existence, even though it may not seem so to them, for such concepts may require mental abilities which do not exist yet for them. For the majority of mankind, life is not as survival-oriented, even though it may seem so, for the personality usually makes things seem worse than they are (i.e., it may have a negative outlook). Thus, these individuals (may) feel that life is harsh and unfair, no matter the reality (circumstances are always warranted, for they offer opportunity for experience). Also, this perspective may exist as part of the fourth ray manifestation of "harmony through conflict" (can harmony be achieved otherwise?). Regardless of specifics, individuals at this stage enjoy (appreciate) (worship) (crave) (relish) (desire) life, thriving on the day to day personality-oriented existence provided (which is as it should be), regardless of the circumstances.

However, for an ever-increasing number approaching the soul-end of the spectrum, a time comes when the status quo is no longer acceptable, often because merely fulfilling lower personality desires is no longer satisfactory. Due to this dissatisfaction, the prospective student may ask the question "is this all there is?" This then is the time when an individual starts to approach the path, for that which was previously acceptable, i.e., personality self-indulgence, is no longer enough and more satisfactory answers for existence are actively sought (needed).

At this point in consciousness, the individual has a choice. The issue is whether to maintain the status quo (indulge the personality) or to move forward to a more inclusive existence. This process is usually many things. For instance, it can be (but is not limited to) (and it does not have to be this way) a

frustrating, difficult, traumatic, and even humorous period, for the personality does not want to give up control (it fears change). A certain irony exists here, for on one side the individual (probably) is tired of mundane life, while on the other side, is the personality existence of pettiness, strife, hate, greed, lust, etc., that great to begin with? Thus, it is natural to seek another (higher) existence (in consciousness).

As part of this process, many have gone the way of the soul (to a higher existence). However, in the past this transition was achieved over a long period of time, and thus, the process was achieved individually. Now, since more people are coming to this awareness together, more and more the transition is being made in groups and (relatively) more openly. Thus, we have a long line (over a long time) of forefathers (pioneers) to follow, but today these steps are being hastened and broadened (becoming more inclusive). In one respect, this makes the transition easier (for the individual is not alone), but in another sense it is harder, since it is difficult for the personality to accommodate the group formation (not the case of the soul), which means the issue will be resolved by how much (or how little) the personality is responsive to the soul infusion. With group approach, treading the path involves greater group and associated individual momentum than in the past (treading the path is never more or less easy (personalities make it difficult), but dynamic).



Commentary No. 792

Appropriateness of Speaking

Speaking is defined as expressing thoughts, opinions, or feelings verbally (as in talking). If developed and used properly, speaking is a powerful faculty (ability) for constructive use by mundane man and the spiritual student (even if the perspectives are quite different). However, if speaking is not tempered, the situation is like a two-edged sword having potentially negative consequences (more or less detrimental, depending on the individual's consciousness). While it is natural (common) for most of mankind (unaware and/or uninterested in the path) to misuse (overuse) the speaking faculty, this is not (cannot be) the situation for the student on the path where the use/abuse relationship has more serious consequences (relatively speaking).

For the majority of mankind it is natural to speak excessively (frivolously) with little or no meaningful thought behind the words (verbal output), i.e., talking without thinking (which assumes at least some lower mental abilities). In this context, it is as though one talks purely for the sake of talking, and since what is said is often without much meaning (in the higher sense) and/or is negative, the individual often appears to have “foot-in-mouth” disease.

The problem for the spiritual student, regardless of context, is that if speech is excessive, without meaning and reasonable clarity, then the student cannot hear (is not listening (and acting appropriately)) (sensing) nonverbal communications from the soul or meaningful lower level verbal communication, which is another way of saying that communication for the spiritual student should be more inwardly intuitive rather than outwardly verbal.

