



The Upper Triad Material

Commentaries IX

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 IX 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

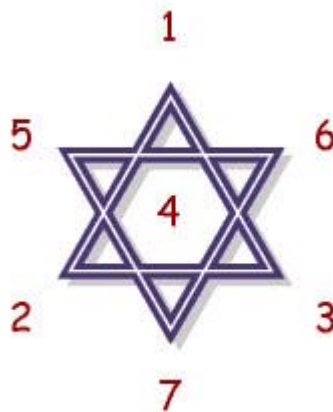
Peter Hamilton is the editor's pseudonym. For questions and comments on the Upper Triad Material, he may be contacted via the following email address.

peter@uppertriad.org

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.



Contents I

C 801	Light, Love, and Power 1	1
C 802	Light, Love, and Power 2	2
C 803	The Body Logic	4
C 804	Avatars	6
C 805	Convection 2	7
C 806	Value Systems 1	9
C 807	Value Systems 2	11
C 808	Value Systems 3	12
C 809	Expectation 1	14
C 810	Expectation 2	16
C 811	Incarnation and Pralaya	17
C 812	Cosmic Fire 69	19
C 813	Awareness of Personality 1	21
C 814	Awareness of Personality 2	22
C 815	Awareness of Personality 3	24
C 816	Cosmic Fire 70	26
C 817	The Purpose of Life 1	27
C 818	The Purpose of Life 2	29
C 819	Awareness of Personality 4	31
C 820	Beyond Egoism	32
C 821	Cosmic Fire 71	34
C 822	Democracy	36
C 823	The Echo of the Soul	37
C 824	The Ring of Truth	39
C 825	Bias 1	41
C 826	Bias 2	42
C 827	Bias 3	44
C 828	Spiritual Retreatment 1	46
C 829	Spiritual Retreatment 2	47
C 830	Svadharmā	49
C 831	The Fires of Evolution 1	51
C 832	The Fires of Evolution 2	52
C 833	Articulation 1	54
C 834	Articulation 2	56
C 835	Articulation 3	57
C 836	Articulation 4	59

Contents 2

C 837	Seven Schools of Yoga 1	61
C 838	Seven Schools of Yoga 2	62
C 839	Fire Elementals	64
C 840	Man as Creator	66
C 841	A Mantra for Goodness	67
C 842	Awareness and Thinking	69
C 843	Dissociation 1	71
C 844	Dissociation 2	72
C 845	Focus and Attention	74
C 846	Food and Strength	76
C 847	Teachers and Self-Will	77
C 848	Time and Eternity	79
C 849	The Will Aspect and Creation	81
C 850	The Nature of Magic	82
C 851	Emotional and Mental Health	84
C 852	Pledge-Fever	86
C 853	Seeking and Self-Realization	87
C 854	Thinking and Feeling	89
C 855	Unanswered Questions	91
C 856	Unquestioned Answers	92
C 857	Withdrawal of Consciousness 1	94
C 858	Rules for Magic 1	96
C 859	Rules for Magic 2	97
C 860	Rules for Magic 3	99
C 861	Bodily Polarity 1	101
C 862	Bodily Polarity 2	102
C 863	Cosmic Fire 81	104
C 864	Cosmic Fire 82	106
C 865	Cosmic Fire 83	107
C 866	Descension or Reflection 1	109
C 867	Descension or Reflection 2	111
C 868	Descension or Reflection 3	112
C 869	The Lotus-Heart	114
C 870	Withdrawal of Consciousness 2	116
C 871	Ahamkara 1	117
C 872	Beyond Discipline 1	119

Contents 3

C 873	Beyond Discipline 2	121
C 874	Contrivance	122
C 875	Cosmic Fire 84	124
C 876	Cosmic Fire 85	126
C 877	Learning and Experience 1	127
C 878	Learning and Experience 2	129
C 879	Music and Magic 1	131
C 880	Music and Magic 2	132
C 881	Ahamkara 2	134
C 882	The Dawn	136
C 883	Objectivity 1	137
C 884	Objectivity 2	139
C 885	The Great Realization	141
C 886	Cosmic Fire 86	142
C 887	Cosmic Fire 87	144
C 888	Cosmic Fire 88	146
C 889	Mantric Repetition	147
C 890	Points of Light	149
C 891	Dispassion	151
C 892	The Greater Work 1	152
C 893	The Greater Work 2	154
C 894	The Greater Work 3	156
C 895	The Tarot 1	157
C 896	The Tarot 2	159
C 897	Inscrutability	161
C 898	Occult Reticence	162
C 899	Energy Levels 2	164
C 900	Consecration	166
	Index	169

Light, Love, and Power 1

The three practical aspects of the trinity (manifested existence) (the three rays of aspect) are power (will) (purpose) (first aspect), love (wisdom) (second aspect), and light (third aspect). These three aspects (qualities) are related to each other through (major) ray correspondence, but more practically through a sense of relative complexity, mutual dependence, and degrees (and polarity) of abstraction. The aspects and their qualities are intrinsically related one with another.

From the source (God) issues forth firstly the quality of life and its potency (power). Life (power) is thereby and therefore the most basic and most simple of the three aspects. From the source issues forth secondly the quality of consciousness and its potency (love). Consciousness (love) is substantially more complex than the underlying aspect of life (power). Consciousness draws substantially upon the reservoir of life (power) and is wholly therein dependent. From the source issues forth thirdly the quality of form and its potency (light). Form (light) is more fully complex than the underlying aspect of life (power) and the intermediate aspect of consciousness (love). Form draws directly and indirectly from both the reservoir of life (power) [therein being wholly dependent] and the all-embracing medium of consciousness (love) [being similarly wholly dependent].

Thus, in the involutory polarity (process) from life through consciousness to form, there is increasing complexity replete with substantial dependence (and to some extent interdependence) [and, literally, the more substantial the more dependent]. Yet in the evolutionary polarity (process) from form through consciousness to life, there is decreasing complexity (increasing simplicity) but with "substantial" improvement as one (some essence) becomes less (literally) substantial (i.e., as one becomes more substantial in the spiritual sense and less substantial in the material sense). Or in other words, power is a fundamental attribute of life (the monad) and underlies (and precurses) all consciousness and form, while love is a fundamental (inherent) attribute of consciousness (the soul) and underlies (and precurses) all form (being partially derived), while light is a fundamental attribute of form (the personality) and is wholly derived.

However, each of the three qualities (aspects) has a pairwise correspondence with each of the other two qualities.

There is light fundamentally associated with substance (form), yet there is a higher correspondence (e.g., the light of the soul) within the aspect of consciousness and even a higher correspondence within the aspect of life (e.g., monadic light per se and the (fundamental) atomic or elemental light within form that is a reflection of that monadic light) (rather than the derived or composite light of form). Light is the natural qualifying mechanism.

There is love (unemotional compassion) (wisdom) (consideration) (rapport) fundamentally associated with consciousness, yet there is a higher correspondence (e.g., monadic love) and a lower correspondence (e.g., personal love or affection) as well. And there is a power fundamentally associated with life, yet there are lower correspondences (e.g., the power of love (on levels of consciousness) and the (reflected) power inherent in matter). In each case the quality is developed or manifested and derived from its aspect: (1) power is the result and evocation (indication) (attribute) of life, (2) love is the result and evocation (indication) of consciousness, and (3) light is the result and evocation (indication) (attribute) of form (matter) (substance), in some sense or another.

† Commentary No. 802

Light, Love, and Power 2

In the more practical (occult) sense, light, love, and power are all closely related. Light and love directly evoke power. Light (love) indirectly evokes love (light). Yet power (per se) does not directly or indirectly evoke light or love.

Real power is conveyed by (contained within) (derived from) purpose and cannot exist independently of that purpose (i.e., life is fundamentally purposive). The student can evoke power (energy) (force) qualified and tempered (or otherwise), but unqualified and untempered power cannot be evoked or utilized constructively. The means of qualification and temperance (of power) are light and/or love. The occultist generally favors the means and methods of light, while the mystic generally favors the means and methods of love. The

esotericist, however, generally utilizes a (more meaningful) combination (balance) of light and love. Power is derived from the monad and functions almost entirely inherently.

Real love is conveyed through (and as a result of) quality of consciousness and is primarily an attribute (quality) of the soul and not of the personality (except in the secondary sense of the personality functioning as a channel for or instrument of conveyance of love (e.g., compassion)). Love has to some extent a life of its own in the sense that unqualified and untempered love is still generally qualified (tempered) and purposive, and functions (self-conveys) as a function of its general qualification. Love is really an intermediate qualification and flows from the soul (the Christ within) through the heart center. Love is not a directed or directable energy, but is (generally and naturally) a shared energy (primarily by means of induction).

Light on the other hand, being more complex, can be shared (by induction) if so qualified and/or directed by consciousness. Light is conveyed through the head center (crown chakra) [with the ajna center serving to focus the conveyance]. Light can be conveyed directly through (conscious or unconscious) mental effort or indirectly (inductively) from the soul or (indirectly) radiatively from the material centers. While light and love are both intermediate qualifications (power being more inherent (subtle)), light is more complex (directable) and less sensitive to quality while love is of a higher order (yet simpler) and is more sensitive to (dependent upon) quality. For example, a trained occultist can wield the power of light for good or ill, yet the power of love can only be wielded by one of compatible and sufficient qualification [and the power of power (life) can only be wielded by the monad (primarily) or the soul (to some extent)].

In addition to real power, real love, and real light, there are artificial correspondences on personality levels. The expression of real love, for example, might involve impersonal compassion or genuine love of humanity or a rapport with all expressed life; while the expression of artificial love, for example, might involve desire and more personal (self-centered or more exclusive) considerations. Real light (the light of the soul) involves refinement, higher qualification, and realization (enlightenment), while artificial light (the light of mind) is more primitive and can be abused (i.e., is subject to misuse and/or involves some measure of illusion) [similarly, artificial (personal) love involves

glamour]. Real power is vibratory. Real love is diffusive. And real light is radiative. In each case, real power (love) (light) draws upon higher (inner) sources, while artificial power (love) (light) depends upon the more material and transient.

† Commentary No. 803

The Body Logoic

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the fire devas and the body of logoic consciousness. The repolarization, from one plane of consciousness to another, is a very difficult transition (transformation) to achieve, albeit necessary, for the individual as well as logoic correspondence.

Much of the materialism and emotionalism within human consciousness is related (indirectly) to the polarization of consciousness of the planetary logos. Although humanity (and individuals) is (are) wholly self-responsible, the logoic conditioning (qualification) by virtue of the planetary aura is quite substantial. This accounts also for the presence of "evil" (as evil is understood in the context of ignorance, materialism, and egoism) (which serves nonetheless as a challenge and opportunity for qualitative progress). The activity of desire in its various lower (sexual) and higher (aspirational) forms is also related (as all things in the world are) to the aura of logoic consciousness (all of which humanity embraces is limited necessarily to logoic physical and etheric levels). Earlier, emancipation from desire "was effected through the faculty of discrimination" (as a systemic process); currently (in the present (solar) system) "emancipation will be brought about through the line of occult dispassion." Similarly, in the next system emancipation will be effected by "non-attachment through abstraction."

Individualization and progressive polarization (repolarization) of (human) consciousness must properly be viewed in this background of the body logoic and the composite (contributive) place of humanity within that body of logoic consciousness (aura) (field of endeavor). The bulk of humanity progresses consistently (interdependently) with the planetary aura (the emotional and concrete mental planes of human consciousness correspond to the physical, liquid, and gaseous sub-planes of the logoic physical). As humanity evolves, so

does the planetary aura, and vice versa (not that humanity is the only contributor (beneficiary), but that human development contributes to and is limited (qualified) (encouraged) by progress in the refinement of the body logoic (on levels that humanity can relate to)).

While the bulk of human individuals (souls) constitute the cells of consciousness within the body logoic, the spiritual students of the world more properly represent (embody) the flow or forces of change (progress) (evolution) within that body logoic. Thus, the spiritual students of the world (those souls who (that) are committed to the (spiritual) path of conscious evolution in consciousness) are more free (less limited) to progress from one state of consciousness to another, within the planetary aura. The bulk of humanity are naturally limited by the inertia (momentum) of gradual evolution (general qualification for progress), while those on the path are not so limited but are distinctly qualified by and subject to the inertia (momentum) of the path, which is a different (complementary and supplementary) phase (track) altogether.

On the other hand one cannot be a spiritual student (on the path) without the soul being particularly responsive to higher (inner) qualification. It is this inherent nonconformity of certain souls that affords the opportunity (predilection) (for pioneers) to embark (consciously) upon the spiritual path (and conversely, it is an inherent tendency to be entangled in (attached to) matter that prevents stragglers from keeping up with the bulk of humanity) [and it is the measure of conformity (tendency to conform) that keeps the bulk of humanity safely within the bulk of humanity].

Avatars

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of fire devas and avatars. An avatar is defined conventionally as an incarnation or embodiment of some spiritual concept or principle or as “a variant phase or version of a continuing basic entity” (an incarnation or appearance of God). In the context of cosmic fire, each “avatar is a ray, emanated from a pure spiritual source, a ray of effulgent and perfected glory, clothing itself in matter for the purpose of service.” Each avatar has achieved freedom from one or more planes of endeavor, depending on type (level), but returns (incarnates) (manifests) to level(s) below his achievement (freedom) for some particular (collaborative) service (purpose) (without being able to learn from the place of his appearance). For practical purposes are considered five types of avatars.

A cosmic avatar represents embodied force from some cosmic center (e.g., Sirius) “as far removed from the consciousness of man as man is from the consciousness of the atom of substance.” Cosmic avatars are concerned with “the intelligent coordination” of cosmic and solar logoi. In our (solar) system, cosmic avatars appear (rarely) only at the various (major) stages of logoi development (e.g., the birth (evocation) of the solar system, the various solar initiations in consciousness, and death (abstraction) of the solar system). The impact of such a visit is comparable to the flash sum total of all of human existence (civilization and culture) (viewed incidentally).

There are many kinds of solar avatars (extra-systemic visitors), “mainly concerned with certain processes in the system (e.g., the administration of the law of cause and effect (karma)” over the entire course of solar consequence). Some appear in the planetary schemes (on the higher planes) and work with the planetary heart center (e.g., involved in an energizing process to bring about “an expansion of consciousness, an increase of spiritual light and brilliancy, and planetary radioactivity”). Such avatars appear “not in connection with any particular hierarchy but only in relation to the whole system.” Interplanetary avatars (nirmanakayas of a previous solar cycle) “are mainly concerned with (1) the superintendence of the transfer of force units or soul groups from one scheme to another (which occurs twice in each scheme), (2) the transference of deva

impulse from one scheme to another (once per scheme) (which sets the type (overall qualification) for the devas of that particular scheme),” and (3) overall manasic stimulation (as an incidental consequence of more proper work).

“Planetary avatars emanate from the central planetary logos of a scheme and embody his will and purpose. Such an avatar is to be seen in Sanat Kumara, who, with the three other kumaras, embodies the four planetary principles.” The three kumaras “are the dynamic energy which holds together the three lower kingdoms and are closely connected with the energy aspect of the three earlier chains. There are also human avatars (those previously human souls (more properly monads) who incarnate beyond their own needs in order to embody (express) (manifest) one or another (or combination) of the various principles) who appear from time to time.

The real message of (the existence and working of) the various avatars is that all of the various cosmic, solar, and planetary laws and principles are embodied by various (ray) lives on various levels (i.e., there is nothing in manifestation that is not alive in one sense or another) and that (selfless) service predominates on higher levels. A man is relatively blind until he begins to see all lives and all forms in terms of embodied (manifested) principles (energy) (service).

† Commentary No. 805

Convection 2

The practical implication of convection, from the standpoint of the spiritual student, is in the collaborative role of the spiritual student in conveying energy (light, love, or some aspect and/or combination thereof). Convection is a natural process, i.e., it occurs without human intervention (not that it is even possible for humanity to intervene), under higher law, in response to generalized need (relative imbalance (or inconsistency between the ways things are and the way things are intended to be (in the evolutionary sense of archetypal fulfillment))).

The spiritual student, by virtue of being associated with (embedded in) the spiritual path, naturally and unconsciously participates in natural convection

(the more so as his or her aura is purified and the mind (heart) is able to convey appropriate (refined) energies). But the spiritual student can (and gradually does) participate more and more consciously and deliberately in the process of conveyance (energy sharing) (and linking), through various occult (mystical) (esoteric) means and methods. Even the relatively untrained aspirant is involved in this process. Through aspiration the student represents (and conveys) the more noble desire of humanity, and through compassion and consideration for others, the student conveys consciously or unconsciously the heart-centered qualification and encouragement. Being more head-centered, the occultist tends to be more (occultly) direct and deliberate in his or her activities, utilizing various visualization or advanced techniques in order to convey or focus appropriate energies.

Collaborative energy conveyance is part of natural convection, provided the motive, means, methods, and apparent objectives are consistent with the intended convection (i.e., consistent with the evolutionary plan as manifested). The keys to success in this regard are (1) being responsive to the soul (higher impression) and (2) being (having) sufficient quality (measure of refinement) of consciousness [which are equivalent]. Pursuing one's own (specific) ideas is generally inconsistent with the plan (or at best less efficient and less effective), so that the relative presence of ego is a counter-indication, but working along more general (constructive, qualitative) lines is substantially more effective.

Advanced (esoteric) work builds necessarily upon a continuing foundation of more basic work (reliance on character, temperament, and quality of consciousness). Being good-natured (cheerful, considerate, relatively selfless) significantly conveys goodwill (third ray qualification) which is a particularly effective moderating (qualifying) force for humanity. Similarly, the expression or manifestation of the various heart-centered qualities is essential to human progress and as the student embraces and shares these various energies the student contributes to (participates more intelligently in) the working out of the plan. The subtle, qualitative presence of a spiritual student within some aspect or activity of humanity is a positive encouragement, even if (as it should) it remains unrecognized by the sleeping bulk of the lifewave.

So while convection is a natural phenomenon (process), the student can and should participate more and more in the flow (dharma) (work) of the path, both

actively in the sense of cultivating and manifesting the higher human qualities (demonstrating potential) (without imposition or seeking any recognition) and more subtly (albeit not passively) by virtue of quality and presence. Thus do the spiritual students of the world (and everyone who embraces goodwill) naturally share (convey) light and love.

† Commentary No. 806

Value Systems 1

Esoterically, a human being (person) is defined and measured in terms of quality and extent (level and breadth (depth)) of consciousness and the person's place upon the path. A soul is either committed to the spiritual path or not (or is approaching the path) and is polarized on some (soul) level (i.e., the causal body resides on (is focused within) some sub-plane). The soul's measure of achievement is the relative quality of consciousness and the extent to which that consciousness is represented in its personality matrix (and thereby in its incarnated personality).

While the quality and extent of consciousness of the personality is a proper (esoteric) measure, exoterically, it is a person's character and temperament that matters (more so than ability and relative intelligence) and that character and temperament (and intelligence) is indicated by the value system that is more or less embraced by a person. By value system is meant that collection of interdependent values that a person more or less embraces and to (for) which a person's motives, attitudes, personal objectives, judgment (bias), and behavior are related (derived). Those values need not be well-organized or even self-consistent, nor need those values be consciously realized. As a person progresses through the various evolutionary stages, the value system similarly undergoes change and adaptation (to new conditions and/or new focus in consciousness) (and achieves some measure of organization and consistency).

There are many kinds of value systems, indicating various types and combinations of values. Some values may be loosely held (and not contribute much to the value system); conversely, some values may be closely held (and contribute substantially to what a person is (his or her value system)). Primitive people are primarily concerned (more or less) with survival considerations and

their values reflect that focus and consideration (absorption). Others may embrace a predominantly materialistic or egoistic value system. Yet others (spiritual students and those who are approaching the path) embrace a system of predominantly spiritual values. In each case there is a relative balance of environmental and inherited values (derived from racial, family, cultural, and religious factors) with personal values, with the relatively more advanced people having a stronger personal (individual) component and a weaker environmental component (in this sense personal values can range from very personal (personality-centered) to the impersonal and super-personal).

Thus a person's actual value system, whether passively (unconsciously) embraced or embraced deliberately (actively) (consciously) (intelligently) (with self-determination), is individualized or customized to that person's character and consciousness, yet affords various dimensions of conflicting (hierarchical) and complementary (consistent) values. In a stable value system (which reflects a stable (integrated) personality), values are generally hierarchical or conditional in the sense that value conflicts are relatively easily resolved in consciousness (i.e., through intelligent realization and conditional or situational prioritization (consciously applied or otherwise)).

In one sense, a person's value system is a reflection of that person's character and quality of consciousness. In another sense, the character and quality of consciousness is a reflection of that person's value system (values). Thus, one can effectively utilize a conscious and deliberate change (improvement) in values to bring about changes in character and quality of consciousness. A person and his or her values are one.

Value Systems 2

One common kind of value system (or dimension within a more complex value system) is concerned with materialistic values. At one extreme a person (with such a value system) may be focused entirely on the fulfillment of basic material needs. At the other extreme, a person may be absorbed in the pursuit or embrace of luxury.

In the middle ground (of this particular spectrum) is a concern primarily with being comfortable. In this dimension, the material component of a value system suitable for the spiritual student (materially rich or poor) lies somewhere between the fulfillment of basic needs and being comfortable, but the magnitude (intensity) (degree of concern, attention, or focus) is relatively small (for the spiritual student (who is more properly and more substantially focused on more pertinent matters) and the student disdains material extravagance (luxury), preferring to conserve resources for purposes of constructive utilization (appropriate sharing).

Another common value system is concerned with relative egoistic values. At one extreme the values embraced are wholly self-centered and selfish, with little or no concern for others (e.g., in the case of a wholly egoistic, judgmental, status-seeking, arrogant, competitive, defensive, reactive, self-absorbed individual). In the middle ground of this dimension is a balance between (values that express) personal concerns and (values that express) concern for others. It is this balance (moderation) that is highly desirable (appropriate) for the bulk of humanity. At the other extreme are two branches, in one case (primitive) with values characterized by indifference and/or passivity (i.e., the absence of ego and the relative absence of intelligence), in the other case (advanced) with values characterized by intelligent impersonality and humility (where the person (spiritual student) is primarily focused upon the path and its work (the student's dharma), with only minor material and egoistic components).

A third common value system is concerned with a particular combination of material and egoistic values under the guise of glamour (in its primarily astral or emotional component) (and to a lesser extent maya and illusion (in its physical

(etheric) and concrete mental components, respectively)). The glamour-value system is probably least likely to be consciously embraced (since proper and sufficient awareness generally precludes absorption along the lines of glamour), but is equally seductive as the more materialistic and the more egoistic systems. A related value system (and one that is particularly seductive) is concerned with sensation on physiological, emotional, and/or concrete mental levels (i.e., this value system is more or less unconsciously embraced by the thrill-seeker, the fun-loving person, the drug user, the drinker (of alcoholic beverages), the combatant (competitor), the smoker, and the sexually-focused person).

The spiritual student on the other hand generally seeks to avoid the pitfalls of any glamour or sensation-based endeavors, being far more concerned with the dharma and (in maturity) being relatively unaffected by the various pleasures that so entangle most of humanity. The spiritual student properly (quietly and unemotionally) enjoys life without being distracted by desire or sensation, being largely content to serve (work) without recognition or attention by others. The spiritual student thus embraces a fairly comprehensive set of values that are characteristic of (treading) the path (and which have been progressively revealed to or realized by all who have embraced the path).

† Commentary No. 808

Value Systems 3

The real import of value systems lies in their utilization, both in terms of accordance and in terms of transition or intention. Everyone has a value system or set of personal values, but there can be differences between values aspired to or intended, values actually embraced, and values merely professed. The difference between values professed and values embraced is a negative or counterproductive differential (hypocrisy), while the difference between values aspired to and values embraced, provided that difference is consciously and honestly recognized, is a positive or constructive (progressive) differential.