While speaking needlessly may not be a serious condition for humanity in general, it is (can be) a very serious impediment (self-imposed limitation) for the spiritual student for several reasons. First, this “disease” means that the person is enmeshed in mundane life (the personality) and is not practicing one of the disciplines of the path, i.e., a contemplative, soul-oriented existence of relative silence (silent demeanor). Thus, in being noisy, an aspirant has little (no) chance of perceiving the ever present Voice of the Silence. Second, it means that the person is probably not weighing (assessing (monitoring) the quality) of that which is said, meaning that the student is (probably) being verbally impositional (another ignored discipline) (possibly with harmful consequences (at least from a higher perspective)). If the student is not acting in a wordlessly silent demeanor (as possible), then he/she is not maintaining a contemplative aura, and thus, instead of projecting a relative presence of calm and peacefulness, the aura is noisy (relatively violent).

Being relatively violent (reactive) (from a higher perspective) is (relatively) serious, for the spiritual student is not acting at the highest level possible (i.e., practicing a harmless, detached, and wordlessly silent existence), which means the student remains outside the (desired) aura of the Christ within. While this may not be a serious consequence for the aspirant who is initially approaching the path, it will become more of an obstacle to progress as the path unfolds, as one’s position on the path becomes more difficult to maintain (i.e., the path

becomes narrower (more particular) as the path is ascended) (but as the path unfolds, the spiritual student should have developed the qualities necessary for each stage, if he will only use them). Thus, many who are otherwise qualified get (needlessly) stuck at this (seemingly) considerable hurdle, for idle speech (gossip) (and a wandering mind) usually indicates that the personality does not wish to relinquish its position (even though eventually it will (must)).

† Commentary No. 793

Paths to God

From one perspective, there are many paths to God. Each of the great world religions, philosophies, mythologies, etc., can be seen as representing one path among the many paths. Each religion is appropriate to the consciousness and karmic needs of the humanity of the time and culture in which it is developed and sustained. In this sense, all of these many paths have an inherent appropriateness and worth for their adherents. Each person may further be viewed as traveling a different path from all other individuals to God. This is due to the variation in sequencing of ray qualification and karmic experience over the course of individual evolution. All are evolving (consciously or otherwise) toward God-consciousness (traveling a path to God), but the pattern of that evolution is unique to each individual.

While the perspective that there are many paths to God is quite valid, the perspective that there is but one path is equally valid. There is but one great pathway within which are differentiated all of the individual and group paths. This one path is the all-encompassing evolutionary force that draws all toward God-consciousness. Some individuals respond more readily to this force, and eventually begin to consciously cooperate with and serve the path. This realization of and commitment to the spiritual path leads to the various stages of discipleship and initiation.

If looked at superficially (as do many fundamental adherents), with focus on doctrine, dogma, and cultural overlay, the world's religions appear to contrast. When reduced to their core teachings, however, all major religions are found to reflect the essential unity of the one path (truth) by the similarity of the eternal

verities they all proclaim. There is one eternal truth (approaching absolute) which all seek. All other truths derive from this greater truth. This greater truth cannot be confined to any single formula, nor can it be found in its entirety in any single philosophy or religion. Further, the gradual evolutionary advancement of humanity dictates that it cannot be dispensed altogether and for ever by any single teacher, thinker, or avatar, no matter how divinely inspired.

Adherents to some faiths often misinterpret the concept of "one" path to God in a manner that is unfortunately separative and exclusive. In self-righteous narrow-mindedness, some choose to believe that the "one path" is their own particular religion (i.e., the one to which they are attached and fixed upon to the exclusion of "other" truth), and that it is the only one among the many others that actually leads to God. All of the others are viewed as potentially encouraging proper social conduct within their own cultural context, but as essentially heathen, not blessed by God, or at the least, dealing with inferior aspects of truth for those of inferior mentality.

A statement, for example, such as, "There is one way to God, and that is through Jesus Christ," is often cited as justifying such religious arrogance. The spiritual student would not disagree with such a statement, but he would interpret it in a more humble, more inclusive (broader) manner. The one way to God is through the soul (higher self), which is the Christ-consciousness within each person, regardless of whether or not that person deifies Jesus. The indwelling Christos (soul) is the personality's link to the spirit (monad). Further, the hierarchical Christ serves as the world teacher (heart of love) for all of humanity, not merely those who consider themselves to be Christian. Thus, the spiritual student sees value in the many paths as they blend and merge, each revealing various aspects of the one beautiful path to God.

Success

From the mundane view, success is generally defined as the gaining of wealth, fame, power, prestige, status, or achievement in some material (physical plane) sense. Success of this type has principally to do with physical world maya, astral glamour, and mental illusion. This is success in terms of form and appearance. From the spiritual view, however, success is seen in terms of quality. It has to do with the fulfillment of karma, learning of lessons, evolution of consciousness, fulfillment of dharma, or achievement in consciousness. The real products and indications of success are the quality and character that are incorporated into the permanent atoms, to be drawn upon in succeeding lives. They are eternal, whereas the products of mundane success are strictly temporal (fleeting) since they are associated with a particular personality for the course of only one lifetime.

The spiritual student does not strive to be a success in mundane terms. He recognizes that he is incarnated on the physical plane for the purpose of learning to overcome the maya (material perspective), glamour (emotional bias), and mental illusion, and to be of service to humanity. He chooses therefore not to waste time and energy seeking mundane success, which would tend to enshroud him further in the material veil. This does not imply that the spiritual student may (will) not be successful in the mundane sense, merely that it is not something he values and seeks as an end (or even means) in itself.

A spiritual student with a well-developed, integrated personality may build and create in the physical world and wield power. He or she has the potential to envision something (an end) and achieve it through the strength (force) of personality (with or without some relative measure of wisdom and a relatively real (not rational) sense of appropriateness). His or her karma (or dharma) may even include holding a position of power (influence), but that position comes (properly) as a duty to fulfill (service opportunity) (in as detached a manner as possible) and not as the result of seeking success for the separated self.

From the spiritual perspective, the net increase in the quality of consciousness is the measure of the success of any particular incarnation. A person who was

highly successful from the mundane perspective, but who spent most of his life's energy focused on attaining that material success, may actually pass out of incarnation with little, if any, positive change in quality of consciousness. It is the soul that determines what progress is to be attempted in any lifetime. If that which the soul chooses to attempt is not achieved, it matters not that all of the schemes and plans of the personality were realized. The soul might, for example, endeavor upon an incarnation rich with struggle and continual conflict as a means of attempting to quicken the pace of it's progress. To the outer world the life would appear to be but a series of one problem after the next, with little of what is associated with the concept of "success" emerging. Yet it is the learning that is the basis of spiritual success. If learning has occurred, then success has been achieved.

Similarly, a person may incarnate, experience (on whatever levels), and appear to be a failure in mundane terms. But, again, if the objective in consciousness of the soul is realized, then that incarnation is successful. Thus, success in spiritual terms varies depending upon the evolutionary stage of the individual. Without an appreciation of where an individual is and where he or she should be in consciousness, it is not possible to judge the success or failure of anyone's life, and success in mundane matters does not necessarily correlate to real success (in spiritual matters).

† Commentary No. 795

The Fire Devas 9

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the fire devas and the work of the solar angels in bringing about individualization and the subsequent unfoldment of the soul. The body of the soul is the causal body which "has its place on the third sub-plane of the mental plane, the lowest abstract plane," and is qualified by the third ray in the sense of "light for construction."

At the point (time) of individualization, the Manasadevas (Lords of the Flame) produce the causal body (at the conjunction of their own forces and those of matter) and induce the characteristic (human form of) self-consciousness as the soul appropriates that causal body and is then afforded the opportunity to

incarnate within the lesser worlds (of material existence). The Manasadevas offer their own five-fold vibration to the four-fold vibration of matter (of that sub-plane) to form the nine-fold lotus of the soul. The lotus is initially transparent with light but tightly folded.