In a sense, the whole extent of the spiritual path can be viewed in terms of the progressive realization of embraced values. The basic principles of metaphysical, theosophical, and esoteric philosophy imply or convey progressive and intelligible values. The aspirant is one who aspires to or embraces a basic

(aspirational) (probationary) (preliminary) value system, consistent with his or her understanding of the path. Similarly, the disciple is one who embraces an intermediate value system (discipleship), consistent with his or her (more substantial) understanding. In each case the student progresses from one value system to another, or more properly, the value system evolves as the student's knowledge and understanding (and relative wisdom) grow.

That progression generally involves some presentation of values (e.g., encouragement of adherence to the preliminary discipline), some consideration of the presented values, some (preliminary) acceptance, and a period of transition or transformation as those values are gradually embraced or fulfilled. This process actually occurs continually (if not continuously) as new values are recognized, considered, and incorporated. But because the personality (ego) has a mind (will) (desire system) of its own (and because of its inherent self-centeredness, narrow-mindedness, and basic materiality), the personality is usually an impediment to the progression of values (i.e., the personality has its own (primarily self-defensive and sensation-seeking) value system that conflicts or contrasts naturally with that of the waking-consciousness of the spiritual student). The value system of the personality is generally equivalent to the value system of the average person, in which case the values held are generally held more or less unconsciously (subconsciously) (by default). The mark of the relatively more intelligent person is that values (of whatever quality) are held more consciously (i.e., with conscious awareness if not actual conscious consideration and deliberation). The mark of the spiritual student is that values are held more consciously and that those values are predominantly spiritual (consistent with one's place on the path).

Consciously intended values are significant in the sense that conscious intention creates and sustains a momentum in the direction of achievement. But it is also relatively important for a person to be honest about the values actually held (e.g., through periodic self-assessment), as hypocrisy is ever counterproductive. Conscious intention, intelligently and periodically reinforced, can effect considerable transformation in values embraced (character) (disposition) (temperament). It is also quite helpful to consciously identify one's habits associated with actual or retrogressive values so that one can undermine or consciously dissolve those habits (patterns) (tendencies), effectively replacing them with new (more appropriate) ones.

We are the values we embrace. If we are to progress beyond what we are we must progressively embrace higher values, until we actually embody the embraced values and thereby convey or induce those values.

† Commentary No. 809

Expectation 1

Expectation is the act or state of expecting, to anticipate or look forward to, to consider probable or certain, to consider reasonable or necessary, or to consider bound in duty (obligated). A common daily expectation involves the service (work) offered by one person to another. This service expectation may range from a situation in which one has informally (freely) indicated that a task will be done (completed) to a more formal (contractual) arrangement in which one is being paid to perform needed work. In the case of the informal (free) service, the recipient's expectations may be low, i.e., the requestor may have little expectancy that the job will be done and the time frame of completion may be considerable. This low expectancy level is more likely to be true in one-time situations, but if the voluntary service has been ongoing for some time, then expectations can be more realistic. In the contractual (formal) (professional) situation, expectations may be higher both in terms of quality and time-to-completion. The recipient takes the quality and time expectation for granted, since he is probably paying for the service and the performer is probably making a living from the same, meaning that such expectation may not be unreasonable (from the perspective of the personality).

While expectations are common and (probably) necessary personality-centered attributes, i.e., the norm at this time, they should not be an undue part of the soul-infused, spiritual student. The problem is that in the transition period from personality dominance to being soul influenced, the personality is unwilling to (easily) relinquish control (eventually it will) to the higher perspective (the next evolutionary step). Regardless of the circumstances, it is the dharma (duty) of the spiritual student to be as free of externally projected expectations as possible (soul-derived internally-oriented expectations should be the norm), and

the student should deal more in what is accomplished (the real), rather than the expected (the unreal).

From a higher perspective, the problem of expectation is that things which are appropriate for the personality may not be appropriate (are often (usually) totally inappropriate) for the soul. Expectation involves (purely) personality-centered traits, such as, being demanding, pushy, or aggressive, which are attributes wholly alien to the soul, for (at the least) they are impositional and judgmental in makeup. The problem for the personality is to achieve (reasonable) congruence (alignment) with the soul regarding such concepts.

The issue of expectation (and most other dual-interpretation concepts between the uninspired personality and the soul-qualified personality) involves manner and degree. While the personality may believe that a task should be done in a timely, effective, and efficient manner (egocentric), taking exception at anything less (and projecting feelings of frustration and aggression (hostility)), the spiritual student has no such expectations and deals not in pressure or imposition (which only make matters worse), but would rather handle things in a peaceful, undemanding, non-confrontational manner. Thus, the situation from the higher perspective may come down to, does it really matter?

In such circumstances, rather than pursuing things excessively, it is better to remain detached, or otherwise negative consequences may be the only accomplishment. What is applicable for man in general is not true for the spiritual student. For the student, even minor deviations may be severe (in the short and long run), for undue expectation (imposition) may undermine an otherwise appropriate effort. One should live in but not be of the mundane world, remaining balanced in a non-impositional, well-adjusted manner.

Expectation 2

Circumstances involving expectation are a routine (necessary) part of life for mankind in general (implying convenience to the lesser self (a personality necessity)), but they have (potentially) different (difficult) consequences for the spiritual student (depending on level of preparation). While expectation may be appropriate for one student of another (without taking exception) or for the student of himself, this is not true for the student in the case of others, for the others are not answerable to the same laws. Spiritual students are generally honorable, conscientious, and responsible, meaning what they say (and saying what they mean), while humanity in general is less constrained by such expectations (at least at this time). Thus, the rules for the average person seem to be less restrictive (less expectant) than for those on the path.

Undue expectation (pressure) normally does little to resolve circumstances from either the lower (personality) or higher (soul) points of reference (even if it may provide needed experience). In the personality mode, expectation of one person of another may be either unperceived or interpreted as harassment (unappreciated). In addition, the related energy may be negative, especially if it is permeated with (unwarranted) emotional feeling (no matter the outcome). In such instances, understanding is unlikely, for the necessary insight does not exist as to the implication of an unfulfilled promise. The end result may also seem to be a wasted effort (but nothing in manifestation is wasted).

From the perspective of the spiritual student, such energy (which should not be confrontational) may also seem wasted. At best, the student should have only limited external expectations (undue or otherwise), for mainly negative (karmic) consequences are (seem to be) derived (especially if the request was made without proper detachment). The situation appears to be negative for the requestor's expectations are not met, possibly because the request was poorly presented or the expected is undeserved (at that time) (in that context). Depending on context, unfulfilled expectations (may) (probably will) create situations to be repeated (until the lesson is learned), since the individual knows (should have known) better than to have unwarranted expectations in the first place (especially if they are impositional or judgmental).

The specifics of how to interact in the world is ever the responsibility of the spiritual student, for he is (in essence) an outsider (visitor). If a situation is poorly handled, one implication is that the originator is only beginning on the path (lacks proper control (refinement)). If the situation had been better addressed, then probably no one would have had to suffer (the seeming) adverse consequences of the errantly directed effort. Possibly, the situation indicates that the originator (student) is split (lacks focus). In a positive sense, such situations can (should) lead to beneficial lessons in patience. The student should always endeavor to avoid (not perpetuate) such circumstances. If the scenario continues, it may indicate that refinement is needed (in poise). Thus, at the least such situations should be looked at as learning opportunities by which to progress on the path, i.e., karmic reduction.

The student's undue expectations are not unlike expecting too much of a child, before the necessary faculties are developed. Just because the individual is an adult does not mean (real) maturity (e.g., an integrated personality). Much of mankind (at its present developmental state) naturally endeavors to avoid work (a personality perspective) and expend the least effort, while the spiritual student is (should be) trying to give as much of quality as possible, with little (or no) concern for the lesser (little) self.

† Commentary No. 811

Incarnation and Pralaya

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues with consideration of the processes of individualization, incarnation, and pralaya. Individualization is a form of initiation and marks the beginning of (human) self-consciousness. The human being is (potentially) (intentionally) (eventually) (ultimately) the triad in (full) manifestation (on human levels): "the self, the not-self, and the intelligent link; Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma, synthesized; the medium whereby the will, love, and mind of God become intelligible and apparent; positive electrical force, plus negative electrical force, plus the equilibrating medium; the flame, the fire, and the spark in essential manifestation; electric fire, solar fire, and fire by friction."

The path to accomplishment of this triple manifestation includes three cycles each of three aspects, though for all practical purposes the third aspect (sequentially, Shiva) involves expression beyond the human realm. The first aspect (sequentially, Brahma) (the period in which the not-self predominates) involves the bulk of (preliminary) lives (incarnations) leading from individualization to commitment to the spiritual path, in three cycles: "(1) the savage state, (2) the state of the average person, and (3) the state of the intellectually successful person (personality)." The second aspect (sequentially, Vishnu) (the period in which the soul (love-wisdom) "gradually predominates and emerges through the medium of the Brahma aspect") involves the spiritual path from the initial commitment through fulfillment, in three cycles: "(1) the probationary path, (2) the path of initiation through the third initiation, and (3) the path of initiation through the fifth initiation."

Incarnation is the process by which some lifeform (cosmic, solar, planetary, human, etc.) manifests for experience and expression (evolution) (or in the case of subhuman lives, involution). Incarnations proceed (progressively) cyclicly, with periods (pralaya) of quiescence between incarnations (more properly, pralaya is viewed centrally with incarnations as excursions). Pralaya is the "work of abstraction" and the means of imparting principal (impulsive) qualification (in which the impulse (intention) or momentum for incarnation and subsequent withdrawal and abstraction is imparted). Each pralaya "may be considered merely as a transference of force from one direction into another" and there are a number of different kinds (types) of pralaya (five practically).

(1) The period of pralaya between incarnations involves the withdrawal of the life force from the dense physical body, the etheric double, the astral form, and the (concrete) mental form (progressively and respectively), the assimilation of the experience gained (but not otherwise effectively assimilated) during incarnation (i.e., devachan), and preparation for the succeeding incarnation. (2) The period between soul cycles (i.e., the three cycles of three aspects) (e.g., between the first cycle of the savage man and the second cycle of the average man is a (potentially) substantial interval) affords more substantial preparation and pre-qualification. (3) Individual pralaya (proper) in the interval (great human pralaya) between human perfection and the next major cycle of endeavor. (4) Incidental or planetary pralaya "marks periods between manvantaras" and concerns the planetary logos. And (5) solar or great pralaya "marks the re-

absorption into unity and the end (beginning) of manifestation of the solar system.”

There are also microcosmic correspondences as well as intermediate pralaya (periods between rounds, globes, chains, etc.) in which (broader) assimilation, abstraction, pre-qualification, and impulsion are accomplished.

† Commentary No. 812

Cosmic Fire 69

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues with consideration of (1) the types of human rebirth, (2) the future coming of the avatar, (3) impulse and incarnation, (4) the activity of the pitris, (5) the work of form-building, and (6) incarnation and karma.

(1) There are three classes of rebirths: “those of avatars, those of adepts, and those of jivas seeking development.” Keys to the principles of rebirth can be found in the correspondence between “the devachan of the reincarnating jiva, the nirvana of the adept, and the pralaya of some cosmic entity.” Each case involves “periods of development, long cycles of meditation, and interludes between stages of activity.” “By means of meditation, a man finds freedom” on some level. (2) There are four avataric methods: “the method of overshadowing, the method of embodying some principle, the method seen in the mystery of the Bodhisattva, or the Christ, and the method of direct incarnation.” “All the methods of manifestation should be interpreted in terms of force and energy” as well as by correspondence and association. Through relationship (e.g., discipleship or participation in some (proper) ashramic field) one properly qualified generally serves as an energy extension, (indirectly) involving one or another of the four avataric methods (if only by induction and correspondence). The reappearance of the Christ is primarily an avataric and magnetic duration involving astral (emotional) relaxation (refinement) (quieting).

(3) The incarnation of some jiva (human being) is the consequence of some monadic impulse (duration) (via the soul) tempered by karmic qualification and related to the status of (the three fires of) the lotus or causal body. As the soul

evolves the lotus is gradually unfolded revealing (progressively refined) fiery radiation. The soul of the savage (average man) (intellectually successful person) is more or less quiescent (inactive), while the soul of one upon the path is increasingly active in the sense of its radiation and active qualification of the lesser self. But each soul is part of some collective (group) (ray) (ashramic) soul having some particular purpose and sequence. So incarnation relates as much to personal karma as to the collective needs of one's soul group and relationships thereof.

(4) "Creation means the appearance in active manifestation of some form of energy." The work of the solar pitris involves "directing the vibration towards the atomic triangle, pronouncing the mantra of incarnation, and building into the causal body that which is required for its completion." While the solar pitris involve man's consciousness, the lunar pitris "embody the substance of man's (lower) bodies." But "any life (pitris) can only give out that which it has possessed, and possession of the varying attributes of consciousness from that of the atom up to the consciousness of a solar logos is the result of long cycles of acquirement." (5) The "work of form-building proceeds under definite laws, which are the laws of substance itself," in various stages, including and involving, respectively, (a) the nebulous and the pitris of the (fire) mist, (b) the inchoate and the pitris of chaos, (c) the fiery and the pitris of the fiery spheres, (d) the watery and the pitris of dual heat, (e) the etheric and the pitris of the triple heat (and the pitris of vitality), and (f) the solid.

(6) The subject of incarnation and karma "radically concerns energy" and energy is inherently a matter of collective and particular (purposive) (karmic) qualification. Karmic causes "are inherent in the constitution of matter itself" as matter is collectively qualified in many ways and from various sources.

Awareness of Personality 1

The human personality is potentially a considerable asset to the spiritual student, but it must first be carefully cultivated and tempered in order to be more useful and effective than (naturally) impedimentive. For most people, the personality is already an adequate (generally effective) instrument for experience and expression, but for the spiritual student, the personality must be refined and the natural personality-centeredness of the personality must be overcome as well. In order to overcome the natural impedimentiveness of the personality, the student must cultivate an effective awareness of what and how the (particular) personality is (e.g., what characteristics and tendencies, how the personality functions to protect itself and sustain its illusion of independence), before the personality can be effectively tempered.

It is therefore relatively quite important for the spiritual student to be continually aware of the degree of his or her personality-centeredness (in the case of an untempered personality) or the degree of personality presence (in the case of a partially tempered personality or a personality that is tempered part of the time (or both)). Personality-centeredness implies the absorption of the personality on mundane (personal) levels and/or the absorption of the personality in glamour and illusion. It is extremely difficult for a personality-centered person (even a spiritual student) to be aware of that personality-centeredness.

So the student must cultivate measures of self-discipline such that (1) the personality is gradually refined (making it more receptive and responsive to higher impression) and (2) the waking-consciousness becomes increasingly aware of the times and extent of personality-centeredness. In that awareness are the seeds for gradually taking control of the personality and wresting it from its absorbed state (all of which is over and above the need for the student to overcome the self-centeredness of the personality (i.e., personality-centeredness and self-centeredness are two distinctly different phenomena although often manifesting simultaneously)).

Personality-centeredness is in a sense the extreme case of personality presence or the degree to which the personality is functioning as an (independent) personality (instead of as a consciously and effectively receptive and responsive instrument of higher purpose) (one who is personality-centered can be only marginally receptive and responsive (intelligently cooperative) at best, while one who is not personality-centered is thereby wholly receptive and responsive). In the context of a spiritual group, personality-centeredness is separative and counterproductive. In the context of an advanced spiritual group, even personality presence is separative and counterproductive (impedimentive). Thus one must be properly tempered in order to work effectively in the context of a spiritual group.

The real keys to overcoming both personality-centeredness and personality presence are awareness of what constitutes personality-centeredness and personality presence coupled with continual (continuous) self-awareness (i.e., awareness of what and how the personality is functioning). The first key is a matter of consciously learning from the appropriate (pertinent) theosophical and metaphysical teachings, while the second key is a matter of conscious and deliberate cultivated awareness and the ability to discriminate the personality presence from the properly-tempered personality. Many intelligent aspirants and even some (probationary) disciples (spiritual students) have difficulty becoming so aware and in exercising proper discrimination.

† Commentary No. 814

Awareness of Personality 2

The fundamental problem of the untempered or partially tempered personality (one that is personality-centered or which manifests some extent of personality presence, respectively) is that the waking-consciousness naturally identifies with the personality and therefore (without considerable training and self-discipline) has considerable difficulty in discriminating between the real (the absence of personality) and the unreal (the personality presence). [Of course it is not “wrong” for the personality to be personality-centered or for there to be a personality presence (participation of the personality as a personality and not as a responsive instrument), but that is counterproductive from the point of view of

the soul and in the context of the spiritual path (where the objectives of life and the values embraced (or to be embraced) are different from those of people who are not on the path and not subject to its rules)].

Two of the keys to the personality's (self) deception are glamour (feeling) and illusion (rationalization). Emotionally-polarized people (emopols) are particularly susceptible to glamour, while mentally-polarized people (menpols) are particularly susceptible to rationalization (the problem of a menpol who is englamoured is often compounded by rationalization and the problem of an emopol who rationalizes is often compounded by emotional bias). The personality encourages the absorption of the waking-consciousness in glamour and illusion.

When the mind first seeks to wrestle with this problem of personality-centeredness and personality presence, the obvious discriminating factors have to do with coarseness (and apparent quality of consciousness (as manifested) (e.g., character, disposition, temperament, etc.)) (i.e., the color of the personality (aura)). This helps in the refinement process but does not really address the more subtle factors (that may not be obvious to the waking-consciousness). The mind gradually learns to recognize many of the personality indicators (and in recognition are the seeds of overcoming) and eventually develops the ability to discriminate even the more subtle aspects of personality (i.e., the tone of the personality). But this is necessarily a long and difficult process as the personality is intelligently subtle and deceptive and seeks to undermine the student's efforts.

Through self-observation (and retrospection) the degrees of coarseness manifested can be recognized and qualification evoked to bring about a suitable refinement. But where the personality is absorbed (in mundane, personal matters (including glamour)) self-observation and retrospection may not suffice to bring about the needed awareness and self-transformation. One must also actively (consciously and deliberately) cultivate the processes of (continual or continuous) self-observation and (daily) retrospection such that the waking-consciousness (the focus of one's human consciousness) becomes aware of even the more subtle forms of absorption.

One of the crucial keys to success in these endeavors is honesty (and particularly self-honesty). One must be intelligently and sensibly open to truth (and particularly to the truth about oneself) or else the personality will have the upper hand in extending or continuing its deception. In fact, being open to truth may not even suffice. Indeed, one may actually have to love truth and actively (consciously and deliberately) seek truth before the veils of personality-generated glamour and illusion (self-deception) can be overcome. This process is further compounded by the layered nature of truth (e.g., the deception of the personality is layered such that one must actually penetrate (reveal) layer after layer (one by one) (each more subtle) of self-deception).

† Commentary No. 815

Awareness of Personality 3

One who is properly trained and experienced in occult matters should be able to recognize (discern and discriminate) the relative degree of personality presence and in that recognition (coupled with sincere intention (will)) should be able to bring about the proper tempering of the personality such that the personality will be a non-impedimentive and constructive (collaborative) instrument for spiritual work. But those who are not so trained and experienced (yet have embarked upon the spiritual path nonetheless) must institute a process of continual (hopefully continuous and eventually unconscious but nonetheless effective) vigilance in order to achieve the needed recognition and subsequent refinement and qualification.

The student who cannot easily discern and discriminate the personality presence should continually ask a number of pertinent questions. How and to what extent is the ego manifesting itself in my life? To what extent am I manifesting as a personality? To what extent is my personality qualified by higher purpose and quality? How is the personality manifesting as a personality? How is the personality qualified by the soul? What are the ways of the personality? What is the quality and nature of the soul? How can I manifest that quality and nature? What ways of the world have I embraced, consciously or otherwise, and how do those ways undermine the manifestation of higher purpose? How can my personality be refined and cultivated to reduce

and eliminate its presence? How can I utilize my personality (spiritually) effectively, without undermining the higher purpose and quality in manifestation? To what extent am I absorbed in the mundane and personal world? How am I enamoured? What assumptions have I made and what are their effects? What opinions do I have and how closely are they held? How can I be loosened from my opinions and how can I have no opinions?

If the student is both honest and earnest in asking these questions (and in formulating additional pertinent questions) and patient and persistent in listening to (for) answers, however subtle they may be, then progress will be achieved. The "work" is continual, as ever the process is refined and new recognitions occur. Eventually the qualification of the personality by the soul (which is necessarily indirect and subjective) will increase and become more and more obvious to the waking-consciousness (helping the waking-consciousness then to discriminate between the personality presence and the soul's quality). Ultimately, as the soul's quality is recognized, it will become painful to be anything other than that soul qualification (i.e., every emergence of personality will be painful to the waking-consciousness which will then seek to dampen the personality in order to restore the flow of the soul qualification).

Of course the spiritual student cannot expect to be soul-aligned or soul-infused all of the time (although that is indeed one of the goals), and there will naturally be times in which the personality emerges (as a personality). Stress, for example, naturally evokes both the personality presence (more notably in the form of manifested weaknesses and vulnerabilities (e.g., impatience and irritability)) and the seeds of their overcoming, but stress (and its effects in the personality) is not an easy matter to deal with.

The extent to which a personality participates in anything (e.g., a spiritual (metaphysical) (theosophical) group (activity)) is the extent to which the soul (higher self) (higher purpose) (truth) (wisdom) is not present. In the final analysis, the soul is only and ever revealed in the absence of personality.

Cosmic Fire 70

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues, with consideration of the building of the causal body (the body of manifestation of the soul). The building of the causal body involves the redemption of the human being and the elevation (refinement and qualification) of the lower self so that it can participate more effectively in the working out of the soul's energy. It also involves the development and unfoldment of the lotus of the soul and the evocation (awakening to activity) of the central life within the lotus.

"Man (every human being) is in essence divine. Man is in fact a fragment of the universal mind or world soul, and as a fragment is thus partaker of the instincts and quality of that soul, as it manifests through the human family. Man in his lower nature, and in his three vehicles, is an aggregate of lesser lives, dependent upon him for their group nature, for their type of activity, and collective response, and who (through the energy or activity of the solar angel) will themselves later be raised, and developed to the human stage." With realization of these truths (1) medical science will be able to focus on what it is about the personality that prevents the soul's energy from properly qualifying the lower self, (2) "the entire social world of thought will apply itself to the understanding of the emotional nature of humanity" as well as human relationships and responsibilities (from this higher perspective), and (3) methods of teaching will be transformed accordingly (with emphasis on the existence of the soul).

The two basic processes and methods (and their combination) of the (present) spiritual path will eventually become the way of the bulk of humanity, "one calling for the elevation of the inner consciousness of the human unit (functioning in the physical body) to the higher levels of the mental plane, and therefore involving a raising or expansion of man's waking-consciousness until it becomes aware of this higher life" (i.e., the mystical or heart-centered approach) and "one in which the effort of the man (person) is concentrated in an attempt to bring down into the physical brain consciousness, and thus on to the physical plane, the life and power and energy of the inner center, the soul" (i.e., the occult or head-centered approach).

The building of the causal body is more properly viewed as a combination of the response of the causal body to the energy (experience) of the lower self and the response of the causal body to the qualification of the higher self. The causal body can be viewed (1) "as nine vibrations emanating from a central point, (2) as nine petals of a lotus, radiating from a common center, and hiding within themselves three central petals, which conceal a central point of fire, (3) as nine spokes of a wheel, converging towards a central hub, and (4) as nine types of energy which produce definite emanations from a threefold unit, outgoing from the central unit of force." In this sense, one (three petals) is the number of the monad, two (nine petals) is the number of the soul, and three is the number of the personality. As a person evolves in consciousness, so do the petals of the lotus of the soul (causal body) accordingly unfold into manifestation (radiative activity or qualification).