Then "there appears a triangle on the mental plane, produced by manasic activity, and this triangle of fire begins slowly to circulate between the manasic permanent atom and a point at the center of the lotus and thence to the mental unit, which has appeared upon the fourth sub-plane through innate instinct approximating mentality. This triangle of fire, which is formed of pure electrical manasic force, waxes ever brighter until it produces an answering vibration from both the lower and the higher. This triangle is the nucleus of the antahkarana" or bridge between the higher and lower aspects of the human being (i.e., between the soul (abstract mind) and its personality (concrete mind)). Then "a downflow of buddhi takes place along the line of the manasic triangle until it reaches a point at the very center (heart) of the lotus" where three more petals are evoked "which close in on the central flame, covering it closely, and (which petals) remain closed until the time comes for the revelation of the jewel in the lotus." At this stage, the lotus is "composed of twelve petals, nine of these in bud form and three being completely hidden." The various petals of the lotus of the soul are constructed by the Agnishvattas "out of their own substance."

"At the same time, the three permanent atoms are enclosed within the lotus" and appear "as three points of light in the lower part of the bud" and form "a dimply burning triangle. The (embryonic) causal body is then ready for full activity and is complete in all its threefold nature." The aspect of matter "which concerns the material form of the man in the three worlds, or his active intelligent personal self, is developed and controlled through the medium of the mental unit, the astral permanent atom, and the physical permanent atom." The aspect of consciousness "embodying the love-wisdom of the (divine) soul as it reveals itself by the means of (higher) mind (and buddhi) is predominantly there, and in the nine petals and their vibratory capacity lies hid all opportunity, all innate capacity to progress, and all the ability to function as a self-conscious unit" (i.e., as a manifested human being). The aspect of spirit "lies concealed at the (three petals in the) heart of the lotus, in due course of time to stand (ultimately) revealed."

When the embryonic causal body has been evoked and prepared, then “the light or fire that circulates along the manasic triangle is withdrawn to the center of the lotus, and this prototype of the (future) antahkarana disappears.” The causal body (and its nine petals of consciousness (in three sets of three)) is then unfolded over the course of aeons of evolutionary activity.

† Commentary No. 796

The Fire Devas 10

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the fire devas and the work of the solar angels in the unfoldment of the soul. The principal objectives (in these matters) are (1) evolutionary experience and expression and (2) bringing about the union of the soul and its lower, personal self. The second cannot be achieved without considerable and substantial evolutionary experience, and so, as the individual evolves, the shift in priorities occurs, with experience per se becoming less and less significant relative to the assimilation of experience which in turn becomes more and more refined and in support of that union.

The central message of “cosmic fire” is that a wonderful albeit subtle harmony of purpose and (subtle) collaboration exists between the human and deva lifewaves. Further, that the human being in its totality is a conjunction of human and deva lives (of which the ego or personality is a relatively insubstantial (more illusionary (transient) part)). That conjunction is the blending of two forces (on soul levels) of distinctly different polarity which together produce or evoke an even greater reality (realization) on monadic levels. While playing with fire is inherently dangerous, the proper (wise) blending of the various fires on soul levels is something else altogether.

Until the later stages of the spiritual path, man is relatively ignorant of the evolutionary plan and incapable of conscious collaboration. Therefore, man is primarily only passively (unconsciously) responsive to higher impression (and primarily through the more direct karmic consequences). But the deva lives are far more (actively) responsive to higher impression (not self-consciously) and consequently embody much more of the plan (will) of the logos. Through the

processes of initiation (in consciousness, as the soul impresses the mind), man becomes more and more aware of and a conscious participant in the evolutionary process. As man evolves, the lotus of the soul is gradually unfolded and is eventually repolarized onto the second sub-plane of the mental plane. Also as man evolves, the antahkarana is gradually and properly built as a bridge in consciousness between the lower and higher aspects of the human being.

In each root-race an adaptation of force occurs. In the third or Lemurian root-race, the majority of present humanity were individualized. In the fourth or Atlantean root-race, the path of initiation was made available to the pioneers of humanity (thereby creating a path of ascension for all of humanity). In the fifth or Aryan root-race, a comparable adaptation of force will occur. In each case the adaptation involves a great and broad (subtle electrical or magnetic) stimulation which coincides with and affords adaptation of some kind or another on a large scale and/or which results in substantial and particular qualification. Each of the specific (major) faculties of the human being (e.g., the spark of mind) is the result of one or another of these stimulations.

Each major adaptation of a race or lifewave implies a corresponding adjustment or development in consciousness on some logoc level and thus plays a role in the greater scheme of things (in humility, man must eventually realize that his apparent great (racial) achievements in consciousness are merely the result of logoc activity and not vice versa). The various methods of individualization thus operate under systemic law. In the moon chain it was "the gradual evolution of self-consciousness under natural law." In the (present) earth chain it was "that of achieved self-consciousness through the aid of extraneous agencies." And "in the next round and chain the method will be abstraction through will power."

Disposition

There are three essential meanings to the concept of disposition. The first sense of disposition is the act or power of disposing (putting into place, arranging, or distributing) (also, transferring control or responsibility for something or some process to another) or the state of being disposed. The second sense of disposition is that of temperamental makeup or prevailing temperamental tendencies. (The third sense of disposition is the literal sense of dis-position or displacement).

In the first sense, disposition is keenly related to karmic fulfillment. Whether in relation to the fulfillment or settlement of property and/or responsibilities (mundane, professional, moral, or otherwise (spiritual)) or to the orderly and appropriate transfer of property and/or responsibilities to others (if indeed that it both possible and appropriate (prudent)), karma is involved (for all) and dharma may be involved (in the case of the spiritual student). The spiritual student is necessarily responsible (and all are accountable) for the discharge or disposition of responsibilities and for the proper utilization of whatever property and/or other resources are afforded. Failure to exercise proper (responsible) disposition evokes (normally subsequent) consequences. Similarly, sincere and effective disposition (in this sense) evokes both fulfillment (accomplishment) and subsequent appropriate opportunities for additional service.

In the second sense, disposition is more related to character, quality, and temperament (and associated responsibility). In this sense, disposition refers to the prevailing or general mood or personality-inclination (tendencies) of a person. A person's disposition is a direct reflection and indication of that person's character, quality, and temperament. That disposition can be an effective instrument for good or ill in the sense that it is primarily the disposition of the personality that affects the immediate environment and the people therein. A healthy (good-natured and stable) disposition has a net positive or constructive effect on the environment or atmosphere, while a poor disposition (coarse, ill-natured, self-centered, and/or unstable) generally has a net negative or destructive effect on the environment or atmosphere.

Physically-polarized people (phypols) generally have coarse dispositions and little if any ability to moderate or improve their situation (except over the gradual course of a number of lifetimes). Emotionally-polarized people (emopols) generally have more refined dispositions than physically-polarized people (but only relatively), but with emotional polarization there is inherent and relatively untempered emotional fluctuation (or relative instability) and inconsistency (and a considerable tendency for the emotionally-polarized to become and remain absorbed in sensational or emotionally-stimulating (seducing) activities). Even so, one of emotional polarization can still temper the emotions and effect a relatively more positive disposition. In fact, it is relatively more important for the emotionally-polarized to cultivate a positive disposition because emotionally polarized people tend to radiate their emotional content indiscriminately (unconsciously and without temperance).

Mentally-polarized people (menpols) generally are even more (relatively) refined (but, still not generally comparable to the spiritual student) but due to relative emotional stability and relative strength of mind, disposition is still keenly important, as the emotional and concrete mental field (aura) can be quite forceful (deliberately or otherwise impositional) unless properly tempered (in which case a healthy disposition can be most effective).

† Commentary No. 798

World Peace

World peace is not a teleologically valid objective, even though it would appear to be a noble achievement. What is teleologically valid and therefore a more proper objective is the improvement in the quality of human consciousness such that world peace is an incidental consequence. The world conditions that are present at any time are necessarily the consequences of past, present, and to some extent future human endeavors and reflect the relative quality and character of human consciousness.

The purpose of human existence and concomitant manifestation is contributive evolution in consciousness, not merely or even primarily the evolution in human consciousness, but improved (expanded) (deepened) human consciousness as it

contributes (relatively) to the aura of consciousness that is the planetary logos (and to some extent even that of the solar logos). In order to evolve in consciousness, the human being (and the human race) must face and gradually (ultimately) overcome many conflicts (contrasts) and inconsistencies (i.e., problems). Without problems or difficulties there would be no substantive opportunities for growth in consciousness (learning and the assimilation of experience to produce wisdom or quality). Those problems (conflicts) (tension) (challenges) may be traumatic or otherwise depending on the consciousness, attitude, and responsiveness to learning opportunities.