The process of building and unfolding the causal body is also the process by which the three fires are balanced and blended. "In electric fire, the monad is represented in its threefold nature (the central petals of the lotus). In solar fire, these solar pitris in their nine-fold formation (the soul) work out the forces. In fire by friction, the lunar pitris are represented and constitute the lower self or personality."

† Commentary No. 817

The Purpose of Life 1

As all of manifested existence is qualified by logic purpose, so does each human incarnation have both a general purpose and relatively particular goals and/or objectives (some aspects by virtue of general qualification and other aspects by the particulars of karma). In the broadest sense, the purpose of life is the development, evolution, expansion, and refinement of consciousness. As composite lives evolve in consciousness, so do the collective lives evolve in consciousness. The actual, practical purpose of life on human levels depends on the relative consciousness achieved and the relative place of the soul on its evolutionary spiral, and its range includes experience, development, refinement, and service (and naught else).

For those who are not upon the spiritual path (i.e., those who are within the first major cycle of human incarnations), the purpose of life ranges from experience to development. At the first level (sub-cycle), the human savage (physpol) (being physically-polarized in consciousness) is concerned predominantly (and unconsciously) with gross experience. At the second level (sub-cycle), the average person (emopol) (being emotionally-polarized in consciousness) is concerned predominantly (and largely unconsciously) with experience and development, with the balance between experience and development being determined by karmic factors (i.e., need based upon levels of achievement). At the third level (sub-cycle), the intellectually successful person (emopol or in some cases menpol) (being emotionally or mentally polarized in consciousness) is concerned predominantly (more or less unconsciously) with development.

The distinction between experience and development is primarily one of focus. The relatively unevolved need broad experience in order to progress (i.e., broad experience provides a basis for basic development of the human faculties), while the relatively evolved, having some measure of broad experience, are more focused (yet relatively unconsciously) on the development of particular characteristics in consciousness (with corresponding development of the respective form).

For those who are on the spiritual path (i.e., those who are within the second major cycle of human incarnations), the purpose of life ranges from refinement to service. At the first level (sub-cycle), the aspirant (emopol) or probationary disciple (menpol) is concerned predominantly with refinement (self-purification and self-discipline) and overcoming the (personal) karmic residue. At the second level (sub-cycle), the disciple (menpol) is concerned predominantly with refinement and service, with the balance between refinement and service being determined by karmic factors (relative progress or levels of achievement). At the third level (sub-cycle), the senior disciple (initiate) being virtually wholly free from (personal) karmic considerations is almost wholly concerned with service (i.e., his or her assigned work).

The distinction between refinement and service is also primarily one of focus. The relatively inexperienced spiritual student (aspirant, disciple) needs a considerable measure of refinement in order to be of more effective service (i.e., to be able to proceed with a service motive without being distracted by personal

or mundane energies), while the relatively experienced spiritual student (disciple, initiate), having some relatively considerable measure of refinement and self-control (qualification of the personality such that the personality is a purified and responsive instrument of the soul), can thereby focus almost entirely on the (proper) purpose, which is service.

† Commentary No. 818

The Purpose of Life 2

The “purpose” or intention of the personality (ego) is of course another matter altogether. The personality seeks primarily to defend and sustain itself in its (illusion of) independent existence. The personality achieves its goal (to the extent that it can) by self-imposing a “desire” qualification for focusing attention (activities) on happiness, sensation (sense-perceptions), excitement, ego-fulfillment, etc., i.e., experience that supports its own objectives. As the ego becomes somewhat tempered it may lean more toward glamour as its method of continuing its influence, but as the ego is fully overcome, the personality ultimately becomes an unencumbering instrument of the higher self and higher purpose.

The purpose of life ultimately involves all four dimensions (experience, development, refinement, and service) simultaneously. As a person evolves in consciousness, the focus and predominance (emphasis) shifts naturally and inevitably from experience (karma) to development, then from development to refinement (as the path is entered upon), then from refinement to service (dharma). But even so, one continues to experience even when one’s experience is essentially complete, and one continues to develop even when one’s development (as a human being) is essentially complete, and one continues to refine one’s consciousness even as one’s refinement is essentially complete (and as the service motive is fully embraced).

As each stage is fulfilled, the respective process becomes more unconscious and less central (more incidental and less deliberate). The habits that have been developed (e.g., (1) to assimilate experience more or less unconsciously but in real time, (2) to continue development albeit incidentally to refinement and/or service, and (3) to continue the unconscious qualifications that result in

continuing refinement) through the various stages continue to operate, constructively and progressively, by virtue of one's qualification in consciousness.

The dimension of the underlying purpose of life being embraced (experience, development, refinement, or service) actually provides the personality with substantial (qualifying) motivation, albeit relatively unconsciously. The personality naturally seeks experience or development or refinement or service, depending on one's place in the spiral circuit (cycles and sub-cycles of evolutionary manifestation), although the ego can sometimes use that inner urge (motivation) (glamour) to neglect what is actually more needed (e.g., one who is englamoured by service might (apparently unfortunately) neglect refinement or self-discipline, or one who is absorbed in sensational experience might (apparently unfortunately) neglect development). The key is whether or not the personality is primarily pursuing its own purposes or those of the path.

In the final analysis, one begins the evolutionary process through many lives of unconscious and relatively ineffective (indirect) (passive) assimilation of experience (and corresponding development of abilities, characteristics, and faculties), one evolves to and through the point where the assimilation of experience is accomplished more or less consciously and deliberately (and therefore rather effectively) (and concomitantly with refined development (and some measure of service)), and eventually (ultimately) evolves to and through the point where the assimilation of experience (continued development) (continued refinement) is secondary (to service) and is accomplished more or less unconsciously but nonetheless effectively (due to occult training and qualification).

Awareness of Personality 4

After many cycles of incarnations for experience and interludes (pralaya) for assimilation, the personality is eventually developed and refined to the point where it begins to sense the presence or quality of the soul. Just prior to that point, the mind (waking-consciousness) believes in the existence of the soul and works toward becoming consciously and continuously aware of the distinction between the soul (quality) and its personality (color and tone), but can only properly measure the soul's presence in terms of the absence of the personality. However, after the mind (personality) (waking-consciousness) begins to sense the presence of the soul (i.e., after the noise of the personality and ego have been largely (but never actually completely) overcome)), then the discernment (discrimination) of personality presence becomes relatively more easy (intuitive).

Prior to this turning point the personality has the upper hand as it is self-enchanted (i.e., absorbed in material (mundane) (personal) glamour and illusion) and the personality actively deceives the waking-consciousness (which is after all only an aspect of itself) in its falsehood (even to the point where the personality masquerades as the soul). But once the soul quality is consciously recognized, the personality is increasingly seen (perceived) to be of lesser quality (relative to that of the soul) (even as the quality of the personality is actually improving). From that point on the soul has the more apparent momentum and the waking-consciousness actually begins to enchant the personality with the quality of the soul (i.e., the personality begins to "like" the feeling that results from its awareness of the soul's quality). At that point, the personality begins to cooperate with the efforts of refinement, seeking its own temperance as a means of improving its ability to bathe in the presence of the soul (even as that means the personality is weakened in its sense of separation and independence).

However, even at that point, the struggle is not ended, as the personality is still "present" to some extent and its (now secondary) objective of self-preservation becomes even more subtle in its manifestation. Thus the (waking-consciousness of the) spiritual student must still be (further) refined and further trained to permit increased awareness (discernment) of the personality presence (and the more subtle distinctions between personality and soul (in

manifestation)). On the other hand, having some awareness of the soul means that the soul qualification (energy) (forces) is more actively felt (available) and the student can more easily recognize the finer distinctions between the real (the self) and the unreal (the not-self).

Believing in the existence of the soul (active relationship to God) conveys some momentum to the aspirant's efforts. But once the soul is actually felt (and this does not mean the personality's masquerade), that momentum is increased relatively dramatically. In subsequent lifetimes and prior to the fulfillment of each lifetime's recapitulation in which the soul's presence is again consciously felt, such a student will simply "know" of the soul's reality, having unconscious memories of the earlier incarnation(s). But it is only when the soul's presence (quality) is actually felt that the personality can begin to respond actively.

Awareness of personality must nonetheless be continually realized, consciously or unconsciously, in order for the spiritual student to continue within the momentum of the path, for only by that awareness and realization can the personality be effectively and efficiently utilized for good.

† Commentary No. 820

Beyond Egoism

There is a natural and inevitable psychological transition from egoism through altruism to holism. Egoism is the natural result of focused self-interest (replacing the passive non-egoistic (and non-altruistic) state of the undeveloped ego) and predominates in the "developed" personality whose strength is allowed to color character, disposition, temperament, and values. Egoistic (self-centered) people are necessarily personality-centered (but not necessarily vice versa) and non-altruistic.

Egoism does however have a "range" from relatively coarse to relatively refined. In the worst case, the self-concerned person preys on others for some apparent (but not real) benefit. In the better case, the self-concerned person has some moral (ethical) (legal) temperance such that others do not suffer (directly) by virtue of his or her egoism. This tempered ego naturally evolves into a more

altruistic personality (characterization) as consciousness improves (based on experience and largely unconscious realization (conscience)) and a person begins to be concerned as much about others as himself, and on to the point where one is concerned predominantly with others. This altruism also has a "range" based upon the degree to which values are imposed (i.e., at worst one can be altruistic and impositional, at best altruistic and non-impositional).

Average and relatively developed people have a reasonable balance between self-interest and concern for others (with self-interest holding sway if the balance is tested). It generally takes a number of lives before self-interest gives way to more noble (and more humble) endeavors. Beyond altruism is the range of holism, in which altruism gradually evolves into (over the course of lives) trans-altruistic realization (deeper, broader, semi-conscious appreciation for the inter-relatedness of all lives and all events). Holism is concerned with the whole, with concern for individual components (forces and/or people) (as individuals) tempered by that greater realization (conscience) (wisdom). In the holistic domain (approach) (perspective), individual components still have value, but that value is related to the whole and the emphasis (focus) is upon the determining factors as irreducible wholes.

Holistic methods can be applied to virtually any level or segment of manifestation (e.g., humanity can be viewed and treated as a whole (system) of internal and inter-related components, activities, forces, etc.) but are only truly effective when external-relatedness is accounted for (i.e., treating a whole (system) in the context of some greater whole (system)). In the final analysis, holism is a means of embracing the all of life and is far superior (psychologically) to altruism (which is, in turn, far superior (psychologically) to egoism) [although the measure (character and quality) of consciousness determines the individual needs (suitability) and egoism (altruism) is a necessary precursor (prelude) to altruism (holism)].

But this triplicity (egoism, altruism, holism) [more properly holism, altruism, egoism, with clockwise circulation] is itself only one dimension or component of the human psychological system. There are a number of dimensions or components which collectively indicate the measure of human (spiritual) (evolutionary) achievement (relative maturity), any one or several of which are not necessarily conclusive (i.e., one can be developed or advanced in one or more

dimensions with or without a corresponding achievement in the remaining dimensions). Yet passing (evolving) beyond egoism (egoistic character, disposition, temperament, and values) toward a more altruistic (holistic) view is a major and necessary prerequisite for serious spiritual and esoteric work.

† Commentary No. 821

Cosmic Fire 71

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D) continues consideration of the building of the causal body. The monad utilizes the soul (causal body) as a “vehicle of enlightenment,” while the soul utilizes the personality as its “medium of expression.” While the personality (lower self) develops, it is the soul (higher self) that evolves (and it is the monad (being) that actually evolves (by double reflection) even as it remains far removed from its personality expression). The causal body is the central reservoir of accumulated evolutionary result, as the experience of the personality is assimilated by the soul and as the monad in its own way (and on its own level) draws upon the content of the soul (causal body).

From the perspective of the monad, the first evolutionary period primarily involves the lunar pitris (and fire by friction) and “the lower vibrations control.” The second evolutionary period is “the stage in which the solar pitris gradually become predominant” and as the soul consciousness is cultivated the solar fire is involved (and the “middle vibrations control”). The third evolutionary period is “the stage in which electric fire is revealed” and both the soul (causal body) and personality (mind, emotions, and body) are both discarded.

The causal body consists of three circles of petals, an outer circle of three petals (triad) of (third ray) knowledge and experience, a middle circle of three petals (triad) of (second ray) love-wisdom (understanding) (service), and an inner circle of three petals (triad) of (first ray) sacrifice (the “full expression of knowledge and love turned toward the conscious sacrifice of all to the furthering of the plans of the planetary logos and to the carrying out of his purposes in group work”). The petals of the outer triad involve knowledge, love, and sacrifice (respectively) on the physical plane (and the hall of ignorance). The petals of

the middle triad involve more intelligent knowledge, love, and sacrifice (respectively) on the physical and emotional (astral) planes (and the hall of knowledge). The petals of the inner triad involve respectively (on the mental plane (and the hall of wisdom)) "(1) the will to sacrifice through knowledge and thus intelligently to dominate the entire threefold lower man (personality), (2) the will to sacrifice through love and thus to serve, and (3) the utter sacrifice of all forever."

The various petals unfold according to formulae and depending on the ray of the particular monad (i.e., a first ray monad (of power), a second ray monad (of love-wisdom), or a third ray monad (of activity)). The unfoldment of the outer circle is referred to (symbolically) as "the 700 incarnations." The unfoldment of the middle circle is likewise referred to as "the 70 incarnations." And the unfoldment of the inner circle is referred to as "the seven incarnations." Together, the 777 (symbolic) incarnations (years) lead to the point of initiation and further synthesis.

"All manifestation is the result of active energy producing certain results, and expenditure of energy in any one direction will necessitate an equal expenditure in an opposite." In the first or personal stage "the energy manifested acts outwardly" and the soul is absorbed in matter (its personality). In the second stage adjustment under law (balance) is sought and equilibrium is achieved (the soul emerges into activity (active qualification)) from the struggle between the pairs of opposites. In the third stage "the energy of the soul is centered at the heart of the circle and not in the periphery" (the pull of the lower nature is superseded and the presence of the monad is felt).

Democracy

Democracy is a form of government by the people, particularly in the sense of majority rule. In a democracy (in principle), the political power is “vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.” In principle, a democracy (democratic country or organization) exhibits “the absence of hereditary or arbitrary class distinctions or privileges.”

In a democracy, each citizen (or member) has the right to participate in the political process and the right to vote in any pertinent election or on any issue presented to the membership (people). Moreover, in a democracy there is usually a moral or ethical (cultural) obligation (expectation) for each citizen (member) (representative) to vote in elections and on issues presented, which also implies a moral or ethical obligation to be suitably informed on the issues (candidates) in order to be able to vote intelligently. Consequently, the results of the democratic process are relatable to the (majority) quality of consciousness of the people (including that of those who choose not to participate directly in the process (i.e., those who do not participate are still responsible for the outcome (indirectly contributively))).

Democracy does have potential short-comings. There is a tendency toward political polarization which is counterproductive. There is a tendency for people to “take sides” (being attached to one or another of the political positions rather than seeking moderate and reasonable solutions). And there is a tendency to elect representatives based upon emotional appeal (glamour) and superficial values rather than based upon proper qualifications (intelligence, reasonableness, selflessness). But compared to more primitive (less fair) forms of government (e.g., dictatorship), democracy is more constructive. Proper participation in the democratic process encourages education (growth) and a sense of responsibility. For a democracy to work effectively, the people must be reasonably intelligent and reasonably capable of participating effectively in the political process. Moreover, democracy is a process that allows for the growth in intelligence (and reasonableness) of its participants.

The role of the spiritual student, however, is not to participate directly (objectively) in the political processes (of a democracy or otherwise), but to participate indirectly (subjectively). "Voting" in any sense is a function of the personality and not of the soul. The soul does not take sides nor does the soul have any opinions on any issues. The soul deals instead in quality of consciousness. A spiritual student who participates directly in the political process (e.g., by voting) does so as a personality. But the spiritual student who is soul-infused or soul-aligned simply cannot participate directly in the political process, for participation or involvement in political (democratic) processes is inherently separative and encouraging of personality-centeredness or personality absorption and are inconsistent with the soul's quality.

While the vast majority of people should still participate directly in the political process (fulfilling their civic duties), the spiritual student should participate only subjectively. By being aware of the issues and allowing one's conscience (wisdom) (soul qualification) to guide the meditative process, the spiritual student should be able to convey a higher quality of consciousness for all who participate more directly. This does not mean taking sides in any sense, nor in mentally choosing candidates. But it does mean subjective qualification and complete non-attachment to candidates and issues. Only thus can the spiritual student fulfill his or her civic duties.

† Commentary No. 823

The Echo of the Soul

The soul is a wave in the field of being of the monad. The human personality is a wave in the field of consciousness of the soul. This (solar) wave is an echo of the wave that constitutes the soul and is therefore a second-order wave relative to the soul (which is in turn a second-order wave relative to the monad and thus the personality is a third-order wave). In this sense, a wave is an intelligent (purposive) and qualified energy distribution and constitutes reality (life) (consciousness) (appearance) on some level. And in this sense, an echo is a reflected wave, and conveys the response of the medium through which the incident wave is passed.

The human personality is thereby an echo of the soul and a function of both the incident wave (the soul as projected) and the medium of the three (lower) worlds of human experience and expression (i.e., the physical, emotional (astral), and concrete mental planes of consciousness). The incident wave (impulsive incarnation (the underlying purposive and karmically qualified impulse to incarnate)) is distorted (modified) by the relative coarseness (materiality) and quality (tonal response) of the medium (environment), as is the reflected wave (echo) distorted by the induced consciousness (the relative coarseness and quality (tone) of the human personality) (distributed incarnation (the induced response to the soul's impulse)).

From the perspective of the soul, the problem consists of assimilating the energy content (experience) of the reflected wave (echo). If the reflected wave is distorted appreciably (as in the case of the savage and even in the case of the average person), most of the energy content is diffused on more concrete levels and there is relatively little content that is detectable (and therefore able to be assimilated or absorbed by the soul on its level). As the human being evolves in consciousness the relative purity of the personality is improved and the quality (tone) of the personality begins to be felt by the soul. This is so because the personality then projects its quality more effectively "upward" and because the personality is functioning on relatively higher (less coarse) levels (i.e., the higher sub-planes). The medium (matter) acts as an effective filter. The coarse emanations of a personality are absorbed (or are reflected downward) by the material nature of the lower planes (and sub-planes) of consciousness, while the more refined emanations are passed onward (upward) to levels upon which the soul can operate.

The concrete mind of a highly refined and properly trained and qualified personality can actually reach equilibrium (balance) (relationship) with the abstract mind of the soul such that energy (qualification) can be exchanged (meaning that the soul can extract (assimilate) experience more directly and that the personality can be more directly qualified by the soul). But this can only occur (properly and effectively) where the personality (echo) is particularly clear (pure) (refined) and without even the hint of ego or personality-centeredness (personality presence) (personal or mundane energy). It is thus only in the absence of personality (in the sense of the personality being so refined that it reflects the energy of the soul without any distortion) that the

soul (wave) and the personality (echo) can work effectively (harmoniously and contributively) together.

This (energy) perspective of the (incident) wave of the soul and the (less real) (reflected) wave (echo) of the personality is more descriptive of the way these entities operate (and appear from the higher perspective) than any material sense (illusion) (of separate or independent existence).

† Commentary No. 824

The Ring of Truth

As the student advances in the dharma of the path, he (she) is progressively better able to discern truth. To the extent of the relative responsiveness of the mind to the intuition (of the overshadowing and underlying (indwelling) soul), any statement or thought presented to the mind can be tested by the intuition and will have a certain subtle ring of truth or otherwise. Of course the soul is not interested in the affairs of the personality, but the mind that is in (some) contact with the soul does have its thoughts (impressions) naturally tested by that association. That (energy or quality) which is "true" or pure will be qualitatively and subjectively accepted by the soul, while that which is not "true" will be (naturally) rejected by the soul (and realized by the mind in the "ring" of that relative consistency). However, there are a number of pitfalls for the unwary that lead to a false sense of discernment.

One such pitfall is the natural rationalization of the (concrete) mind (personality) (ego) that can proceed without conscious deliberation and without the conscious awareness of the (waking-consciousness of the) (unwary) student such that the student mistakes the result of subconscious rationalization for true intuitive discernment. The mind (ego) of the aspirant (or disciple) may often attempt to masquerade as the intuition (particularly where there is hope or expectation, wherein the mind provides encouragement irregardless of the truth (i.e., the ego reveals (the mind hears) whatever one wants to be revealed (heard))). Even if the mind deliberates consciously, there is no intuition (higher insight) (discernment) in any (concrete) mental process and the results of any rational or otherwise concrete mental process should be suspected. Deliberate

concrete (rational) (reasonable) mental activity can still be useful (particularly in the absence of intuition), but should not be mistaken for true insight. Any time a person actually thinks about some subject, then whatever intuitive capability a student might otherwise have is thereby preempted.

Another pitfall is the false attribution of discernment to the (emotional) instincts of the lower self (personality). Instinct is the lower correspondence of intuition and can in many cases reveal or present some insight or (lower) realization to the mind. In some cases the information thus presented is accurate and reliable, but in other cases (and times) it is not. Thus the (results of) instinct (are) is not consistent (actually the instinct is consistent, but the ability of the aura (emotional or astral body) to accurately convey the instinct to the conscious mind and the ability of the (emotionally biased) mind to interpret the received impressions is seriously limited).

Thus both the emotions and the concrete mind tend to distort the (lower) abilities of the personality in the discernment of truth. The ring of truth in such cases (where there is emotional or mental bias) is hollow (potentially misleading or false) and not real. But where the emotions are tempered (refined) and the mind is pure (clear) (quiet), then the ring of truth (of intuition) can be impressed upon the conscious mind and the student can thereby (potentially) "feel" the (necessarily relative) truth of anything.

The ring of truth is "true" (rather than apparent or deceptive) only where there is no hope or expectation and only where there is no concern for personal or mundane factors. The ring of truth "works" only from above (unsolicited by the mind or heart) and not from below (where there is personal interest). The properly wary (qualified) (trained) student learns not only to discern truth (relatively), but to discern the relative truth of the "ring" of the truth so discerned (i.e., the ring of the ring of truth).

Bias 1

Virtually everyone is not only emotionally and mentally biased, but the vast bulk of humanity are largely unaware of their biases and even the fact that they are biased. Emotional and mental bias is a major impediment to open-mindedness and the embrace of truth (and concomitant growth and refinement in consciousness). Awareness of one's bias is a first and major step toward the reduction of bias and its ultimate elimination.

Bias is defined as an inclination of temperament or outlook and is a more general form of prejudice. Bias can be positive or favorable in the sense of being favorably disposed toward some object, process, or person, or conversely, bias can be negative or unfavorable in the sense of being unfavorably disposed. Bias can be constructive in the sense of yielding some net benefit, or, more generally, bias can be somewhat destructive in the sense of yielding some aspect or element of separateness. Bias can be strong or weak, conscious or unconscious, or more generally somewhere in between. Bias provides a filter for one's experience, emphasizing (strongly or weakly) one aspect or interpretation of sense impression or perception over another. Bias is also multidimensional in the sense that one's bias is an accumulation of habits (biases) in thinking and feeling that vary depending on focus (object, process, person, etc.), i.e., one can be favorably biased about some things and negatively biased about others, one can be strongly biased in some ways and weakly or slightly biased in others, and one can be conscious of some biases and unconscious of others.

Bias is an inevitable part of personality development as one's experience contributes more or less directly to one's bias and one's previous experience contributes to one's character, consciousness, temperament, etc., which in turn contribute to one's bias. In fact, having a generalized positive bias (in the sense of being good-natured, having a positive or constructive outlook on life, seeing the good side of things rather than emphasizing the more negative (destructive) side, etc.) is "good" and implies a relatively well-adjusted personality. But the spiritual student also needs to be aware of the fact of that bias, in order to see things more clearly (honestly and accurately), thereby being able to assimilate experience more effectively.

A particular manifestation of bias normally and generally begins at the level of polarization of consciousness. An emotionally-polarized person (emopol) will generally “suffer” emotional bias which will then color both the feelings and subsequent thinking. A mentally-polarized person (menpol) will generally “suffer” mental bias which will then color both the thinking and subsequent feelings. A secondary “flow” often occurs in the reverse direction, generally unconsciously, in the sense that an emopol’s thoughts can lead to unconscious emotional biases and a menpol’s feelings can lead to unconscious mental biases.

In order to effectively embrace truth, one must be substantially open-minded and intelligently responsive to truth. The extent of one’s biases is the extent to which one is not so open-minded and to which one is not so responsive. One should therefore make a conscious effort (1) to be honest (and particularly to be honest with oneself), (2) to earnestly and honestly scrutinize (retrospectively if not simultaneously) one’s own thoughts and feelings and actions with a view to discerning or recognizing one’s biases and how they are manifesting, and (3) to establish the habit of intelligent (non-passive) open-mindedness (and its corollary of relative freedom from beliefs, opinions, and/or other attachments).

† Commentary No. 826

Bias 2

The problem of bias is compounded by the existence of attachments to various thoughts and feelings (as the emotional and concrete mental nature is wont to do). Objectivity in thinking and feeling, i.e., expressing or involving the use of “facts” without distortion by personal feelings or prejudices (bias) and being fairly rational and reasonable, is relatively rare due to the preponderance of bias and associated attachments (as well as the existence and manifestation of maya, glamour, and illusion).

There exists a multi-dimensional spectrum of relative attachment or one’s relative conviction of the truth of something. This spectrum includes impression, faith, sentiment, view or perspective, loosely-held belief, belief, opinion, and strongly-held opinion, and conviction. Impression implies some

tentativeness (relative non-attachment). Faith implies confidence without rational or objective substantiation. Sentiment implies the bias of one's nature or character. View or perspective implies one's relative bias but without necessarily any substantial attachment (particularly where one is more or less conscious of that relative bias). Belief implies relative certitude or confidence (which may vary with the degree of attachment) and generally implies "deliberate acceptance and intellectual consent" to what is believed. Opinion implies more of a judgment or appraisal of the belief (which implies greater relative attachment). And conviction implies great attachment (entanglement).

There are those who passively and/or foolishly accept whatever others suggest as true, without intelligent consideration and self-determination. And there are those who unconsciously allow their emotional and mental biases to determine their beliefs and opinions, with or without substantial conscious (rational or otherwise) consideration and judgment (self-determination albeit substantially biased). The skeptic is just as much enslaved by his or her opinions as the proponent. But there are also those (more moderate and preferable) who defer judgment (and who accept beliefs either tentatively or provisionally [tentative acceptance implies lack of confidence, while provisional acceptance implies (higher or inner) confidence but (open-minded) qualification for revision] (allowing subsequent experience to guide the modification, refinement, or elimination of general or particular beliefs)).

There is no hypocrisy in this matter of bias greater than that of the scientist (or anyone) who has a belief or opinion and sets out to prove it, with the illusion of objectivity (the possibility of proving something being another fallacy in itself). The existence of a belief or opinion definitely biases the mental approach of the scientist, effectively compromising his or her objectivity by the extent of the relative attachment to the belief or opinion, even if the outcome (conclusion) happens to be true. Anyone who believes something and attempts to prove it will naturally (and largely unconsciously) interpret whatever "evidence" is acquired in a way such as to reinforce the conclusion that is sought.

The significance of "positive" or supporting evidence will be (foolishly) exaggerated (greatly or otherwise according to the relative bias and relative honesty of the seeker) to support one's contention and the significance of "negative" or contrary evidence will be (likewise foolishly) rationalized away or

otherwise discounted to some extent. On the other hand, the degree of intellectual honesty that a person has may very well be sufficient to prevent too much bias from being applied and a “reasonable” outcome or conclusion may be achieved in spite of the bias in the process.

† Commentary No. 827

Bias 3

So where in all of this should stand the spiritual student? Somewhere between having provisional beliefs and being entirely free from such bias. The spiritual student is ever urged to embrace the truth that is realized, but without being attached to that truth (i.e., without having opinions). While all opinions convey and contain attachments, beliefs may (if properly qualified) be more provisional and less impedimental. In consciousness there is (some) bias, but it is up to the student to minimize that bias and eventually preclude the filtering of one’s sense-perceptions, thoughts, and feelings by that bias.

In the worst case, the professed student has opinions and convictions that are strongly held and defended reactively. In such a case the (questionable) student is deaf, dumb, and blind, being closed to the truth and naturally separative. He or she hears and sees only what he or she wants to hear or see (i.e., only that which reinforces his or her own beliefs and opinions). Having opinions is a very strong indication of ego manifestation, as it is only the ego that can have beliefs or opinions in the first place (the soul is free). Occultly, anyone who has opinions is literally entangled in them (to their extent) (and the consciousness is thereby dulled) (and the responsiveness to truth or realization is thereby impeded or subdued).

In the best or ideal case, the spiritual student has no beliefs or opinions, but has only a generalized (intuitive) feeling of direction (upward and onward along the spiral evolutionary circuit in consciousness and being). Such a student will have some (considerable) realization of truth and a refined sense of appropriateness (for himself or herself), but will be free from judgment and rationalization and will be open to greater and progressive realization. More realistically, the spiritual student will have some beliefs but will be aware of the bias that those beliefs represent and will work toward non-attachment (and corresponding

freedom). The (true) student is not afraid of being “wrong” and does not mind admitting that his or her provisional beliefs have been moderated, for such implies both honesty and a willingness (and ability) to grow spiritually. Every belief impedes subsequent realization (while every opinion more severely impedes subsequent realization), for human perception at its best has fewer dimensions than reality and is therefore inherently impaired.

In consciousness there is an inherent (progressive) seeking of (progressive) truth. In order to be effective, the seeker of truth (as all spiritual students are) should not have any beliefs or opinions, nor make assumptions, nor make or have judgments concerning whatever aspect of truth is being sought. Any preconceived beliefs or opinions will filter or bias the process of truth-seeking and potentially bias the outcome (perceived understanding). All beliefs and opinions (preconceived or otherwise) impede the realization of truth, but that which is preconceived represents a more substantial if not cumulative bias that affects the process as well as the conclusion. Objectivity (intellectual honesty) is more valuable than its lack, but subjectivity (true realization) is even more valuable (particularly when the mind is well-developed and properly tempered). Discernment and discrimination are likewise more valuable than their lack, and particularly where tempered by the intuition and self-realization.

Ultimately, the self-realized student ceases seeking. Truth is revealed most properly without being sought, for the very act of seeking (and any form of expectation) is a (subtle) bias and filter of truth and impediment to the realization of truth. Without seeking there is only realization. And with true realization there is only being (beyond consciousness).

Spiritual Retreatment 1

The extent to which a student is absorbed in the mundane and personal world is the extent to which that student is ineffective in spiritual matters (e.g., in maintaining one's spiritual poise, having awareness beyond the superficial consciousness, performing one's dharma, etc.). Spiritual retreatment affords the opportunity for withdrawal and refreshment (renewal) of the spiritual perspective. A retreat is defined as (1) an act or process of withdrawing, (2) a place of privacy or safety, and/or (3) a period of group withdrawal for prayer, meditation, study, and/or instruction. Spiritual retreatment is a process combining all of these things in a context of withdrawal from the influences and habits of the mundane and personal life and refreshment in the ways of the spiritual path.

One of the principal problems or challenges of the spiritual life is maintaining one's spiritual perspective (demeanor) (awareness) (presence of mind and heart) while being necessarily imbedded in mundane, egoistic, and secular influences (and while being surrounded by people who are (more fully) absorbed in those mundane, egoistic, and secular influences). Those all-pervasive influences in the lower worlds encourage personality-centeredness, egoism, and the concomitant state of mundane, egoistic (personal), and secular absorption. Without some force to the contrary, one will necessarily remain in that state of absorption more or less indefinitely. Indeed, virtually everyone in incarnation is so absorbed in the lower worlds. Only the relatively few spiritual students can glimpse beyond the veil of mundane absorption and ego, and of those few yet fewer are actually able to sustain anything other than transient freedom.

For those who are on the path, however, there are periodically manifested contrary forces resulting from the dharma (karma) of the path (and one's relationship to the path) that (periodically) impel or encourage the student to release his or her mundane and personal (egoistic) attachments (entanglements) and some measure of freedom from absorption is achieved (if only momentarily). This occurs to the extent to which the student is responsive to the (higher (inner)) impelling force and is lessened to the extent of the student's attachments. As the consciousness of the student improves (is refined) and as

the student gradually loosens the mundane and personal attachments then so does the student respond more and more effectively (more often and more consistently and with greater quality) to the liberating forces (of spiritual retreatment).

The forces contrary to absorption are the forces which impel the student to meditate daily and effectively and which tend to periodically disrupt the status quo of the absorbed state. The intelligent and responsive student cooperates with these forces by being determined (1) to meditate daily and more effectively, (2) to achieve freedom from absorption, and (3) to serve more effectively and responsively. That determination (evocation of will), sufficiently reinforced, naturally increases and improves the moment-to-moment awareness of the waking-consciousness. The extent to which the student is aware of being (or having been) absorbed is the extent to which freedom is achieved.

Daily philosophical study and (proper) spiritual meditation are in effect the first and most essential level and aspect of spiritual retreatment. The daily patterns (habits) of study and meditation (and service orientation) are therefore quite important. But daily philosophical study and (proper) spiritual meditation are in themselves not usually sufficient to afford true freedom from absorption. This is so because even the daily study and meditation is performed in the context and habits of one's daily (more or less personal) life.

† Commentary No. 829

Spiritual Retreatment 2

In addition to the quite essential daily discipline and momentum of philosophical study and meditation, the student must also endeavor to break through the veils of the (lower) (personal) consciousness associated with the mundane (personality-centered) (absorbed) state. This is generally achieved by periodically breaking the patterns of the daily rhythm (and whatever measure of mundane (personality) absorption) and achieving some greater measure of withdrawal (spiritual retreatment) [without foregoing the daily discipline].

In this sense, spiritual retreatment means withdrawing both from the habits and the environment of the daily (egoistic) (personal) (secular) life to some place of relative privacy and safety (spiritual seclusion) (i.e., freedom from most if not all of the ordinary daily influences). Although one can achieve some spiritual refreshment (revitalization) in any truly secluded place and position (relative to one's normal state) (if approached and utilized properly), proper spiritual retreat "facilities" are designed to more effectively afford this freedom and provide the student with the opportunities implied in the more secluded (less encumbered) environment. The essential objectives of spiritual retreatment are for the retreated student (1) to achieve effective withdrawal (freedom from the normal habits of absorption) (i.e., clarity in thinking and feeling (heightened awareness of the true self and its objectives)) and (2) to carry that momentum forward in the return to the normal daily life. This second level or aspect of spiritual retreatment (physical withdrawal and displacement), if conducted and embraced properly and periodically, is generally necessary and sufficient for achieving relative freedom and in sustaining that achieved freedom.

It is one thing to achieve a measure of freedom and momentum upon the spiritual path. It is another matter (and challenge) entirely to maintain that freedom, awareness, and spiritual momentum (service), particularly in the face of the natural personality tendency toward mundane (egoic) (personality) absorption. A proper retreat "facility" and circumstances thereof should be designed to encourage the state of spiritual poise (awareness) and to discourage the participants from falling back into the absorbed state. Thus properly maintaining the retreat environment is essential. Retreat activities should neither indulge the personality nor encourage any ego emergence or personality presence. A "monastic" and unemotional environment is preferable. Quietude and periods (and places) of real privacy are quite essential. The overall seclusion of the facility is also important, as one needs to embrace the retreat environment without being distracted by mundane considerations.

Proper spiritual retreatment should be a regular and periodic practice of the serious spiritual student, regardless of one's level of attainment. Because even the relatively more advanced students develop mundane or personality habits that must be challenged if the spiritual freedom is to be achieved or maintained. Even those who live and work in a "retreat" environment must at least periodically achieve spiritual retreatment from that environment (i.e., third-order

retreatment) if they are to be successful in achieving and maintaining their relative freedom from absorption.

Of course one should not withdraw entirely or indefinitely, but merely periodically. For the student on the path must ever live the life of service within the context of the race (lifewave) (humanity). Spiritual retreatment is not for the student, but to afford the student more effectiveness in the spiritual life (which is service).

† Commentary No. 830

Svadharna

Svadharna is defined as one's own dharma, or the law of one's being. In the most proper sense it is the will of the soul as it qualifies the purpose and associated responsibility of the personality (incarnation). In the lower sense it is the conscious relative understanding of the mind (personality) with respect to that qualification. Thus one's understanding may not be entirely consistent with the actual expectation of the soul.

Responsibility (dharma) begins with karma, as one is ever responsible for (facing) the consequences of one's actions (feelings) (thoughts). When one approaches the (spiritual) path and to the extent that one [the soul] embraces (is embraced by) the path, then one's dharma begins to overshadow one's karma (not only by virtue of one's attention being focussed more upon the path but by virtue of relative karmic fulfillment (i.e., one must be relatively free from karma (karmic complications and/or distractions)) in order to properly approach the path and function effectively thereupon). As one's mind and personality begin to function within the framework of the soul's qualification, one is naturally drawn more and more into one's own spiritual work (svadharna) [which is simply one's role in the group dharma].

Those (the bulk of humanity) who are neither upon nor approaching the path have no svadharna. Their lives are determined almost entirely by a combination of karma and self-will (in the lower, self-centered sense and in its various forms (e.g., desire)). One can still be noble and involved in worthwhile activities, but without the induced sanction of the overshadowing (indwelling)

soul, these activities, however noble, are nonetheless preliminary (preparatory) and without svadharma. On the other hand, a false svadharma can emerge from the stronger personality (ego) that becomes (superficially) self-consciously a law unto itself. This false svadharma must ultimately be tempered (eliminated) by humility and the realization of one's proper place in the evolutionary scheme. Independent activity, however apparently noble, simply does not contribute to the fulfillment of dharma.

Physically isolated or otherwise, anyone upon the path or approaching the path in response to the call of the soul can begin to participate in the group dharma to the extent of one's abilities and awareness (conscious and unconscious understanding). As the mind (personality) achieves some measure of rapport with the soul, the awareness and realization of svadharma is induced (enhanced). Each has a role to play, albeit no one has a critical role to play but all are essential nonetheless. As that rapport (insight) improves so can one participate more consciously in the dharma of the path and in svadharma.

The real contribution of svadharma to the waking-consciousness of the spiritual aspirant and disciple is a sense of appropriateness in activity (service). Svadharma provides the underlying motivational qualification for one's spiritual activities and temperament. Svadharma provides guidance as to what is needed, what is appropriate, and what is not, for oneself (not for others) and for all of the waking life and consciousness. In a sense, svadharma is a combination of dharma and conscience, of the active manifestation of the love-wisdom of the soul as perceived by the mind and heart of the responsive personality. It is a measure of one's true achievement (upon the path), as svadharma indicates the standards that one (the soul) expects of the lower self, in practice (spiritual discipline (quality) (character) (temperament)) and service. It thereby provides a conscious incentive to live in accordance with that higher expectation and quality (dharma).

The Fires of Evolution 1

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D, II-3) continues consideration of the building of the causal body. The soul in incarnation must necessarily utilize and/or wield various forces of the higher worlds and materials of the lower worlds, evoking whatever higher forces can be brought to bear on the lower vehicles (the personality) (lower life and consciousness). Similarly, the personality on its level learns to imitate the occult “work” of the soul by utilizing and/or wielding forces in the lower worlds. As the individual evolves, that utilization is increasingly tempered by wisdom (and conscience) and eventually is superseded by the overshadowing qualification of the soul.

However, in every working there is necessarily implied a balance of forces as well as an application of force (as even every qualification is an application of force). And in every working there is necessarily involved the deva lives of the forces and materials (substance) related. The grand flow of energy within any scheme (and all lesser flows) is (or embraces) a combination of progressive (evolutionary) (forward-looking) force and regressive (devolutionary) (backward-looking) force. Every ensouled element of the manifested universe is qualified in the progressive sense, and every element of material substance is also qualified in the regressive sense (so that as the life-forces are withdrawn, the material can disintegrate, releasing the locked “energies” for further adaptation and utilization). While a balance exists between these two aspects, evolution favors the progressive side (i.e., overall, and particularly with regard to consciousness, the progressive forces are greater in magnitude and momentum than the regressive forces).

The progressive (positive) aspect is called “good” and the regressive (negative) aspect is called “evil” and how one identifies with these forces (however consciously or unconsciously) determines to a large extent the measure or likelihood of progress or regress. Positive influences abound from every life on every level. Yet so too do negative influences abound from every disintegrating form on every level (e.g., a human corpse, the moon, a dissolving constellation, etc.). Those who identify too strongly with the dark side (disintegration) (regression) (egoistic extremes) (material substance) are naturally attracted to

black magic and the dark path, while those who identify with the light (love) (life) side are naturally impelled further toward or along the spiritual path.

Thus, those who act (consciously or otherwise) to constrain or limit the flow of life (love) (light) are to that measure or extent participating in the dark side, while those who act to encourage or allow the flow of life (love) (light) to manifest (properly) are to that measure or extent participating in the light side. The causal body is built with the consequences of every “good” action (behavior) (feeling) (thought), while the consequences of every “bad” action have no effect on the causal body save to inhibit its being built (i.e., the “good” is incorporated but the “bad” is not incorporated).

The role of cosmic fire is in this sense to stimulate and facilitate evolutionary progress while burning away the coarser material (of lesser vibrations). As the various fires are cultivated and synthesized, the quality and character of the vibratory nature (of the substance (consciousness)) are improved and the retarding effects (inherent inertia of matter) overcome. Thus cosmic fire (evolution) promotes adaptability, flexibility, freedom (lack of attachment), and simplification (lack of entanglement).

† Commentary No. 832

The Fires of Evolution 2

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D, II-3) concludes consideration of the building of the causal body. There are a number of different types of egoic lotuses (in the higher sense), depending on the degree or extent of development or unfoldment and depending on the sequence and extent of petallic unfoldment (determined by the ray nature of the soul). There is also an historic dimension in the sense that while most human souls (lotuses) originally appear as (unfolded) bud lotuses (at individualization), some emerge on the plane of the soul already substantially developed and unfolded due to experience in earlier cycles. Ultimately, each type of lotus represents both an extent and a quality, within the greater scheme of soul groups and groups of souls.

The lotus of the soul (the causal body) is placed upon and within the mental plane. That mental plane “is the key plane of the solar system. It is the pivotal

plane upon which the great wheel turns. It is the meeting place of the three lines of evolution." The mental plane is the common plane of consciousness for all of the great lives within the solar system, as each of the great lives has a mental vehicle. This "is the basis of occult realization, and the true ground for atonement." Rapport is thus achieved "through the medium of this energized substance."

Kama-manas rules within the hall of ignorance, the first phase of the soul's evolution. Manas rules within the hall of learning, the second phase of the soul's evolution. And manas-buddhi rules in the hall of wisdom, the third phase of the soul's evolution. In kama-manas the mind is distracted by the desires and feelings and experience of the lower life. In manas proper the mind is relatively self-involved (as intellect), and while much is learned there is also much self-deception based in ego and illusion. In buddhi-manas the mind is liberated by higher qualification and true rapport is achieved. The keys to success on the mental plane are integrity in the sense of being an integrated personality undistracted by lower, coarser, personal entanglements, and responsiveness in the sense of being open-minded (relatively without ego) and (therefore) receptive to truth.

From one perspective (the first sub-plane) there are five soul groups (according to source and timing of individualization or appearance within the Earth scheme): (1) and (2) those which individualized in the Lemurian Epoch and the Atlantean Epoch (respectively) [the true humanity of the earth chain], (3) those which "have come-in from the previous (moon) chain and who are much more evolved than the earth humanity," and (4) and (5) those (rather rarely) swept in from other logoi or other schemes for particular purposes. From another perspective (the second sub-plane) there are three or seven soul groups (according to the rays) (and further organized by sub-rays and ashrams).

The causal body is closely related to these groupings and is further related to the various psychic centers (chakras) and the flow of prana. In fact, from one perspective all that a human being is in incarnation is the collection of chakras and their quality and relationships with each other. As the chakras are unfolded, the soul is able to communicate with the personality (form) through more direct qualification. And eventually, through successive initiations, as the consciousness is revealed on the plane of the soul, there is direct realization

(apprehension) of the place of the soul within the planetary and solar organization of (planetary and systemic) chakras. While all is energy, all that is readily apparent is simply the effect of energy (force).

† Commentary No. 833

Articulation 1

Articulation implies the state in which things and lives are perceived to be differentiated and/or relatively distinct one from another and yet related in a relatively objective manner. In this sense articulation refers to the objective world of physical manifestation and more properly to one being so absorbed or immersed in that (mundane and egoistic) world-perception that one is not conscious of any higher reality. One who is articulated in this sense may have an intellectual appreciation of higher things but for as long as one is personally (phenomenally) (psychologically) absorbed in the great illusion of the material world one remains articulated in this lesser sense.

In this sense articulation is the first of three stages and is represented by the third ray of appearance and substance (manifestation) or consciousness in its lower sense (of being absorbed in matter). Non-articulation is the second path and is represented by the second ray of quality and consciousness proper, in its higher (non-articulated) sense. And the third stage is in one (lower) sense a dynamic integration of articulation and non-articulation in which articulated existence is seen as both articulated and non-articulated and in another (higher) path is a state in which that which was perceived as non-articulation is not-perceived (because one is beyond perception) as articulation and something else (nonetheless not differentiated) is not-perceived as non-articulation. This third stage is represented by the first ray of life and being (in the sense of being beyond consciousness).

Articulation is the place and process of consciousness of the personality, the mind, and its ego. Non-articulation is the place and process of consciousness of the soul (and in the higher sense of the monad). The passage from the articulated state to the non-articulated state is afforded by proper meditation, which involves letting go of all of the attachments of the lower worlds

(including the existence of the ego) and thereby achieving the self-realization of non-differentiation (the mind as no-mind). Non-articulation then persists without behavior, without feeling, and without thinking. Yet non-articulation also persists with realization (satori) and allows or affords realization of the articulated existence (without being compromised by articulation).

Manifested realization is the dynamic integration of the non-articulated and the articulated. In manifested realization one can have awareness of the lower worlds and one can even interact to some extent within that realm of articulation, yet, if the higher state is maintained, one is not absorbed in the process. This means that (in this case) one non-behaves, that one non-feels, and that one non-thinks, in the sense that the ego is non-existent and one is merely and clearly reflecting the higher (non-articulated) consciousness. This is not in any way a passive state, yet if one thinks or feels or speaks or in any way acts for oneself (ego) (mind) (personality), then one is articulated (and has lost whatever non-articulation had been achieved).

The qualification and detachment of non-articulation is non-qualification and freedom. It does not imply or convey a lack of compassion or consideration but it does require a lack of entanglement and involvement. Non-articulation reveals the wisdom of one's inner being (real self) (soul) and the futility of one's outer being (personality) (mind) (ego) as an end in itself. Spiritual poise is non-articulation. Egolessness is non-articulation. The quiet mind is non-articulation. Being and self-realization are non-articulation. Yet even articulation is non-articulation.

Articulation 2

The real keys to passing beyond the stage of being absorbed in the articulated state are (1) meditation leading to awareness of the non-articulated state (non-passive openness) and (2) persistence in awareness of the role of the non-articulated state with respect to articulation (closed-ness).