Unfortunately, in a sense, traumatic circumstances are frequently necessary (evoked) in order to challenge the relative absorption (unresponsiveness) of humanity (people) in mundane or personal matters (physical, emotional, and/or concrete mental attachments). World peace would be "nice" if it meant that people were no longer self-absorbed, materialistic, etc. and therefore responsive to higher impressions (more noble values). But otherwise no real purpose would be served. If world peace were imposed (or achieved without resolution of the more fundamental issues), then the "problem" energy (karmic forces) would simply resurface or appear in other ways. On the other hand, this in no way implies that one should work "against" world peace.

More properly, it is the conflict or inconsistency between the way it is (current conditions and temperament) and the way it should be (intended resolution in character, temperament, consciousness, etc.) that provides the field of opportunity for meaningful experience and the assimilation of that experience and consequent growth in character and quality of consciousness. Conflict (violence) is not ultimately necessary, except as a consequence of "current" conditions. Alternatives to conflict are available, if only the (human) consciousness would (could) embrace them. But contrast will ever be necessary (in the manifested state), as contrast (the challenge to grow) affords opportunities for growth while the lack of contrast implies pralaya (time of rest). Thus world peace is not only possible but inevitable, but can and will emerge only when and as humanity as a whole has become sufficiently more receptive and responsive to more subtle forms of evolutionary pressure.

As the spiritual students of the world (and more and more good-natured people (people of goodwill)) work constructively and peacefully to encourage (stable)

growth in consciousness, so will traumatic conflicts (on whatever scales) be lessened and eventually eliminated altogether. World peace (peacefulness in general) will thereby emerge consistently, without being an achievement in itself but as an incidental consequence of human maturity (and (spiritual) responsiveness to higher (purposive) impression) and the relative [more meaningful] fulfillment of real objectives in consciousness.

† Commentary No. 799

Pettiness

The problem of pettiness is a matter of the self-absorbed or overly-mundane personality (ego), where attachments on emotional and/or concrete mental levels are fairly common (and preclude or undermine the focus on more noble issues). Pettiness is small-mindedness, being “marked by or reflective of narrow interests and sympathies (having little or no importance or significance).”

Pettiness is the making of mountains out of molehills, of over-reacting to (particular) issues or circumstances and exaggerating the relative significance. What leads a personality to pettiness is a combination of ego and values, in the sense that the ego represents an underlying insecurity (failure to face reality) and in the sense that “small” (mundane) (materialistic) (personal) (egoistic) values are embraced. Attachment to these values (lack of reasonableness and flexibility) merely compounds the problem. The immediate consequences of pettiness are a loss or lack of goodwill, the creation or sustenance of a separative environment, and the continued absorption (defensiveness) (reactiveness) of the personality (ego). All of these consequences are either destructive (at worst) in the sense that (right) human relationships are undermined or precluded or not constructive (at best) in the sense that progress is not achieved or fostered. The longer-term consequences of pettiness are more significant and more substantial (and more subtle) in the sense that pettiness (reactive absorption) leads to deepening concretion (crystallization) and a lessening of responsiveness to evolutionary encouragement (qualification).

The solution to pettiness depends on the relative degree or extent of absorption (i.e., the relative degree of intensity of reactivity and defensiveness) and

conversely on the relative degree of awareness and responsiveness. For the relatively aware (non-self-absorbed) spiritual student, overcoming pettiness is largely a matter of becoming more aware of one's own pettiness with a growing and conscious realization of the limiting (petty) nature of one's values and associated behavior. With increasing (more sensible and more realistic) awareness and realization, pettiness can be dealt with and gradually overcome as new (better) habits and values are embraced (and as the lesser are released), through deliberate qualification (self-directed change).