While meditation per se is helpful but not essential to the growth and development of the personality consciousness (which is necessarily absorbed in articulation), proper meditation is very essential to achieving awareness of the distinction between being absorbed as a personality and being non-articulated. Meditation is the only means available for the spiritual student to (1) effectively refine his or her personality consciousness, (2) achieve progressive freedom from personality absorption, and (3) participate in the energy and qualification of the (non-articulated) soul. Without proper meditation the student is very much limited by the personality consciousness. With proper meditation the student is able to go beyond the personality, and in bringing that (higher) energy and awareness back into the personality one is able to vivify and qualify the (refined and uplifted) personality in order to sustain the sense of non-articulation.

But even meditation can be articulated or non-articulated. Most people who think they are meditating are merely articulating, allowing the mind to participate in the (superficial) form of meditation. This is still helpful or at least it is better than no meditation. But as the non-articulated form of meditation is achieved, so does real freedom and the higher qualification of the personality begin. Any act of thinking (mental activity) or feeling (emotional activity) is a measure of articulation. If the student is involved in the act of thinking or feeling (or speaking) then the articulation is considerable, while if the student is not involved in the act of thinking or feeling (or speaking) then the articulation is less substantial and more incidental. But where there is no articulation there is non-articulation. In meditation proper there is naught but non-articulation (no-thing).

Awareness is not the same thing as articulation. But unqualified response to awareness in the form (of the personality) is a matter of articulation. So one

needs to achieve and manifest awareness without the personality being absorbed or involved in the process. This leads to the properly qualified personality (refined quiescence (a non-active, non-passive state)) in which the ego no longer functions. Persistence in awareness of the role of the non-articulated state with respect to articulation is then possible. This means that one is (thereby) ever aware of the non-articulation (unity and integration) behind (within) every aspect of articulation (diversity and differentiation). This means that one is (thereby) also aware of the falseness (superficiality) of articulated existence and expression. One is no longer interested in phenomena or happenings. One no longer “needs” to demonstrate anything. One is then satisfied merely to be.

Of course in such a state (non-articulation (nothing (no-thing) (reality)) in articulation (thing-ness)) one can (must) still be of service, but that service activity is a matter of doing what needs to be done, what one is called to do by virtue of one’s awareness (which is dharma or duty (appropriateness)), and is not a matter of entanglement or involvement or attachment. The quality of consciousness exhibited in personality quiescence embraces real service (dharma) that is performed or fulfilled freely (and continuously, not merely continually) and is a viable measure of non-articulation.

† Commentary No. 835

Articulation 3

The articulation of reality (i.e., the non-articulated) is an arbitrary process depending greatly on one’s powers of perception (primarily) and one’s powers of reasoning (secondarily) and one’s powers of realization (potentially). Because virtually everyone in incarnation is absorbed in articulation, then the habits of perceiving reality in its articulated forms and the association (mis-association) of reality with what is perceived is the general rule (and forms the basis and sustenance of the grand illusion).

One’s perception is heavily biased by one’s early training (and continued experience). Since those who provide that training and experience (parents, teachers, friends) are themselves (almost all and almost always) wholly

absorbed in articulation, then one will normally develop with the same biases in perception, accepting the illusion of the physical world (material reality) and the appearance of reality as reality itself. As one develops the ability and associated habits of reasoning, one normally then unconsciously rationalizes away anything that would tend to violate one's predisposition toward the articulated existence. However, as one begins to be able to think for oneself, without the overbearing and unconscious presumptions of those who are wholly absorbed, and as one thereby gradually develops open-mindedness, then one can begin to realize aspects of the truth.

The problem of articulation is the reinforcement that articulated experience provides toward sustaining its illusion. In order for one to function in the articulated world, one must necessarily play some role within that articulated context. This makes it even more difficult for one to achieve freedom and for one who has (momentarily) achieved freedom to actually sustain that freedom. From the point of view of the non-articulated (which in truth has no point of view), all of the people in the world are asleep except those few who are able to touch the non-articulated (and who are thereby irradiated) and those fewer still who live in the non-articulated while functioning in the articulated (i.e., whose waking-consciousness persists in non-articulation).

Thus the (unenlightened) vast majority of incarnated people see and hear and feel and sense and reason according to appearances. But eventually the call of the path begins to induce uncertainty in the minds and hearts of those who have developed to the point of that responsiveness. The mind begins to question the appearance of things and gradually attracts the opportunities for understanding. The great value of refinement and meditation is that these (essential and essentially spiritual) practices lead one to be less attached to (and less absorbed in) articulated existence and relatively more responsive to the non-articulated reality. The great value of Zen Buddhism (and comparable practices) is the challenge that it conveys to the otherwise insufferable and wholly self-absorbed mind and the assumptions and presumptions that have been entrained.

Articulation is limitation. As one achieves liberation from the limitations of thing-ness and ego, so is enlightenment (non-articulation) achieved. And yet achievement is an articulated concept and phenomena. So the achievement of non-articulation is non-achievement. In this sense achievement is really

allowance, as the conditioned mind and its habits of perception preclude any sense of the non-articulated reality. But as one (and to the extent that one) allows the mind to function freely, without conditioning, the truth (non-articulation) is revealed. But of course as one then articulates what has been revealed or what has been realized, then one has again suffered some measure of absorption in articulated reality.

† Commentary No. 836

Articulation 4

The greatest challenge of the spiritual path lies in overcoming the natural and pervasive absorption in articulation. When one studies the philosophy of the path (metaphysics, theosophy, etc.), one may seek to become enlightened (or one may foolishly assume that one is already enlightened), yet how many are actually determined to achieve their freedom?

The very act of seeking is articulation (yet nonetheless a necessary precursor). Determination is likewise articulation. Real will, on its own level, is however non-articulation. Thus the real key to overcoming absorption lies in the proper exercise of the will (even though that exercise is necessarily a matter of articulation, as the exercise is induced from the non-articulated state, provided that one is responsive). Instead of articulating one's desire, wanting, seeking, or determination, one simply articulates one's existence as non-articulation (I am That). And eventually, with persistence in freedom of thinking and feeling, That will be manifested.

All of the other achievements within the context of the path are relatively easy compared to achievement of freedom. To become and to be pure of thought and feeling is relatively easy. To live a life of spiritual service is relatively easy. To learn to meditate effectively is relatively easy. To overcome the ego is more difficult, but still relatively easy compared with the achievement of freedom from absorption. Of course all of these other aspects (achievements) are precursory, as one cannot be free unless one is also (relatively) pure and living a life of dharma. A real love of truth and real self-honesty are quite essential. And one cannot be free unless one has overcome to some considerable extent the inhibiting aspect of the ego (the self-delusion of the mind). But one can and

should nonetheless work toward freedom (non-articulation) as these other achievements are being addressed or sought.

The first step toward freedom from absorption is the realization and acceptance of the fact that one is absorbed and the understanding of what that absorption entails. The second step (proper) is the invocation of the aspect of will toward the objective of freedom. And the third step is the evocation of non-articulated awareness. The first step is the more tedious and time-consuming. Without continual awareness of one's measure of absorption there is no hope of freedom. This first step does require considerable intention, persistence, and continual reinforcement of one's need to be aware of one's own condition in consciousness. One gradually learns to temper all of the personality inclinations (i.e., independence) and bias and one gradually learns to speak only from the poised state and not in the untempered manner of the wholly absorbed (if one wants to speak then one is definitely absorbed as a personality (which is the same thing as being absorbed in articulation or articulated existence)). If one speaks more naturally (in a manner of appropriateness) and from the spiritually poised (non-egoistic) (non-reactive) (non-contrived) state, then one is only partially absorbed (which is in itself a major accomplishment (but the perception of one's own accomplishment is counter-indicative)).

The second and third steps follow naturally from the increasing awareness and realization achieved in the first step. With a measure of intelligent (balanced) detachment (reticence) in thinking, feeling, and acting, comes a measure of freedom. In open-mindedness (honesty) (the value of truth) lies the seed of freedom. In persistence of awareness lies the development of freedom. And in service (dharma) comes the realization of freedom.

Seven Schools of Yoga 1

Seven Schools of Yoga by Ernest Wood describes seven traditional approaches or paths and practices of yoga, incidentally demonstrating their correlation with the seven rays and the three rays. In this sense, the three major rays focus in consciousness and involve raja yoga in its general sense, and raja yoga (1), karma or buddhi yoga (2), and jnana yoga (3), respectively. Similarly, the four minor rays focus on form and involve hatha yoga in its general sense, and hatha yoga (4), kundalini or laya yoga (5), bhakti yoga (6), and mantra yoga (7), respectively.

Yoga implies union with the divine life and the path(s) leading to that union and self-mastery. The lower schools (hatha yoga) involve predominantly external or lower means and methods and are considered preparatory, while the higher schools (raja yoga) involve predominantly internal means and methods and are considered (relatively) more advanced. The lower schools involve methods that are valuable for some people in conditioning the form and overcoming the lower aspects of the coarse personality (e.g., in the sense of self-discipline and purification). However, the lower schools involve particular methods which are not well-suited to all forms and which are relatively dangerous for the untutored. Moreover, for one who is already self-disciplined and adhering to the preliminary discipline, the benefits of the lower practices are questionable. Indeed, those who are able to accomplish the preliminary discipline without resorting to hatha yoga in any of its forms are better off in the sense that they are not distracted by the focus on form (and personality) that is inherent in the lower practices.

The higher schools (methods) do not require teachers nor do they involve potentially dangerous practices, but they do still require a measure of common sense on behalf of the personality, utilize the uplifted (and qualified) mind (primarily), and call upon the higher self rather than the ego or personality. Furthermore, a reasonably qualified aspirant need not rely on the hatha yoga that correlates to his or her personality ray, but, rather, should rely on one or another of the raja yogas utilizing particular techniques relating to his or her

rays. Or in other words, there are aspects of each of the seven yogas that can be effectively utilized by the serious (and reasonably qualified) student.

Raja yoga (1) is the yoga of Patanjali (and the first ray) and involves freedom (self-mastery) through will, first through the (preliminary) kriya yoga and then through the ashtanga or eight limbs of yoga practice. The object of kriya yoga is the weakening of the five afflictions (which are avidya (ignorance), asmita (egotism), raga (liking), dwesha (disliking), and abhinivesha (clinging to bodily life)). Once effectively weakened, the five afflictions can be more properly overcome in subsequent stages.

Karma or buddhi yoga (2) involves unity (self-mastery) through feeling. This yoga of the second ray involves love (buddhi) and work (karma), wisdom (buddhi) and duty (dharma). In this sense dharma means "where one stands," and this (in embracing this concept) implies that the disciple (spiritual student) has achieved some measure of spiritual poise, recognizes his or her place upon the path, and is content to do whatever is before one to do (and to work (perform service) with whatever measure of wisdom there is within the consciousness). Jnana yoga (3) involves unity through consideration (thought) (understanding) (the seeking of truth) and is the yoga of the third ray. In a sense, it is this jnana yoga that deals in its various ways with maya, glamour, and illusion and leads eventually to their successive overcoming.

† Commentary No. 838

Seven Schools of Yoga 2

Hatha yoga (4) proper involves the regulation of breathing (and in the higher sense leads to energy projection and qualification). Laya yoga (5) involves the chakras or energy centers and the force of kundalini (and in the higher sense leads to conscious working with various energies and their forces (and their transformation)). Bhakti yoga (6) involves love and the external aspect of divinity (God) [while buddhi yoga (2) involves love and the internal aspect of divinity (God)] and is, in the lower sense, the invocation or calling forth to God, and in the higher sense, the evocation of rapport with God (the soul) and the qualification of the lower self that that implies. Mantra yoga (7) involves the repetition or proper sounding of various mantras for self-qualification (and in the

higher sense forms the basis for occult work). In the lower sense, these hatha yogas and their methods can become ends in themselves, while in the higher sense, each contributes some methodology and practices of value to the raja yogi.

However, the raja yogi avoids the extremes of any of the hatha yogas. And the raja yogi puts the lower practices in the context of ways to facilitate the higher work without their becoming distractions (i.e., without the entanglement of the personality). Employing primarily one or another of the three raja yogas or rays (and associated internal focus and methods) and employing secondarily one or another (or both) of the other raja yogas (and specific practices of the four hatha yogas and their external methods as needed or appropriate), the raja yogi proceeds upon his or her own path (within the context of the one path). In this (higher) sense, yoga embraces both the individual path to self-mastery and the simultaneous entering into the pervasive divine life.

The real distinction between the higher yogas and the lower yogas is the reliance upon the soul in the former case and the reliance upon the personality in the latter case. Raja yoga involves the overcoming of the personality and the alignment of that personality with the overshadowing and indwelling soul or higher (divine) self. Hatha yoga initially involves a strengthening of the personality as it is integrated. Then hatha yoga involves gradually qualifying the personality (through intelligently focusing upon the personality). And finally, hatha yoga leads to the weakening of the personality (through the preliminary or kriya yoga) and the higher yogas. The various methods of hatha yoga may need to be applied over the course of many years or even (many) lifetimes, while by the time one has achieved some measure of success in the lower discipline, the raja yogas can be embraced more readily.

On the other hand, when one embraces the higher self and the spiritual path proper, one becomes the path and service dominates the quality and character of the individual dharma (which means that individual progress is subordinated to the work at hand). Individual progress then becomes more subjective and qualitative (and more or less incidental to the work) and yet (while not readily apparent to the senses) (and from a higher perspective) "progress" is thereby accelerated.

In the final analysis there are many paths within the one path, and each aspirant must necessarily find the preliminary path that is the more natural one for his or her own temperament. As the student develops and evolves over a number of lifetimes, the experience is broadened and deepened to include aspects of other paths, until, eventually, the disciple has achieved some measure of experience and ability on or with each of the seven rays and their various methods.

† Commentary No. 839

Fire Elementals

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D, II-4) considers the fire elementals or lesser builders. While the greater devas represent aspects of positive (higher) (active) (evolutionary) force, the lesser devas represent aspects of negative (lower) (passive) (involutionary) force. These lesser builders are “the recipients of energy and influences” and constitute “literally a sea of fire” (behind and within the apparent reality of the lower worlds) within which the evolutionary qualification is manifested. Thus the lesser builders are vitalized with purpose (potential) as the living substance of manifestation.

The various higher lives (form-builders) utilize the lesser lives as those lesser lives are organized into forms and/or brought into the field of action (energy qualification and application of forces (the lesser lives actually constituting the manifestation of that qualification or application)). However ignorant humanity may be of the existence and function of the lesser lives, there are nonetheless effects evoked in the realm of the lesser builders through every thought, feeling, and action in the lower worlds (mental, emotional, and physical, respectively). It is through the medium of the lesser builders that a person has an effect or influence upon others (the extent of which being a function of the measure of focus, intent, and intensity of the “sender” (however unconscious he or she may be) as well as the measure of receptiveness and karma of the recipient).

Thus, the greater builders are “the originators of activity in deva substance” while the lesser builders are the “recipients of force” (with a third group of builders somewhere in between but nonetheless upon the evolutionary arc). In

this middle group are found a number of deva lives which live through various forms (made of the substance of the lesser builders) in the lower worlds (e.g., birds, fairies, elves, gnomes, and other sprites). There are involutory deva lives on (in) every sub-plane of the lower worlds, from the dense physical and etheric regions of the physical plane through the higher sub-planes of the mental plane (and beyond). Each has a role to play within the whole, whether it be the provision of some form or the conveyance of sustenance on some level (e.g., prana, air, food, and drink).

As the human race eventually becomes (voluntarily) clairvoyant, many of the lesser devas of the physical, etheric, astral, and mental realms will be recognized and the various relationships comprehended. The fires of the human body and the fiery lives of the deva kingdom will then be appreciated more or less consciously by the bulk of humanity. More importantly, as the clairvoyant vision is gradually developed one will be far more readily able to comprehend the cause and effect relationships that are not otherwise apparent. Of course this presupposes that intelligence and the capacity for understanding are developed as well, for mere clairvoyance does not convey intelligence or the capacity for understanding (the untrained (involuntary) and relatively unintelligent clairvoyant sees whatever he or she wants to see).

The great waves of energy that impel progress in its many facets flow cyclicly through the planetary scheme and its various planes and sub-planes of consciousness, vitalizing and qualifying the various forms and associated involutory and evolutionary lives. All are involved in this process, from the elementary and involutory lives, to the passive and ignorant of humanity, to the active and ignorant of humanity, to the active and cooperative of humanity, and beyond.

Man as Creator

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D, III) considers man as a creator in mental matter. Man (in the sense of any human being) is a thinking and feeling individual who naturally creates thought-forms in mental matter and who vitalizes those thought-forms with his feelings. Thus hath man the considerable potential for good (constructive or progressive works (that support evolutionary progress)) and evil (destructive or counter-progressive works (that inhibit evolution)). The effects of creative endeavors can last long after a person's attention has shifted to other objects, as animated and even aggressive thought-forms can be vitalized and sustained unconsciously, and even without continued revitalization thought-forms can live long beyond the (conscious or unconscious) intentions of the thinker.

"Much that is to be seen now of a distressing nature in the world can be directly traced to the wrong manipulation of mental matter by man." Much of the maya, glamour, and illusion that persists persists directly as a consequence of man's thinking and feeling, sustained through the ages by his ignorance and lack of wisdom. Man's collective lower nature has produced great pervasive thought-forms (collectively referred to as the "dweller on the threshold") which continue to serve primarily to consequently sustain man's enslavement by that lower nature (e.g., man's selfishness and inhumanity, as well as his materialism and egoism). And the vast majority of humanity, because they live primarily in that lower nature, are receptive to the "encouragement" of those pervasive thought-forms. And yet, those who have risen above the lower nature have gained some measure of freedom from those lower influences and consequently are collectively building more constructive forms. But before the balance can shift in favor of the more constructive forms (and freedom), man must (himself) face and destroy (dissipate) these great and errant forms.

"At present much of the manipulation of mental matter and its direction into forms of some kind or another emanates from lower levels." Those (vast majority) who live in the desire nature necessarily and unconsciously enlist the mind in feeding the dreaded "dweller." "This direction of energy follows the line of least resistance" (i.e., where the lower forces dominate) and the lesser

builders (devas) are swept into play more or less unconsciously (under law). Yet man's role in this evolutionary panorama is to become a conscious and intelligent (constructive and cooperative) creator in matter. As man gradually realizes more and more of the divine plan, he will grow in wisdom and gradually begin to cooperate and consciously support that plan.

So few have lifted themselves above the miasma of maya-glamour-illusion and the karmic balance for humanity still favors enslavement. Yet as more and more of humanity embrace the higher concepts (the spiritual path and its preliminary discipline) so will the lesser thought-forms be gradually dissipated, for those who embrace the path are as much a part of the karmic balance of humanity as those who are yet so enslaved (the great ones cannot intervene on our behalf but can only provide encouragement (to those who are receptive)). Man is only now gradually learning (and primarily unconsciously) to work creatively in mental matter and to evoke the various consequences (forms on various levels). Man's success is necessarily collective, and his freedom will come only as humanity works as a unit.

Man is a creator-in-the-making, and the current field of endeavor is his laboratory for learning the ways and means of creation. But that field is also man's opportunity for learning the rules of these creative endeavors.

† Commentary No. 841

A Mantra for Goodness

There is a popular and very practical mantra, with a number of variations, that is particularly helpful in qualifying the personality for "goodness." This particular mantra has three parts, each of which corresponds to one of the three major rays and, taken in sequence, evokes a considerable three-fold qualification.

The first stanza is "I Am surrounded by the pure white light of the Christ." This is a first ray qualification that encourages or strengthens the integration of the personality via the "I Am" and evokes the first ray relationship of the soul (Christ) to that personality. Those who are not comfortable with the "Christ" terminology may easily substitute God or Allah or father or whatever is more

comfortable (but not “mother” or any “Earth” or planetary substitute). The potency comes from the soul and its relationship in (higher) consciousness to the solar logos. Evoking “Earth” forces is simply counterproductive in this context. Accompanying the mantra should be the visualization of light surrounding, enveloping, and wholly qualifying the personality in its four-fold form (physical, etheric, astral, and mental). The “light” should be seen sweeping through the vehicles of consciousness, sweeping in “enlightenment” and sweeping out coarseness. In this sense the mantra (stanza) is a means of purification as well as qualification.

The second stanza is “Nothing but good shall come to me.” This is a second ray qualification in the sense that the personality is thereby conditioned to respond only to “good” external forces (and is incidentally conditioned not to respond to “bad” external forces). This may seem to be a bit self-centered or selfish, yet it establishes a constructive relationship with the external world. It allows the individual to be “in the world” without necessarily becoming “of the world.” In this sense, “good” implies whatever is appropriate, i.e., no mantra can prevent karmic consequences from being manifested, but mantras can afford some protection from carelessness and active vulnerability (if not consequential vulnerability). Both of the first two stanzas, together in sequence or individually, afford some protection from externals.

The third and final stanza is “Nothing but good shall go from me.” This is a third ray qualification and the real force of the entire mantra (the first two stanzas being preliminary and preparatory). The key to success in this endeavor is to program the mind to evoke this mantra (and this stanza in particular) at every incidence of “bad” thinking or “bad” feeling, so that the unfortunate thought-form may be dissolved or internalized rather than released with its incumbent (external) consequences. In this way, the habit of “goodness” can be instilled and negativity minimized and eventually eliminated. Whenever one is feeling “bad” about something or someone, it is far better to utilize this stanza over and over than to energize or release any “negative” thought-forms. In this sense, this third stanza, in sequence or separately, affords considerable protection from internals (i.e., one’s own unfortunate thoughts and feelings).

Simple and straight-forward as this mantra may be, it affords considerable practical potency in dealing with the problem of encouraging one’s own

“goodness.” Being practical, it works even for those who are not on or approaching the path (and it also evokes or utilizes the conscience). For those who are on or approaching the path, it should be supplemented with study and meditation and other active consideration of the positive habits (active goodness) and various disciplines of the path.

† Commentary No. 842

Awareness and Thinking

A principal and recurring theme within the philosophy is that of steadiness of mind, which deals with the practical relationship between awareness and thinking. Awareness and thinking and consciousness are all distinctly different although related concepts. Consciousness refers to the relationship between spirit and matter and is the medium of quality and qualification.

Consciousness is not an activity nor is it a process. Consciousness is an aspect (albeit one that induces processes in consciousness). There can be aspects within aspects, as in states of consciousness. But awareness and thinking are activities with associated attributes (and are not aspects), within consciousness (although things which are not aspects may have aspects).

Awareness and thinking are virtually mutually exclusive activities, or at least one (awareness) grows at the expense of the other (thinking). Of course awareness comes in a number of different forms and most if not all of those forms may be expressed simultaneously in different ways or on different levels (i.e., subconsciously, consciously, and super-consciously). But conscious awareness is inversely proportional to thinking, i.e., as one thinks one's conscious awareness is thereby lessened, and as one grows in conscious awareness one naturally “thinks” less and less (as one learns to rely on awareness rather than thinking).

In the beginning of its existence (manifestation), the human animal has very little conscious awareness and virtually no mind with which to think (and must therefore rely on instinct and (emotional) feelings). In the end of human expression, the master has evolved beyond thinking to the greater awareness of non-thinking. In between these two phases lies the bulk of more familiar human experience and expression as well as the (more real) changes in consciousness

that mark (real) progress. Some five stages and four transitions mark the progress between no thinking and non-thinking.