However, for the relatively unaware (self-absorbed) individual, pettiness is not a matter that can be dealt with more or less directly. In this case, the measure of self-absorption is more serious and preclusive (from the standpoint of the spiritual student and/or relative evolution in consciousness) and must be dealt with before pettiness per se can be addressed and resolved. Ultimately, pettiness can only be overcome as awareness and realization are improved, where the strength (independence) of the ego is lessened (loosened), and where the overall (personal) values become broader (less personal) (more spiritual) such that mundane (personal) (petty) considerations afford neither attraction (distraction) nor attachment.

In the larger scope of evolutionary manifestation, the planet, humanity as racial existence, and individuals (egos) are "petty" considerations, with the human being having (natural) materialistic and egoistic (petty) tendencies. But as the individual focuses on larger, less personal issues, he (she) then begins to participate (with relative humility) in the grander, broader scheme of things (e.g., evolution) and begins to function less as an isolated independent (sleeping) (passive) contributor and more as an interdependent (aware) (sensibly active) (consciously constructive) contributor, working intelligently within the scope of human evolution and beyond.

Convection 1

Convection is the action or process of conveying, the transference of energy from one place (time) (plane) to another, with a sense of movement (conveyance) in a continuous stream. Convection implies circulation, in that each energy conveyance is accompanied by some balancing activity (e.g., the conveyance of some other form of energy in a direction opposite to the original or the conveyance of some energy (in that opposite direction) on some other level).

The sense of this circulation is both continuous and simultaneous, although in the sense of karmic fulfillment, convection implies at least two-dimensional accomplishment (i.e., energy (consequences) is (are) conveyed and karma is thereby fulfilled). More properly karmic fulfillment is a continuous phenomena with many contributive aspects and elements. Realization (self-realization) is another example of convective experience and expression (achievement and fulfillment), particularly when viewed as a continuous (bidirectional) process and not merely as (apparently) happening in time and place.

In broader context, all (life) (consciousness) (manifestation) (appearance) is a multidimensional energy flow. All (all things) is (are) energy in one form or another. For every action (energy flow) there is an equal and opposite reaction (more properly, a corresponding and equivalent balance of forces) (as the energy necessarily flows in some way back to its source). Convection is merely the means (action) (process) of natural conveyance of energy (under law, and without deliberation). With deliberation, energy is more properly conveyed (more) directly, through qualification. But without deliberation (conscious moderation of an existing energy flow (field)) energy is naturally convected.

Convection occurs (naturally) wherever, whenever, and however, in accordance with need (purpose), particularly in the sense of restoration of equilibrium or (apparent) balance. For example, a student who approaches the edge (lateral boundaries) of the path will find increasing resistance in the form of an energy convection (conveyance) of restorative forces. If the student is willful and pushes beyond the boundary (i.e., becomes lost), then an energy convection will eventually restore the student to the path. Wherever there is need, there is

fulfillment of that need (need and desire are not equivalent (i.e., desire implies energy projection but not necessarily a fulfillment consistent with desire, while true need is a necessarily fulfilled condition)). In each case balance is achieved and need fulfilled.

Convection also implies a flow between two disparate points (conditions) (places), e.g., energy is conveyed (conveys) naturally from a high pressure "place" to a "place" of lower pressure, thereby achieving balance (pressure equilibrium) (actually balance is implied not in the energy fulfillment but in the energy flow (i.e., in the broader sense everything is always in equilibrium but some things merely appear to be out of focus)). Disparateness is merely a convenient perspective but exists not in any proper (broad) view. Because energy (reality) is not limited by the illusions of time, space, and/or dimension, conveyance (convection) occurs between places (i.e., between the conditions (states) of places), between times (forward, backward, or otherwise), and between planes (sub-planes) (dimensions). In this sense, chakras (human and planetary) are the means of convection for energy flows between levels. But as there are always at least two components to any convection, any "downward" flow through a chakra is accompanied (simultaneously) by a corresponding (different) "upward" flow through the same or some other center. In the midst of changing conditions in life, consciousness and appearance, equilibrium persists.



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