The first stage of thinking is non-dependent thinking or no thinking, i.e., the absence of thinking because the mind is rudimentary and a person has simply not learned to think. Then as the mind is developed the process of actually thinking is begun. The second stage of thinking is passive, externally-dependent thinking, in which a person allows others to do his thinking for him. This stage is necessary as "thinking" must first be imposed or induced by external means before one can even begin to function mentally. The problem lies in the unfortunate extension of this stage well beyond its intended purposes (i.e., many (most) people, who should be thinking for themselves, are still passively accepting ideas and thoughts from others without any exercise of real discernment or discrimination). But as a person progresses, he eventually and necessarily learns to think for himself. That transition, between passive (externally dependent) thinking and active (independent) thinking may consume many lifetimes and is a magnificent struggle in itself.

Yet a greater struggle comes to the (spiritual) student, as he gradually becomes more and more internally dependent in his thinking (i.e., more and more subject to awareness, higher impression, etc.), as his ego is gradually overcome. This fourth stage (internal) gradually gives way to a fifth stage of non-dependent thinking or non-thinking in the active (most positive) sense of conscious awareness. These higher transitions (between active thinking, internally-dependent thinking, and non-thinking) constitute a most difficult undertaking, but the student (disciple) ultimately learns to truly think, without thinking, as awareness comes to full fruition.

Dissociation 1

For a good cause (experience leading to evolution in consciousness), many things in the lower world have been allowed to control or influence us at the expense of (conscious awareness of) higher consciousness. In the great illusion we are led to believe that what we see before us is all that there is to life, and we compound that illusion by identifying with the most superficial aspects of our being, not realizing the true nature of things.

Thus we naturally identify with the physical body, with the emotions, and with the mind, individually or collectively, depending on the stage in consciousness. That identification leads to attachment and the exclusion of higher impressions and awareness of our true nature. And when we finally begin to realize what we are, we find that our habits in identification and attachment are so strong that it is most difficult to rise above them. At this point our evolutionary momentum is quite weak and our inertia or resistance to progress is quite strong. But whatever insight we glean, ever so vaguely at first, eventually evokes qualification and consequentially brings about some flexibility through contrast (realization of the contradiction of our true (higher) nature with that of our identification with the lower).

At this stage, the first step onward is (conscious and deliberate) dissociation. Dissociation (differentiation) is a necessary precursor to integration. We must first dissociate ourselves from, and overcome our natural identification with, the various aspects of the lower self. That dissociation brings to the focus of consciousness power and a measure of control over the dissociated elements. It begins rather slowly and intermittently, but grows in strength and momentum, until we stand forth from that (lower) aspect and it no longer has any power to affect us as we reside in (at) the waking-consciousness. Then we are much more able to (purify) qualify (refine) that (separate) lower aspect and in that qualification draw it back into our sphere of active consciousness, as a qualified and willing instrument, rather than as an independent and often counter-productive (resistive) element of oneself. Qualification is the second step onward while integration is the third step. Thus, integration must necessarily follow dissociation and qualification.

This process (cycle) is repeated for each element of the personality, progressively, beginning with the physical body, then the emotions or astral body, and eventually the (concrete) mind as well. And then the entire personality must be dealt with similarly. Ultimately, it is the (subtle) ego that must be dissociated, qualified, and integrated. In principle, two or more aspects of the lower self (or its entirety) can be dealt with simultaneously, particularly in the recapitulatory sense, but it is generally “easier” to work sequentially progressively.

Of course, applying this entire process of dissociation, qualification, and integration is merely a technique and method of bringing about the intended results. In fact, one is all of the lower self and can never not be all of the lower self, for as long as that lower self is being manifested, but that lower self is such a small and superficial part of the whole (person), one must learn to identify with the higher self (primarily) and the whole self (eventually). But to identify with the lower self (or some aspect of life in the lower worlds) is patently misleading and self-deceptive. The spiritual student (who leads), and eventually the bulk of humanity (which must necessarily follow), must ever seek to overcome the lesser associations (deception) in pursuit of the greater truth (and the greater good).

† Commentary No. 844

Dissociation 2

But how do we bring about this dissociation, that we might be able to effect the needed qualification and eventual integration? Firstly, through observation, reflection (consideration), and determination. Secondly, through self-remembering and recollectedness, that we might not be distracted by or absorbed in the very activities and attachments we are seeking to dissociate from ourselves. And thirdly, through self-qualification in the sense of consciously aligning oneself with the higher and enabling that higher self to qualify the whole process.

Observation is crucial to this process. We cannot dissociate ourselves from that which we cannot see or from that of which we are unaware. If we are

absorbed in some emotional attachment, for example, we are wholly unaware of the fact of that absorption. If we are merely involved in some emotional attachment, then it is possible, through the habit of self-observation, to become increasingly aware of that involvement, and that awareness will contain the power of eventual dissociation. Reflection is also crucial to this process. We must continually (if not continuously) remind ourselves of our state (in consciousness), the problem(s) at hand, and the methods we are attempting to employ. Otherwise there will be no "power" or energy conveyed to the process and our absorption will continue indefinitely. But in reflection and consideration are the seeds of increasing awareness, and a substantiation of the process of self-observation. Thus we must continually observe ourselves and all aspects of our (lower) manifestations and involvements and carefully consider the nature observed from the point of view of what we are and what we are not.

Determination is another crucial ingredient, which helps to apply (focus) the will (of the higher mind) (and its consequential energies) to the problems and processes at hand. Dedication to seeking the truth about ourselves, that we might see things (us) as they (we) really are, is a very important part of that determination, effectively characterizing the determination in our favor (constructively, in support of the higher goals). Of course understanding is also implied in all of this, that we should have a knowledge of what we are doing (or attempting to do), our purposes, methods, results, etc. The greater our understanding and the more focused our determination, the more effective will be the methods employed.

Self-remembering and recollectedness go much further than incidental consideration. We must strive to remember ourselves at all times, identifying more and more with the higher self, and less and less with the lower self. We must know, that we are not the physical body, nor the emotions, nor even the mind. We must know, that we are not the personality nor the ego, no matter how useful these things may be. We must know, that we are the higher self, and that although that higher self embraces the lower, we must know that the self-will and independence of the lower self (and its many "I's") are not the true self. And we must know, as often as we can remember, and as honestly as we can, what we are, and how we are, both in the lower sense and in the higher sense.

Self-qualification alone will not bring about the needed results in a timely manner, but then neither will observation, reflection, and determination, nor self-remembering and recollectedness, alone. Self-qualification is the overall conditioning (more properly, un-conditioning) that overshadows all of the other aspects of this process within process. Self-qualification implicitly and unconsciously includes all of the other factors, but when self-qualification is combined with all the other factors, results are more readily achieved.

† Commentary No. 845

Focus and Attention

Focus refers to “the center of activity, attraction, or attention” or the point (area) (volume) at (to) which such activity, attraction, or attention converges. In the context of the human mind, which is, after all, the principal instrument of the incarnated individuality, the relative focus of attention and the relative quality of that relative focus of attention are indications of manifested character and quality of consciousness.

The mind is, at once, both the greatest instrument of the human personality and the greatest curse and impediment to the evolving consciousness (assuming that the physical appetites and emotional instabilities and distractions have been more or less overcome). In order to effectively utilize the mind, that it should be both (1) an effective instrument for integrating and maintaining the personality and (2) responsive to the higher self (soul), the student must develop the mind in two distinctly different and apparently contradictory directions. The mind must be trained to be able to focus sharply on any subject or object, at will. And the mind must be trained to expand the focus of attention in the broadest and deepest manner feasible.

Much of conventional education, and particularly that of mathematics and the physical sciences, involves training the mind in the narrow focus and associated analytical and logical (rational) techniques. This gives rise to the ability (and curse) of the mind to be attached to and involved with (entangled in) the subject or object at hand, without, generally and necessarily, the ability to see beyond that narrow focus or attachment. The real value of this ability (narrow focus)

lies in the constructive evocation and concentration or application of force (and associated occult practices and methods). But in order to be effective in the broader and more noble sense, one must also avoid the perils of narrow focus, i.e., avoid becoming attached to or entangled in either the object or the process. Narrow-minded occultists are among the worst (most dangerous) of humanity and are naturally drawn to the left-hand path. And narrow-minded people in general are greatly hampered by their lack of depth and breadth (conversely, broad-minded people, in the extreme, are useless).

Thus esoteric training properly involves both development (and service) along occult lines (relatively narrow focus) and mystical lines (relatively broad focus), more or less simultaneously. The breadth (broadness and openness) of focus is important to understanding and comprehension (i.e., wisdom) and temperance (general qualification), while the narrow focus is useful for special qualification. As one truly grows spiritually, one must necessarily expand one's natural focus of attention, without attachment (opinions, etc.) in order to embrace more and more of the higher worlds and concepts. Even in the lower worlds, that breadth of view affords understanding and comprehension (correlation and assimilation) that would be precluded by any sense of narrow-mindedness (including having opinions or making unconscious assumptions).

But in order to progress in an even-handed (balanced) manner (which is ultimately quite important), the spiritual student should devote time each day to both lines of development and service. By exercising the mind in concentration and then in contemplation (or vice versa), the student retains the sharpness of focus that is needed, without the curse of attachment and entanglement, while simultaneously being able to draw on (be qualified by) the higher human attributes (the energy and higher vitality of the soul). The bridge between concentration and contemplation is proper meditation, particularly where it is extended to the meditative life.

Food and Strength

There are relationships between food and strength in their various and respective kinds. Food is that which nourishes or sustains, particularly in the sense of material nutrients and vitality. Strength is the capacity for exertion or endurance, the degree of potency, firmness, and/or stability, and has physical, emotional, and or mental factors. Food generally conveys or sustains some measure of strength, although other factors certainly apply to strength.

For the case of human beings in incarnation, food is generally taken from the plant and/or animal kingdoms (lifewaves), either in terms of plant and/or animal substance (e.g., flesh) or the products of plant and/or animal processes (e.g., milk and cheese). In terms of dharma or responsibility, the plant kingdom has a responsibility to provide food for the animal kingdom and the human kingdom, while the mineral kingdom, the animal kingdom, and the human kingdom have no such dharma or responsibility toward other kingdoms (the mineral, animal, and human kingdoms contribute to the whole in other ways) (except that the mineral kingdom contributes water and traces for use by the other kingdoms). But man's principal form of nourishment comes from prana which conveys the natural vitality of the logos and which is naturally entrained on etheric levels. And man's secondary form of nourishment comes from the air which is breathed. Thus food and water, per se, are tertiary, though nonetheless required for effective experience and expression on the lower planes of consciousness.

The substance of food is, to some considerable extent, vitalized by the life from which it is derived. Mineral substance is relatively coarse and cannot be incorporated effectively except in very small measures (and much of mineral substance is inherently poisonous to higher lifeforms). Plant substance is polarized and vitalized distinctly differently than mineral substance, with plant substance (vegetables, fruits, nuts, etc.) having a definitely developed etheric component and a rudimentary astral component. Thus vegetarian fare generally provides a natural vitality that is relatively clear (pure). The strength resulting from (or contributed by) a vegetarian diet is not particularly intense or quick, but it contributes most effectively to the momentum of vitality.

Similarly, animal substance (flesh foods) (meat, fish, fowl) is polarized and vitalized distinctly differently from mineral and plant substance. Animal substance has definitely developed etheric and astral components, with the etheric component conveying a more intense and quick strength (which is therefore less effective than the strength-momentum of plant substance) and animal substance conveys a substantial “animalistic” quality through its astral component, which is, after all, qualified by the animal’s desires and instincts. The problem for man, therefore, is that man’s duty is to rise above his own animal nature (derived from his own body and history) and a diet of animal substance definitely inhibits that ascension by clouding a person’s emotions with the relatively coarse emotional content from the animal’s aura (which is not substantially conveyed through the foods resulting from animal processes).

The flesh diet is therefore not so much of a hindrance to average humanity, but a definite and substantial hindrance to one who aspires to spiritual progress. The spiritual student must, therefore, embrace an appropriate vegetarian discipline in order to build and sustain a foundation upon which to develop the greater strength of character and qualified consciousness that is needed for evolution and service expression.

† Commentary No. 847

Teachers and Self-Will

Throughout the field of theosophy and metaphysics one encounters the notion of the need for a teacher, that one cannot advance properly on one’s own. Yet in the relatively more advanced groups, the need for a teacher is not so clear, where the emphasis is upon thinking for oneself and not relying on others to formulate one’s beliefs or attitudes. There are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches, and a time and place for each.

In the first place, where one is unable to think for oneself, where to advance requires external guidance and encouragement, there is need for a suitable and qualified teacher. The bulk of religious experience and practice generally falls into this place (while in the higher forms of religious experience and practice no teacher or intermediary is required). The problem in this instance (the first place) is two-fold: (1) the student (at this place) is generally unable to discern the

quality of the teacher, except based upon superficial criteria, and thereby remains somewhat vulnerable and (2) the advancing student is generally unable to discern the time and place of passing beyond such (external) reliance. Karma of course takes care of the former (and even the latter), and a wise teacher will naturally encourage the advanced students to rely more and more on their own abilities.

Eventually, with or without a teacher, one must necessarily learn to think for oneself, developing a sense of discrimination (discernment) (judgment) and a rational basis for one's own beliefs, attitudes, practices, and values. Thus in the second place, one not only needs no teacher but having a teacher is generally a hindrance to self-reliance. On the other hand, as one progresses further in the direction of personality integration and development of the ego, the existence of that emerging ego (and ego-ness) becomes the principal problem that the student must face and overcome. At this point (in the third place) the student becomes again in need of a teacher, either (1) an advanced student-teacher (disciple) (initiate) (master) who is sufficiently wise and adept to "lead" the student onward and upward, drawing the student more and more into the sphere of influence of the student's own soul (and soul group) (and less and less reliant upon the aura of the teacher), or (2) [and ultimately] the soul itself, as the student begins to rely more and more (eventually entirely) upon the intuition and qualification of the soul (higher self) and the concomitant lessening of the "noise" of the ego (personality) (self-centeredness).

In this third place, the student must overcome the self-will and subject the mind and heart and entire personality to the will aspect of the soul, relying upon whatever measure of intuition has been developed and evoked (given that one can discern between the intuition and the mind-games of the ego). The self-will and the personality (ego) nature must be challenged incessantly if the personality is to become subservient to the higher interests. And in this third place, development proceeds primarily through increasingly refined qualification that is relatively incidental to the (real) work (service) being undertaken.

Ultimately, in an esoteric group, there is a hierarchical structure where authority rests in the senior member (and to which all members are necessarily responsive), but that centralized authority, in an esoteric group, reflects the collective quality and consciousness of the entire group and is thus a matter of

inherent (non-deliberative) consensus. There is no place in such a group for self-will of any kind. Those who exercise self-will (in such a place) simply find themselves cast upon the periphery and ignored (for they cannot contribute).

† Commentary No. 848

Time and Eternity

Time is usually thought of as the “measured or measurable period in which an action, process, or condition exists or continues.” Time is a function and perspective of relative objective existence (manifestation) (materialization). Time is thus manifestly connected with the notion of space and with mass (material substance). And yet each of these (time) (space) (mass) is merely a perspective and all are manifestly misleading unless viewed collectively and/or with a far greater depth and breadth than is obvious to the (normal) mind and consciousness that is (merely) embedded (in time, space, and mass) (or objective existence). For time (like space) is embedded in a fabric of existence, for the purposes of manifestation (evolution).

Time is more correctly thought of as a multi-dimensional temporal flow (intimately connected with spatial flow and mass flow). The first temporal dimension is a point in (of) time. That point or moment is the least real aspect of time, giving rise to considerable illusion (complexity and identification) (and of our living in merely that one dimension). The second temporal dimension is a line or duration in time, with a two-dimensional flow, passing in two directions (past and future) [simultaneously] from the point of view of some point in time. That (temporal) line is the next least real aspect of time, giving rise to the (false) notion of past, present, and future as unrelated or loosely related components of time (and of our living in merely two-dimensional time). The third temporal dimension extends that line (duration) to a temporal plane (which is relatively more real). And the fourth temporal dimension extends that plane (analogously) to a (temporal) sphere.

This notion of three and four temporal dimensions must ultimately be embraced before one can even begin to appreciate the wholeness of one’s self. In one temporal dimension we can glimpse the aspect of transience, which indicates

only the smallest part of what we are. In two temporal dimensions we can begin to grasp the aspect of our own continuity and relationships, however poorly (dimly) (partially). In three and four temporal dimensions we begin to appreciate that what we are (even as individuals) extends far beyond what is normally temporally perceived, that we are part of a much greater temporal whole, and that we are indeed living through many lives simultaneously. Of the temporal dimensions (eternity) beyond the fourth even less is comprehended.

It is only when we reach that third temporal dimension that we are able to consciously change the past and actually embrace the future (and in so doing overcome the notions of both). And it is only when we reach that fourth temporal dimension that we pass beyond time as even we can conceive. But in the process we must overcome our (natural) assumptions about the way things (time) are (is). We must begin to think of the past, the present, and the future as one. We must realize that what we are extends throughout all three of those aspects (and beyond). We must begin to think of consciousness as reality, and consciousness as non-temporal (or at least not temporally in the "normal" sense of a given moment in time). And in extending our "waking" consciousness beyond the normal (dull) waking-sleep of the imbedded, we are able to embrace more of what we are (and reflect that more-ness in what little we are).

The notion of being able to influence the past is a very potent one, the objects of which are to improve the depth of one's understanding, to improve one's relationships in consciousness with others, and to compensate others (in consciousness) for our lack of expressed wisdom. All of which necessarily improves our prospects for subsequent usefulness.

The Will Aspect and Creation

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D, IV-1) addresses the will aspect and creation, through consideration of (1) the condition of the magician, (2) construction of thought-forms, and (3) the occult significance of speech.

“The disciple’s power for service depends on the state of his bodies and their alignment, the condition of activity present in the (three) physical head centers, and the circulatory action of the triangular transmission of force.” In turn, “these factors are dependent on the ability of the disciple to meditate, the capacity he displays for bringing through accurately from the subtler levels the plans and purposes of which his soul is cognizant, the purity of his motives, his power to hold a state of meditation, and the amount of energy he can pour later into his thought-form and thus procure for it a period of existence.” “These subsidiary factors are dependent on his place on the ladder of evolution, the condition of his bodies, his karmic condition, the tenuosity of the etheric web, and the caliber of his physical body and its relative refinement.”

The average person creates thought-forms mostly unconsciously and indeliberately and these are fueled primarily by the desire nature and persist to the extent of the creator’s mental focus, intensity of feeling, and continuity of (largely unconscious and indeliberate) reinforcement. The magician (occultist) constructs thought-forms much more consciously and deliberately (and much more potently), firstly directly in mental matter, secondly through direct vitalization in astral matter, and thirdly through direct actualization in the matter of the plane for which it is intended (e.g., etheric, astral, or mental). Through meditation and related occult training, the disciple learns to be receptive to higher impression (the plan or will of the soul) and constructs thought-forms appropriate to and in facilitation of his or her task(s). Upon actualization, the thought-form assumes an independent existence (becomes alive) and moves toward its fulfillment or realization (manifestation) (fruition) [since it has been imbued with some purpose]. The creator is still responsible for the thought-form (and is linked to it by a thread of consciousness), but it nonetheless proceeds in its own course. Yet as long as the creator continues to “look” upon his creation, so shall it persist.

The relatively advanced student understands the occult significance of speech and, realizing the effects of speech, grows increasingly reticent. Such a student relies upon telepathic and intuitive means of communication, unencumbered by words, and generally only speaks consciously and deliberately in order to bring about some intended effect(s). "In physical plane manifestation, we are known by our speech; we are known by our reticence, by the things we say, and by the things we leave unsaid and are judged by the quality of our conversation." "Speech is literally a great magical force, and the adepts or white magicians, through knowledge of the forces and power of silence and of speech, can produce effects upon the physical plane." "But only he who has learned to keep silent, and has arrived at the knowledge of the times to speak can pass this veil and make certain esoteric contacts."

The voice of the silence is the essential key to the will aspect and creation. Christ relates to the Word of God. Vishnu relates to the Voice and to the Song of the Universe. Christ and Vishnu are the (one) second aspect of the logos, and correspond (analogously) to the human soul. Thus it is the human soul that is the real creator and not the mind or ego or personality (which tend merely to imitate the soul).

† Commentary No. 850

The Nature of Magic

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D, IV-2) addresses the nature of magic, through consideration of (1) black magicians and white, (2) the source of black magic, and (3) conditions for white magic.

Black and white magicians differ in both motive and method. The black magician works alone and for his or her own (selfish or self-centered) purposes. The white magician works within a group context for group purposes. The black magician works outside of the divine evolutionary plan, utilizing the forces of involution (matter), imposing upon the lesser devas. The white magician works within the divine evolutionary plan, utilizing the powers of evolution (consciousness), cooperatively with the higher devas. The black magician works (separatively) through the lower psychic centers or chakras, "employing the

astral light for purposes of deception and seduction." The white magician works (constructively) through the higher psychic centers or chakras, "employing the astral light for purposes of information and the aiding of evolution." The black magician works through the third aspect and his or her work is centered in the throat. The white magician works through the second aspect and his or her work is centered in the heart.

Evil (ignorance) (unresolved force) appears from or is related to any one or a number of several sources. Planetary evil is related to the planetary logos and polar opposition (that must ultimately be resolved). Cosmic evil is more fundamental, but also a matter of unresolved force and eventual resolution. Cyclic or tertiary evil relates to the "pairs of opposites in their own cycles and the equilibrating work of the soul." A fourth "evil" relates more directly to humanity and the need for a balancing of forces between the three kingdoms (of which humanity is passing through the middle kingdom). While "evil" in its various forms has been naturally manifested throughout the ages, black magic (the conscious and wrong appropriation of force within the human kingdom), per se, is relatively new, dating from the fourth or Atlantean root-race. Those who dabble in black magic, who survive the encounter (by turning toward the light) are merely set back in their evolution by some modest extent (one to several lifetimes). But those who do not survive the encounter, who become entangled in the dark forces (and unable to free themselves), become lost souls who are literally set free from their respective monads and destroyed.

"Unless students of magic enter upon this pursuit fortified by pure motive, clean bodies, and high aspiration, they are foredoomed to disappointment and even to disaster. All those who seek to work consciously with the forces of manifestation, and who endeavor to control the energies of all that is seen, need the strong protection of purity. This is a point which cannot be too strongly emphasized and urged, and hence the constant injunctions to self control, comprehension of the nature of man, and devotion to the cause of humanity. The pursuit of magical investigation is dangerous." Without sufficient purification and refinement the consequence is over-stimulation and destruction of one's bodies. Without sufficient right motive the consequence is entanglement in the acquisition of power and subsequent corruption and self-destruction. Thus are also needed the qualities of physical purity ("abstinence,

right continence, clean living, vegetarian diet, and self-control”), etheric freedom, astral or emotional stability, and mental poise.

In the final analysis, the (necessarily self-centered) black magician relies on the ego, the mind, and the personality, while the (necessarily relatively selfless) white magician relies upon the soul.

† Commentary No. 851

Emotional and Mental Health

Emotional and mental health are, in some ways and in principle, quite similar to physical health, with various strengths and weaknesses (or tendencies thereof) being part of the karmic manifestation. But emotional and mental health are, relatively and respectively, more significant, in the sense that mental health substantively affects the emotional state, and emotional health substantively affects the physical state. The physical state refers to the condition of the physical body and its etheric double or vital body, its relative health, stability, coherence, strength, and purity. Similarly, the emotional and mental states refer to the condition of the emotional or astral body (aura) and the condition of the mental body or concrete mind, respectively. Whatever exists in the mind is naturally reflected into the emotional body. And whatever exists in the emotional body is naturally reflected into the etheric body and its dense physical counterpart.

Bad thoughts lead thusly to bad feelings, and bad feelings lead likewise to a lack of harmony within the physical body. Diseases of the mind and emotions lead to afflictions in the emotional and physical bodies, respectively. But, similarly, good thoughts lead to good feelings, and good feelings lead likewise to more harmony within the physical body. A healthy mind leads to healthy emotions and healthy emotions leads to a healthy (or healthier) body. In the case of an integrated personality, the connectivity between the bodies is strengthened and the potential for “health” is improved. All of this is, however, subject to karmic qualification (and temporally dissociated emergence of consequences), but karmic qualification is necessarily the consequence of (and influenced by) activity by (within) the mind and emotions as well as physical behavior.

The relative coarseness of the mind and emotions, and the relative habits of thinking and feeling, are necessarily related (causally) to (and from) both the mental and emotional health. Just as the physical body can be strengthened (or weakened) by proper exercise (or lack thereof), so can the emotional and mental bodies, as habits give rise to (constructive or destructive) patterns within the emotional and mental bodies (e.g., having opinions). Having opinions, for example, has been referred to as the "falling sickness of the mind."

People think that bias and prejudice are merely habits of thinking. In fact, bias and prejudice lead to deformation and discoloration of that part of the mental body (concrete mind) to which the subject (of bias or prejudice) belongs. That deformation strengthens the bias or prejudice and makes it quite difficult if not impossible for the person to think clearly on that subject. Moreover, habits of bias and prejudice in one subject encourage bias and prejudice in other areas as well. And one who is bigoted or broadly biased and prejudiced possesses a mental body that is actually "diseased" and seriously impaired. And yet, all of this, too, can be overcome by the determined student, who turns his mind to more noble things.

Some diseases of the mind and emotions are as contagious as some of the more virulent diseases of the body, for those who are sympathetic or vulnerable. Bias and bigotry, for example, can be induced in others, however unconscious their sympathy or vulnerability may be. And yet the same is true for mental and emotional health. A healthy mind, for example, free from those biases and prejudices that limit and confine the mental capacities, will naturally (tend to) induce similar tendencies (mental health) in others, by proximity and association, to whatever extent those others are sympathetic or responsive.

Pledge-Fever

Pledge-fever is a phenomenon associated with the spiritual path of accelerated, conscious, and deliberate evolution in consciousness. It is, fundamentally, a karmic condition, evoked by the soul as a consequence of its decision (realization) to evolve more consciously and deliberately.

In the normal course of human evolution, accumulated karma is resolved gradually as circumstances warrant. And since one generally “creates” more karma than is resolved in a given lifetime, one tends to “have” a karmic accumulation. As one evolves sufficiently in consciousness, the process of karmic resolution is quickened somewhat simply by virtue of the person’s ability to learn (i.e., to assimilate, consciously or unconsciously, the experience or lessons of karma). Thus, in the normal course of human evolution, one eventually crosses a threshold in which the karmic balance (accumulation) is gradually reduced rather than gradually increased.

However, when the soul chooses to embrace the spiritual path, striking changes occur in the karmic process and a much greater karmic “burden” is embraced in each lifetime until there is no karmic accumulation. Then one is free to serve effectively (and any new karma is dealt with in near-real-time). But that process of accelerated karmic fulfillment is necessarily a particularly difficult time for the spiritual student, for as the karmic pressure is intensified and accelerated, all sorts of weaknesses and character “faults” are brought to the surface of the personality where they can be dealt with more effectively by the waking-consciousness. This phenomenon is called pledge-fever (and is known by other (comparable) names as well).

Pledge-fever is not limited to students of any particular organization, esoteric, theosophical, or otherwise, nor can it be evoked by the personality (alone). It can only be evoked by or in cooperation with the soul or higher self, and only to the extent that a real commitment is made to the spiritual path. Pledge-fever is a wonderful opportunity for the aspirant, as weaknesses hitherto unrecognized are more easily recognized and overcome, and as these weaknesses are overcome the student increases in spiritual strength (character) (quality) and evolutionary

momentum. However, overcoming such weaknesses is not necessarily quick or easy, and progress may be realized but not consciously recognized, and so the student is urged to be patient (and persistent) in his or her efforts in these regards. It usually takes several lifetimes to overcome a karmic accumulation by these methods (evocation by virtue of being placed upon the path). Thus, in each lifetime there is a recapitulation, as one reaches the conscious recognition of having a commitment to the path, thereby evoking again the acceleration of karmic fulfillment (on the other hand, even without conscious recognition by the waking-consciousness or focus of the personality, the soul will evoke pledge-fever).

There is another phenomenon, a corollary to pledge-fever, that occurs as well, such that in addition to this intensification and acceleration, there is a tightening of the karmic boundaries such that karmic consequences derived from new causes come more quickly and as a result of more moderate imbalance. Normally, the karmic (behavioral) (physical, emotional, and mental) boundaries are broad and one must stray significantly from the "path" before a karmic consequence is merited. But once one is committed to the path, the boundaries are tightened and even the slightest "deviation" warrants karmic consequence. In other words, the standards are much more rigorous for those upon the path, and this, too, is a great blessing, for it helps the focus (upon dharma).

† Commentary No. 853

Seeking and Self-Realization

Seeking refers generally to the process of truth-seeking and specifically to the process of preparation for self-realization (which involves the preliminary stages of the spiritual path of conscious evolution in consciousness). Self-realization refers to the state of consciousness (achieved through the later stages of the spiritual path) in which the consciousness (waking-consciousness) is wholly aligned with the soul or higher self and in which state thinking in the normal sense is not possible, as awareness is achieved that transcends thinking in that conventional sense.

Many believe that self-realization requires only that one stop thinking, that in not-thinking one has overcome the illusion of duality and separateness, and that no effort or qualifications whatsoever are required, that any effort at all undermines the possibility of self-realization. And, in apparent contrast, many believe that lifetimes of experience, training, self-discipline, etc., are required before one can be qualified for self-realization. Thus many feel that these two ideas are mutually exclusive. But in fact, these two ideas are somewhat complementary. Self-realization is actually possible only after one is properly qualified, and self-realization can then, and only then, occur through the final mechanism of not-thinking.

Those who believe they have achieved self-realization without prior qualification are therefore merely deceiving and deluding themselves. To evoke not-thinking prematurely, i.e., without prior and proper qualification, is to prevent further growth and evolution in consciousness (which is of course quite convenient for the personality and ego). The “great awakening” is therefore a great self-deception and is, in a sense, greater than the grand illusion of individuality, separateness, duality, materiality, etc., that pervades much of humanity. At least the great illusion is part of the plan and something that all of us must pass through in the process of achieving self-realization. The false sense of self-realization that comes with (merely) not-thinking is simply clever and self-limiting.

On the other hand, the mind is definitely a major hurdle to be overcome, and the state of not-thinking is a difficult one to achieve (more properly, a state to allow, as it cannot, properly, be evoked through effort). This is an apparent paradox (and one of many encountered on the path), in that one must develop the mind rather definitely before the mind can be overcome in self-realization. One must seek before one can “achieve” not-seeking. One must learn to think (properly) before one can learn to not-think. In another sense, not-seeking (like not-thinking) is part of the cycle of activity and repose (pralaya), as one works within the field of consciousness (evolution) for a while, and one then rests in repose for a while, effectively assimilating the experience of the active period before returning to another period of activity (experience and expression) (leading to growth and expansion (and refinement) in consciousness).

For the spiritual student, the danger is entanglement in activity that precludes periods of repose. But even entanglement is preferable to stagnation in non-activity. Thus the student should endeavor to observe himself (in constant recollectedness), to achieve both the humility and refinement that comes with non-attachment, and eventually to evoke the state characterized by the silent mind. These efforts are not inconsistent with the intended result; in fact they are quite necessary in order to bring about that intended result (the silent mind).

† Commentary No. 854

Thinking and Feeling

If one is physically-polarized, then emotional experience is necessary in order to develop the capacities for higher experience and expression and in order to develop the adaptability and flexibility that is needed in consciousness. The process of emotional development is, initially, a rather painful one, literally, as one learns to feel (pain and pleasure), and is further painful, eventually and figuratively, as one learns to deal with one's emotions and rise above them. In so doing one first learns to think by having others' thoughts imposed, by accepting others' thoughts (passively) as one's own. And, in time, one learns to think more actively and less passively.

If one is emotionally-polarized, then the path (evolution in consciousness) does not imply further emotional experience and expression as an end in itself, but rather it implies a refinement of the emotional capacities and emotional experience and expression increasingly subordinated to mental experience and expression. For emopols, the path implies mental development through the faculty of reasoning and a lessening of the pull of the emotions. The mind must be brought into activity (dominance) in order to overcome the distractions and entanglements and glamour implied in the untempered emotions. Thus thinking supersedes (the lesser) feeling and further mental experience is needed in order to refine the mind and make it a more fitting instrument of the higher self.

The emopol generally speaks without thinking (as does the menpol where the ego is involved), but the refined menpol (properly) thinks without speaking (and

speaks only with discretion). In thinking, one naturally learns, over time, to distinguish, to differentiate, to discriminate, and to judge. If one values honesty and fairness, as one should (and eventually as one must), then one also develops an increasingly refined sense of objectivity, discernment, and discretion in all things (thoughts, feelings, and activities). One must, in order to succeed in this endeavor, learn to think for oneself.

If, on the other hand, one is mentally polarized, the path does not imply further mental experience and expression as an end in itself, but rather the path (evolution) implies intuitive development through the faculty of buddhi or non-thinking (which also conveys self-realization). And in this way, feeling (in the greater, higher sense of intuition) supersedes thinking. In realization (buddhi), one naturally grasps what is needed, without recourse to reasoning or thinking of any kind. In fact, as soon as one thinks, whatever sense of intuition may have been possible, is lost. The inpol (one who is intuitively-polarized) is one who speaks without thinking, if one speaks at all. One must, in order to succeed in this endeavor, learn to not-think. Yet, in the absence of intuition, one must (should) be reasonable.

The emopol cannot achieve any real understanding, but functions (survives) through instinct (which the educated emopol usually confuses with intuition, much as the educated thinker usually (foolishly) takes credit for ideas (thoughts) that are not his or her own). The menpol can (eventually) achieve understanding, but cannot achieve any true realization. It is only as one rises above the mind, entirely, that realization truly occurs. There are no shortcuts to realization, though the emotional aspirant may very well catch glimpses of what is to come (intuition) (as a form of encouragement). And those who over-rely on the mind are doomed to be its victim. But those who pursue refinement and integration and service, who develop their sense of values (truth and harmlessness), are destined for the higher experience. And in so doing, properly lose themselves.

Unanswered Questions

As one evolves in consciousness, the nature of one's questions and the manner of apprehending the answers to questions also evolve. Many go through life in a largely self-absorbed manner, being preoccupied merely with the immediate experience and personal concerns, without formulating any questions of higher (non-mundane) relevance. Others, more mentally active (but still largely absorbed in the lower worlds), begin to formulate questions on more substantive and less personal issues. And a few (more mentally active but less absorbed in the lower worlds) actually formulate sensible, non-personal questions of philosophical and spiritual value.

In the early phase of "questioning" the concerns are personal and mundane (and of little or no real significance). Consequently, it does not really matter whether or not these questions are answered, except that personal questions (in which the person is attached or entangled in mundane energy and/or the desire nature) usually evoke answers fabricated by the mind (kama-manas) [i.e., one hears what one wants to hear] and which are of little or no value. There is, however, a middle phase (of seeking truth and understanding) in which one who is approaching the path begins to focus the attention on issues that seem pertinent, with the expectation of finding the truth and comprehending it. A great deal of energy can be expending in such seeking and searching (with other matters (e.g., one's duty) often left unresolved or neglected), yet with energy expended (sent forth), there is generally some appropriate consequence (result) (answer).

It is generally good to question, rather than to accept blindly whatever is presented or read. But one should ever be wary of the intervention (and inventions) of the mind. "Answers" that come from the mind in the sense of some rational or intellectual process have relatively little value (to the spiritual student). It is far better to rely on the intuition for "guidance" than to rely on the mind. It is even better to be involved in service such that the answers to questions are not so important.

The nature, character, and form of one's questions are a strong indication of one's degree and extent of (relative) understanding (wisdom). The seeker of truth generally formulates pertinent questions, but compromises the process by expecting them to be answered. That expectation then serves as a hindrance to understanding, an impediment to the intuitive insight of realization. But if the seeker formulates questions and has no such expectations, then there is a greater likelihood that the pertinent answers will come, in their own way and in their own time, according to the needs (not desires) of the seeker and according to the relative degree of intelligent receptivity. Answers to the more proper (relevant) questions are most properly "answered" in the form of quality rather than mental apprehension.

The real value to questions lies in their formulation, not in the assumed answers (if any). And the most pertinent questions are those that cannot be answered, that cannot be apprehended by the mind, but which can be assimilated directly in the form of quality and wisdom. In this sense, even "understanding" can be a hindrance. Each formulation is in effect an invocation. And the proper consequence of an invocation is an evocation. But evocations are not generally "answers" to questions. Quality and assimilated understanding (wisdom) are far more valuable than anything apprehended. In the final analysis, properly formulated questions evoke the needed quality, and remain suitably unanswered.

† Commentary No. 856

Unquestioned Answers

There are (at least) three aspects to the subject of unquestioned answers, corresponding to the relative posture (activity and responsiveness) (role) of the mind (in its three stages of passive mind, active mind, and unconditioned mind, respectively).

The first aspect is the case of passivity (of the conditioned mind), in which "answers" are unquestioned because they are simply accepted without any effort toward discrimination or discernment. This is okay for the (primitive) emotionally-polarized person (emopol) who has a rather undeveloped mind and no alternative to accepting external impressions, but it is rather detrimental for

the (more advanced) emopol who has a more or less developed mind but who is not using it effectively. It is far better to exercise the mind in consideration of the "answers" provided or realized than to accept those answers blindly. Thinking for oneself is a major achievement for the emopol and provides the framework for the transition from emotional polarization to mental polarization. So in this first stage, the student does not question the answers, but does need to learn to question the answers, as the mind is developed and brought into activity. Thereby (through proper mental activity) knowledge is properly acquired, experience (learning) is accomplished, achievements are made, and assimilation (of knowledge and experience) yields understanding and some degree of wisdom.

The second (somewhat higher) aspect is the case of activity (of the conditioned mind), in which "answers" are dutifully questioned and a determination of acceptability or reasonableness is afforded, where the mind is relied upon in the active sense (and the intermediate goal is objectivity). This attitude of questioning is positive in the sense of the relatively undeveloped mentally-polarized person (menpol), but not so in the sense of the developed menpol who is nearing the transition from mental polarization to intuitive polarization. In this second stage it is important for the student to develop the faculty of discrimination, through analysis and other intellectual consideration. Questioning the answers supports the sense of discrimination and also can be used to guard against the fabrications of the mind. In this second stage, the student may very well question all the answers, but the student eventually needs to learn how (intelligently and effectively) not to question any of the answers, that the (properly qualified) student might pass on to intuitive levels.

The third (highest) aspect is the case of non-passivity and non-activity (of the unconditioned (unfettered) mind), in which answers are unquestioned because the mind is wholly tempered by a posture of awareness (intuitive realization). In this case, mental passivity is simply not possible, and mental activity is so tempered by the higher quality that the intuition (properly) dominates. With the mind properly unfettered and unconditioned by attachments, bias, prejudice, opinions, etc., the mind is free to respond in clarity (truly objectively) to the higher impressions (buddhi) and wisdom of the soul. This is what is meant by self-realization (the consequence of self-mastery) and is the practical goal of the spiritual student.

The intuitive (intelligently receptive) state (of the fully developed, tempered, and unconditioned mind) is effectively the highest stage of mental posture that can be achieved (within humanity) at the present time (and foreseeable future). But, ultimately, answers remain unquestioned because the questions remain unanswered.

† Commentary No. 857

Withdrawal of Consciousness 1

The withdrawal of consciousness from the human form can take place in a number of different ways, both, naturally or unnaturally, normally or abnormally, partially or completely, temporarily or permanently, and voluntarily or involuntarily. In a sense, virtually all withdrawals are natural and normal, even in the vast majority of cases of disease or incapacitation, which are merely karmic consequences naturally and normally occurring. However, the terms unnatural and abnormal also refer to cases wherein the ego or personality engenders the condition (partial or complete “unnatural” withdrawal) through carelessness or ignorance (stupidity).

The withdrawal of consciousness from the human form means simply that the soul has chosen to withdraw from the state or condition of waking-consciousness, in which case the dense physical form remains and some or all of the higher vehicles of consciousness are withdrawn from direct association with that lower form. This occurs naturally and normally in the case of sleep (temporary withdrawal for revitalization) and in the case of death (permanent withdrawal from incarnation). This occurs less naturally (unnaturally) and less normally (abnormally) in the case of hypnosis and suicide. Hypnosis is a temporary and externally imposed withdrawal (even if naively and consciously cooperated with by the ego or personality). Suicide is indeed a permanent withdrawal, but nonetheless unnatural and abnormal (and results in a lingering of the more subtle vehicles in darkness (and distress) until the time at which the person would have died naturally).

A significant factor in the withdrawal of consciousness is whether or not it is the soul’s intention (or the soul’s karmic obligation) to withdraw temporarily or

permanently. A recoverable coma, for example, is a case of a temporary withdrawal, while an unrecoverable coma is a case of a permanent withdrawal. "Death" actually occurs when the silver cord is severed (by the soul) and the higher vehicles are withdrawn (orthodox medical science will benefit when this fact is recognized and such severance is efficiently detected (if not even the karmic factors and the soul's intention)). In the case of permanent withdrawal, the body begins to decay unless otherwise (artificially) sustained. Artificial sustainment may be by physical means, in the case of orthodox medical treatment, or by psychic means, in the case of possession by some other incarnated or non-incarnated entity, human or otherwise. In either case, artificial sustainment of the human form is abnormal and unnatural, albeit nonetheless a karmic consequence (which in turn breeds further karmic entanglement on the part of whoever imposes such sustainment).

Withdrawal of consciousness also occurs unnaturally (partially or otherwise) in the case of drug use (including consumption of any measure of alcoholic beverage). Withdrawal of consciousness occurs more naturally in the case of disease and the various autistic states. In Alzheimer's disease, for example, there is a gradual (initially partial, then progressive) and natural withdrawal of consciousness in response to some karmic obligation. Autism is more likely a case in which the soul is ill-prepared to function "normally" in human society and therefore evokes a partial and/or temporary withdrawal for its own purposes.

Withdrawal of consciousness may be a difficult matter for friends and family members, although it helps to realize that "lessons" are thereby intended for all who are involved or associated, not just those who are directly incapacitated by such withdrawal. All consequences are karmically conceived and brought about under law. The relatively wise learn from every experience.

Rules for Magic 1

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D, IV-3) considers fifteen rules for (white) magic, beginning with six (occult) rules (aphorisms) for the mental plane, relating to the proper manipulation of solar energy, the preparation and qualification of the intended thought-form, and the sending forth of that thought-form (creative qualification) onto the astral plane.

(1) "The solar angel collects himself, scatters not his force, but in meditation deep communicates with his reflection." The solar angel is the soul, who remains in deep meditation (internal recollectedness) throughout one's incarnation. The reflection (shadow) is the human personality which must be intelligently receptive and responsive to the qualification of the soul in order to be effective in the lower worlds. The bridge between the two is the sutratma.

(2) "When the shadow has responded, in meditation deep the work proceeds. The lower light is thrown upward, the greater light illuminates the three, and the work of the four proceeds." Man becomes a conscious creator only where there is both a "downward" flow from the soul and an "upwelling" of qualified lower consciousness, i.e., in meditation the integrated and refined personality learns to align itself with the soul (and with the will, plans, and purposes of that soul).

(3) "The energy circulates. The point of light, the product of the labors of the four, waxes and grows. The myriads gather round its glowing warmth until its light recedes. Its fire grows dim. Then shall the second sound go forth." The alignment of personality and soul must be strengthened as the primary note (of the soul) and the secondary note (of the integrated personality) are blended and balanced (and coherence (rapport) is achieved). (4) "Sound, light, vibration, and the form blend and merge, and thus the work is one. It proceeds under the law, and naught can hinder now the work from going forward. The man breathes deeply. He concentrates his forces, and drives the thought-form from him." The intended form must first be built upon the mental plane and then properly and effectively sent forth, utilizing the aspect of will. Most "workers" are unable to do this, by virtue of lack of qualification, training, and realization. Therein lies a major safeguard in this creative process.

(5) Three things engage the solar angel before the sheath created passes downward: the condition of the waters, the safety of the one who thus creates, and steady contemplation. "Thus are the heart, the throat, and the eye, allied for triple service." A vibration induced on one level and intended to be sent forth on the next will induce a responding vibration on that intended level. That which is sent forth must be wholly qualified by the soul's intention, effectively vitalized (and sustained), and in full consideration of the relative quality of the lower vehicles. Only where the physical, etheric, and astral bodies are properly refined, coherent, and responsive, is it "safe" to proceed in this creative endeavor. The unqualified (and independent) personality has its own purposes which are inconsistent with those of the soul. The qualified and aligned personality affords considerable protection from distraction and disturbance. The heart, throat, and ajna centers, properly functioning and wholly qualified for service, are involved in controlling and manifesting the intended thought-form.

(6) "The devas of the lower four feel the force when the eye opens; they are driven forth and lose their master." The form is next clothed in astral matter, for effective vitalization and subsequent manifestation and fulfillment. The ajna center (third eye) is utilized as a controller and focusing agent.

† Commentary No. 859

Rules for Magic 2

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D, IV-3) continues consideration of fifteen rules for (white) magic, with five (occult) rules (aphorisms) for the astral plane, relating to vitalization and the balancing of the pairs of opposites. The key to this process is the proper development and qualification of the third eye (ajna center) (eye of Shiva) (vortex), which is the instrument of wisdom, the instrument of focusing and directing of energy and force, and the instrument of manifested connectivity and relatedness. The third eye is induced and developed as a consequence of proper reciprocal vibration.

In one sense these fifteen rules refer to the process of building and manifesting the thought-form that is the human personality. In another, more general sense, they refer to building and manifesting various purposive thought-forms that are manifested on one level or another. In some cases forms are limited to manas and function only on mental levels. In some cases forms are vitalized through kama-manas and function on astral levels. In some cases forms are further embodied and function on etheric levels. And in some cases forms are actually evoked onto dense physical levels.

(7) "The dual forces on the plane whereon the vital power must be sought, are seen; the two paths face the solar angel; the poles vibrate. A choice confronts the one who meditates." Equilibrating force is evoked to gather the needed astral materials (matter) and energy (qualification) (vitalization). (8) "The Agnisuryans respond to the sound. The waters ebb and flow. Let the magician guard himself from drowning at the point where land and water meet. The midway spot which is neither dry nor wet must provide the standing place whereon his feet are set. When water, land, and air meet there is the place for magic to be wrought." The magician must avoid coming under the influence of the astral elementals. Various formulae are utilized in this endeavor, as the creative effort must necessarily balance the positive force of spirit (the soul) (consciousness) and the negative force of matter (deva substance).

(9) "Condensation next ensues. The fire and waters meet, the form swells and grows. Let the magician set his form upon the proper path." In purity of mind and heart is sufficient protection from the attractiveness of the left-hand path. The quality and character of the thought-form is a reflection of the quality and character of the thinker. If the form is sufficiently qualified, it cannot be appropriated by others (i.e., black magicians) for other (left-handed) purposes. (10) "As the waters bathe the form created, they are absorbed and used. The form increases in its strength; let the magician thus continue until the work suffices. Let the outer builders cease their labors then, and let the inner workers enter on their cycle." Each phase of form-building activity and manifestation involves different groups of builders (devas and elementals). The astral is a particularly chaotic plane, so the magician requires strength and coherence in himself (his aura) and in his thought-form on this level.

(II) "Three things the worker with the law must now accomplish. First, ascertain the formula which will confine the lives within the ensphering wall; next, pronounce the words which will tell them what to do and where to carry that which will have been made; and finally, to utter forth the mystic phrase which will save him from their work." More formulae are required in order to sustain the form and impart to it sufficient momentum for its fulfillment (and for the magician to be sufficiently detached from his creation) (those who create unconsciously (as most people do) are often haunted by their own (careless) creations, either directly or indirectly (karmically)).

† Commentary No. 860

Rules for Magic 3

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division D, IV-3) continues consideration of fifteen rules for (white) magic, with four (occult) rules (aphorisms) for the physical plane, relating to the proper transmission of force. In this sense, the physical plane refers as much to the etheric levels as to the dense physical.

(I2) "The web pulsates. It contracts and expands. Let the magician seize the midway point and thus release those prisoners of the planet whose note is right and justly tuned to that which must be made." These refer to the planetary etheric web and pranic forces and the associated deva lives. The magician (occult worker) must be free to work consciously and directly in etheric matter.

(I3) "The magician must recognize the four; note in his work the shade of violet which they evidence, and thus construct the shadow. When this is so, the shadow clothes itself, and the four become the seven." The occult worker understands the four ethers and their nature and character, their purposes and functions, their embodied lives, and their relationships to other levels and other forces.

(I4) "The sound swells out. The hour of danger to the soul draws near. The waters have not hurt the white creator and naught could drown nor drench him. Danger from fire and flame menaces now, and dimly yet the rising smoke is seen. Let him again, after the cycle of peace, call on the solar angel." The fires

of the physical (etheric) plane must be dealt with effectively, else the creation may turn destructive. Continued or renewed contact with the soul is essential, as solar fire is evoked to balance the fires of matter. Without the higher qualification, the occult worker risks destruction or impairment as a result of entanglement in the lives of the astral plane (waters) (desire nature) and the lives of the etheric levels (fires) of the physical world. (15) "The fires approach the shadow, yet burn it not. The fire sheath is completed. Let the magician chant the words that blend the fire and water." The occult worker must also understand the karmic balance that exists on these levels between the various deva lives. The occult worker is fire and works with fire, but must still be careful.

These fifteen rules for magic merely hint (occultly) at the processes and procedures involved. The effective occultist is one who is properly qualified (purified) and properly trained in all of the arts and sciences of occult (creative) work (service). The requisite knowledge, understanding, and wisdom comes to the spiritual student who properly prepares himself for this work (i.e., through purification, study, meditation, and service). Although there are safeguards at each level, the willfulness of an unprepared student can lead to self-destruction or serious impairment of the faculties. The real keys to success are the overcoming of the separateness and egoism of the lower self. For as long as and to the extent that the soul is involved in the process (through qualification by the soul and the effective responsiveness of the purified, integrated, and aligned personality), success is assured.

These fifteen rules of magic serve to stimulate the unqualified to become qualified, to caution the unwary to become wary, and to convey certain formulae to those (properly prepared) who can perceive the significance. But these rules do not convey any literal understanding of the processes involved nor do they imply that the occult worker must be fully conscious of the details of these processes. They do imply, however, that the occult worker who is fully qualified and trained in these matters will have the requisite understanding.

Bodily Polarity 1

The human being in incarnation consists of a number of bodies or vehicles of expression and experience, i.e., (1) the familiar dense physical body, which is the lowest of the bodies, (2) the etheric double or vital (energy) body, which is more properly considered the physical principle, (3) the astral or emotional (desire) body, (4) the mind or lower mental body, (5) the causal body, (6) the buddhic sheath (the vehicle of the spiritual (higher) intuition), (7) the atmic sheath (the vehicle of the spiritual (higher) will), etc., and (more properly) their associated principles and consciousness.

Each body is subject to (governed by) the laws of its own plane of consciousness, e.g., the physical-etheric body is subject to the natural laws of the physical plane, the astral body is likewise subject to the natural laws of the astral plane, etc. In this sense, natural laws are the consequential laws of evolutionary conditioning (qualification for divine intention (evolutionary purpose)). These natural laws are actually and more properly considered as only aspects of the natural law (cosmic law) (karma in its broadest evolutionary context). And so the laws of each plane are linked purposively, as (karmic) energy flows between the various planes of consciousness (through the various chakras or energy centers).

According to and consistent with natural law, each body is subject to (regulated by) causal factors from the body on the plane immediately above it, e.g., the dense physical body is subject to the health and conditioning of the etheric double, the physical-etheric body is regulated by and subject to emotional factors, the astral or emotional body is regulated by and subject to mental activity, etc. The extent to which a body is actively responsive to the higher factors is the extent to which a body is actively subject to that natural law. Each body has its own, elemental existence, which resists higher qualification and seeks to continue its own (self-centered and narrowly-focused) experience and expression on its plane, but as the personality on its various levels is purified, qualified, refined, and uplifted, the personality becomes integrated and more properly responsive.

Each body has a natural fixed or dynamic polarity with regard to the other bodies. The physical body is either male (active) (positive) (inductive) or female (passive) (negative) (deductive) according to the decision made at the time of conception. The astral body is naturally polarized oppositely from the physical body, but can more or less easily function relatively as male (kinetic) or female (static) depending on the circumstances (internal and external factors and the degree and nature of responsiveness to same). The higher vehicles tend to be bi-sexual in this (dynamic or kinetic (male)) sense of polarity. The vehicles also have an underlying and alternating planar (static) polarity, the physical body having a male planar polarity, the astral being female, the mind being male, etc., in addition to the specific polarity of a given body or vehicle. But the real human being (the soul) is sexless and each body is naturally bi-sexual, having, inherently, both male and female aspects, depending on the point of view or perspective. In the case of the physical body, one of the two sexes is selected by the soul for expression (while the other is suppressed).

Bodily polarity gives rise to a number of potential problems or anomalies, e.g., homosexuality and/or other unnatural polarity reversals, yet the relationships of (proper) bodily polarity also hold the key to potential (and eventual) self-mastery.

† Commentary No. 862

Bodily Polarity 2

Any sexual excess or reversal of bodily polarity is considered by the esotericist as unnatural (harmful) and counter-productive (i.e., counter-evolutionary). Thus homosexuality is considered to be a serious anomaly. Likewise enforced sexual asceticism (celibacy) is an extreme (while natural celibacy is an evolutionary goal). The homosexual (or other polarity-reversed person) is entirely responsible for and accountable for his or her condition (which is a result of sexual excess or extreme identification with or entanglement of consciousness with the body or bodies).

Reversal of bodily polarity involves a lower body actively influencing the next higher vehicle rather than the next higher vehicle naturally influencing the lower. In the case of the (physical) homosexual, the physical body drives the

emotions rather than the emotions (properly) driving (influencing or conditioning) the physical body. Even without a homosexual condition, bodily polarity reversal can occur where the physical appetites (sexual or otherwise) drive and thereby compound the emotions.

In the case of the emotionally-polarized extremist (in which the astral body is positive with respect to the mental body), the emotional flavor (bias) (cause) (prejudice) dominates and compromises the mind and all thinking. Thus arises the difference between trying to prove something and merely seeking the truth. In the case of the mentally-polarized extremist (albeit more rare than the emotional counterpart), the concrete mind tends to dominate (and draw from) the abstract mental faculties in such a manner to serve his or her (concrete mental and personal) objectives. In both (extreme) cases there is substantial mental and emotional blindness rather than the more natural and more reasonable (properly desirable) receptivity to reality and truth.

The problem of each of these cases of bodily polarity reversal (and/or any tendency toward sexual excess or sexual vulnerability) has to do with the fact that sexual force (on any level) is inherently the creative force with which the occultist and mystic and esotericist (spiritual student) must work. In order to work constructively (productively) (safely), the student must be sexually stable (not necessarily static) on all levels of consciousness. Any reversal of bodily polarity (or sexual vulnerability) minimizes or effectively precludes any serious spiritual work simply by virtue of the fact of that vulnerability. The student who is sexually (or otherwise) unstable (or anomalous) simply cannot and will not be trusted with the spiritual (creative) potency that is the dharma of one who is upon the path (way). [There are however, many religious and political leaders who sincerely (or otherwise) and unconsciously (or otherwise) draw upon the lower (sexual) (material psychic) forces in apparent creative potency. Let us not be deceived by phenomenal appearance].

It is ever important for the spiritual student to become and remain properly bodily polarized, for only with such proper polarizations can the lesser vehicles be purified, qualified, refined, and uplifted. Only where the higher forces are conditioning the lower vehicles effectively can the personality be integrated and (subsequently) aligned with (and therefore receptive and responsive to) the soul. The key to effective self-mastery is therefore (1) utilization of the emotions to

clarify and subdue the appetites of the physical body, (2) utilization of the concrete mind to dominate, purify, and qualify the emotional nature (leading eventually to personality integration), and (3) utilization of the abstract mind and intuition (buddhic faculty) to subdue and qualify the concrete mind (mental body) (leading to soul alignment).

† Commentary No. 863

Cosmic Fire 81

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division E) considers motion on the plane of mind, beginning with the nature of this motion and the results of its activity. This motion involves the whole creative, involutory, evolutionary, and assimilative process, as well as spiral-cyclic activity or the turning of the wheel of being, on every level of manifestation. But motion on the plane of mind is of central significance, as it links the lesser (matter or form) and greater (spirit or life) aspects, through consciousness.

The basic or fundamental motion is of the third aspect (matter) (form) and is atomic or rotary. The motion of the second aspect (consciousness) is spiral-cyclic and is the means through which life (consciousness) is manifested through matter (form), i.e., in various cycles of activity (experience) (expression) (service) and inactivity (assimilation) (contemplation), on the various levels (subhuman, human, superhuman (planetary, solar, cosmic)). The first aspect (will) (the plan) is conveyed through the second aspect (motion on the plane of mind) utilizing the third aspect (motion on the plane of matter). The resulting rotary-spiral-cyclic motion or activity is a combination of the fundamental rotary motion with the underlying forward momentum induced by higher impression. This point-of-view-of-motion is virtually synonymous with the point-of-view-of-fire, but with emphasis on different attributes. Thus fire and motion are essentially equivalent.

Inertia is a characteristic of the first motion (third aspect) or rotary activity. While it conveys or exhibits an inherent resistance to change, it is also a source of power and momentum, provided one can induce higher motion and draw upon the resulting momentum. Activity per se is a characteristic of the second motion (second aspect) or cyclic expression. The power (potential) of this

(higher) activity is drawn from the combination of rotary and cyclic motion. But the real meaning of life is conveyed with the third motion (first aspect) or the spiral factor. It is this spiral factor which provides the impulse for progress (not just activity, but progressive (evolutionary) activity), for the evolution of consciousness, for moving beyond mere material existence (rotary activity), for moving beyond even conscious existence (cyclic expression), to conscious awareness (which is a great deal more than the customary so-called self-consciousness) and deliberate evolution in consciousness.

As a person evolves, so does he or she (more properly the soul) become more intelligently responsive to the higher forms of impression (higher forms of motion). Rotary activity is essentially introverted (self-composed) (self-centered); cyclic activity is essentially extroverted, more a matter of being (horizontally) interactive with other (nearby) centers; while spiral activity is essentially (again) introverted (but on a higher level), being more of the nature of sweeping forward (vertically) (onward and upward) (more properly, inwardly). Rotary activity corresponds in the human being to the personality and to the composite lives which make up the various forms or bodies. Cyclic activity corresponds in the human being to the soul and its (higher) deva component, the consciousness within the form. Spiral activity corresponds to the monad on its level as it affects the soul (which in turn affects the integrated and uplifted personality).

The spiral-cyclic activity is an expression of four laws, namely (1) the law of expansion, (2) the law of monadic return, (3) the law of solar evolution, and (4) the law of radiation.

Cosmic Fire 82

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division E) continues consideration of motion on the plane of mind and its expression through four laws (as well as an expression of those four laws).

(1) The law of expansion concerns the “gradual evolutionary expansion of the consciousness indwelling every form” and “the spheroidal form of every life in the entire solar system.” This expansion is two-dimensional and multi-spectral, on the one hand involving the (dimension of) various chains, rounds, kingdoms, and root races, while on the other hand involving the (dimension of) various lives (solar logos, planetary logos, lords of chains, and the informing lives of globes). “All this is done under the law of expansion, by the method of spiraling progression, cyclic growth, rotary repetition, and the summation of each greater spiral is the expansion of the consciousness into that of the sphere which enclosed the lesser ovoid, and the escape of the life imprisoned in the sphere. It is merged in its greater whole.”

This is, in effect, the union or blending of the rotary motion produced by the fires of matter (friction) with the spiral-cyclic motion based upon solar fire. On each level, the atom moves (evolves) (progresses) toward greater self-determination (but in the non-individualistic sense of synthesis). As the various lives progress they affect (effect) and are affected (effected) by other lives (within the life), through various attractive (repulsive), retarding (accelerating), destructive (constructive), devitalizing (stimulating), and energizing (disintegrating) impulses (inductives).

(2) The law of monadic return relates to the principal reality that is man (beyond both the personality (which is very transient) and the soul (which is somewhat transient)). While the personality is individual energy (moisture or concretion) based on rotary impulse and fire by friction, the soul is magnetic energy (heat) based on radiatory impulse and solar fire, and the monad is dynamic energy (light) based on electric impulse and pure fire. The monad is usually viewed as one aspect of the threefold human being (monad-soul-personality), while more realistically, the monad is a triple center where the soul is somewhat related to

the corresponding center within the monad and the personality is rather dimly related to the corresponding center within the monad. In this sense the monad is reality and the soul is a shadow and the personality is a shadow of a shadow.

The monad is both a ring-pass-not which contains the pilgrim and, more properly, “a cyclic pulsation, which is the cause of every evolutionary impulse.” There are three such impulses, the third aspect (Brahma) “which drives every atom to self-determination” (individualization), the second aspect (Vishnu) “which forces the individual atom towards group determination” (initiation), and the first aspect (Shiva) which synthesizes all lives within the context of the solar atom. The triple act of the monad is the sending forth of its shadow (impulse), the waiting without “involvement or entanglement” in the activity of the shadow (soul), and the assimilation of the return of that impulse. The monad is linked electrically and magnetically to its reflection(s), but remains effectively detached (unentangled, uninvolved, and undistracted thereby). The monad is concerned with the (electrical, magnetic) rhythm imposed upon the soul and personality, but remains unconcerned with the resulting activities. The monad senses the quality of the soul, as the soul senses the quality of the personality, but the monad remains primarily concerned with the orchestration of forces as they relate to the soul.

† Commentary No. 865

Cosmic Fire 83

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division E) continues consideration of motion on the plane of mind and its expression through four laws (as well as an expression of those four laws).

(3) The law of solar evolution is the principal integrating principle for all lesser activities. The rotation and revolution of the various atomic spheres (subhuman, human, and superhuman) within the solar system are the means by which relationships are established and qualifications imposed. All is a matter of impression and influence, with each atomic unit impressing (influencing) and/or being impressed by others (horizontally and vertically), depending on the measure and quality of activity and responsiveness. The solar system as a unit is thus related to a number of extra-solar (cosmic) centers to which it is related.

These linking, evolutionary processes are not impulsive in any discrete sense, but part of a continuum or flow of conditioned reality. Even the so-called "solar drift" through time and space is an aspect of this greater continuum. The apparent separateness of things (atoms, people, planets, etc.) helps to sustain the great illusion, but as the reality (and inter-relatedness) of life is embraced, the illusions born of this spatial and temporal perspective are overcome, and centers of energy and relationships are realized.

(4) The law of radiation involves radiation as "the outer effect produced by all forms in all kingdoms when their internal activity has reached such a stage of vibratory activity that the confining walls of the form no longer form a prison, but permit of the escape of the subjective essence." In one sense, as one evolves to that level, one naturally begins to radiate. In another, more proper sense, one is that radiation and one is thereby expended (transcended). This is realized only to the extent that one is not attached to or deluded by form existence.

"All atoms become radioactive as the result of a response to a stronger magnetic center which response is brought about through the gradual evolutionary development of consciousness of some kind or another." Radiation is thus "the result of spiral-progressive movement." In the mineral kingdom it is primarily a matter of fire (heat), while in the vegetable kingdom it is additionally primarily a responsiveness to (the energy which produces) water or moisture. In the animal kingdom it is a matter of fire and water, as well as responsiveness to sound, while in the human kingdom it is a matter of all of these plus light (or energy in general). And of course radiation is also a cyclic phenomenon, with there being periods of radiative or emanative activity interposed with periods of quiescence or inactivity.

The key to progressive evolution is motion or dynamic activity and responsiveness. For the human being, motion on the plane of mind is weighed in accordance with the respective measure of rhythm, quality, heat, light, magnetic influence, radiation, and activity (all of which are viewed in the sense of quality). It is as the human being "moves" through the field of manifestation that he (she) comes into contact with various forces and eventually becomes intelligently responsive to those (external (internal)) forces. And it is as the human being "moves" beyond the illusion of spatial-temporal (self-centered) existence that he (she) becomes radioactive (i.e., human radioactivity is not a

matter of apparent (worldly or personality) influence but a matter of radiative quality that comes only where the consciousness is free from absorption in personal and mundane (spatial-temporal) matters.

† Commentary No. 866

Descension or Reflection 1

The descension or reflection of the divine monad (as a mere soul or higher self) onto the sub-monadic planes of consciousness, and the further and subsequent descension or reflection of the soul (as a personality or lower self) onto the three worlds of human experience and expression is a matter of perspective that yields a number of different ways of considering these phenomena. Some of these points of view appear to be mutually contradictory, giving rise to the paradox of descension or reflection, or what is the monad (soul) (personality)? This is not merely a matter of relativity or relative reality, but a question of substantive spiritual reality.

From one point of view, the monad remains on its level (being one with all of monadic existence) and is thereby unencumbered by manifestation or by absorption in matter. Likewise, from this point of view, the soul remains on its level (being one with all solar existence) and is thereby unencumbered by the limitations of physical, emotional, and mental existence. In this sense (perspective), the monad (and the soul, in its turn) periodically sends forth or otherwise induces a reflection of itself onto the lower levels of manifestation. That reflection is linked or related to its source (the monad or the soul) but does not compromise that source. The reflection exists and manifests on its level, evolving in consciousness by virtue of its activities (experience and expression).

The monad evolves as it assimilates the experience of the soul, although the timescale and manner of such lies beyond the ken of contemporary humanity, and the soul evolves by virtue of its assimilation of the experience of the personality. In this sense, the personality does not evolve, but is merely developed and refined as an instrument of experience and expression (i.e., manifestation). At the end of a cycle (incarnation), the "value" or quality of the personality is absorbed by the soul and the personality is discarded, and

likewise, at the end of a solar cycle, the “value” of the soul is absorbed by the monad and the soul is discarded.

The significance or strength of this perspective is that the monad on its level (and respectively, the soul on its level) is not corrupted or tainted or compromised or limited or obscured in any way by its reflection, but is able to assimilate or extract the value obtained through the manifestation of that reflection. By keeping the reflection “at arm’s length” only the “good” need be assimilated, while whatever negative quality is embraced by the reflection can be ignored. Thus, only the good survives, and then only in the sense of what is assimilated or extracted as wisdom.

The weakness or limitation of this perspective is that it does not convey any sense of substantial “reality” to the reflection and it causes one who “is” such a reflection to wonder about one’s own “reality” and relationship to the respective source. Is the reflection merely an inducement? Is what is reflected a shadow of that which remains on its own level? Is what is reflected a part or portion of that monad or soul? Is the human being merely an artificial and transient entity having merely substantial (material) existence, being utilized by some greater lifeform, or does the human being have a “spiritually substantial” existence and a future in its own right? These are important questions in the sense that one needs to know and understand one’s own nature and “how” to evolve in consciousness toward monadic existence (that evolution being intended or implied in the overall (perceivable) plan of evolutionary manifestation).

Descension or Reflection 2

From another point of view, the monad actually descends onto the planes of manifestation (atma-buddhi-manas) and is thereby limited or obscured in consciousness, losing freedom and potency (for some period of time and/or manifestation) but gaining in opportunity for experience and expression. In this sense, the monad becomes the soul (i.e., a relatively blind or sleeping monad). Likewise, in this perspective, the soul actually descends in turn onto the lower planes of manifestation, becoming even more limited and obscured in consciousness, as a personality (i.e., a relatively blind or sleeping soul). What must remain on the higher levels (monadic and solar, respectively) is the archetype and associated thread of consciousness (matrix relating the source in its original state with the descended essence).

The significance of this perspective is that the personality is the soul and the soul is the monad, i.e., each “holds” the reality of the source within them and nothing is lost through the process of ascension (evolution in consciousness) back to the levels from which we came. As a personality, one can draw upon the soul within (not merely upon some “overshadowing” soul) and actually identify with something within oneself (more properly with what one really is), rather than merely aspiring to some reunion with some transcendental self. Likewise in the case of the soul in relation to the monad. This is of course much more appealing to the mind and personality.

This (relatively more personal) perspective does not imply that the soul or monad can be corrupted in any permanent sense, as one must still be purified, qualified, refined, and uplifted to the higher levels, leaving behind the lower, coarser vibrations, as the focus of (unitary) consciousness is repolarized successively on one (successively higher) plane or sub-plane of consciousness after another. The weakness of this perspective lies in the sense that one must evolve oneself, as there is (in this perspective) no higher self on some higher level to assist in the process other than in the sense of an underlying archetype or potentiality to be unfolded.

The paradox of descension or reflection is resolved in a third perspective in which rather than an “either-or” approach one can take an “and” approach to the problem. This third perspective acknowledges the combination of descension and reflection, with the monad periodically sending forth a part or aspect of itself (as a soul) to the lower levels while simultaneously remaining (albeit silently) on its own level. Similarly, the soul periodically sends forth a part or aspect of itself (as a personality) to (yet) even lower levels. The higher is not obscured by the lower and remains ready and willing to assist the lower to the extent that the lower can make itself responsive to the quality of the higher. One is, simultaneously, the immanent and transcendental aspects of one’s being (and both are divine). Nothing (at least nothing real) is lost in the process of ascension.

The human being is therefore a noble creature (as all lives are), yet embedded in matter (illusion) and having within the seeds of development above and beyond that illusion. One need only focus on the higher aspect of one’s being, and all of the necessary inner unfoldment will be subsequently achieved. In the final analysis, all three perspectives are correct, depending on one’s point of view. The only problem arises when one tries to draw conclusions and inferences based upon a limited or narrow perspective. But in the third perspective (the broad view) there is no such internal inconsistency. The broad view (holistic) is generally the more significant, in any application.

† Commentary No. 868

Descension or Reflection 3

Thus a paradox is merely a matter of limited perspective, but confusion may continue to arise due to semantics. When one refers to the monad (soul) (personality) [respectively], one should be referring to that aspect of the whole human being, on its level, not in its descendent or as its reflection. The aspect of the monad (soul) that remains on its level is the higher reality of that monad (soul). The aspect of the monad (soul) which descends (or is reflected) is the lower reality of that monad (soul). Thus the descendent (reflection) should be identified as such (as the soul (personality) (respectively)).

In much of the metaphysical and theosophical literature, however, this semantic discipline is not adhered to, either because an author lacks awareness of these distinctions (e.g., believes otherwise), or because words are used by different people to mean different things, or because words have been mistranslated, or because an author wishes to safeguard aspects of the teaching through blinds, etc. Thus, one should always look for the context of the material being read or studied (and the relative quality of the material) rather than presuming the meaning of a particular word (e.g., ego or soul).

Another aspect of the problem is identification. The bulk of humanity identify with their physical bodies and to some extent their emotions and minds, but virtually all with their egos (personalities), however those personalities are perceived. The "soul" is commonly (inconsistently) referred to as the deeper aspect of one's personality, due to semantic confusion (and the failure of the bulk of humanity to realize any self-essence beyond the superficial appearance of the material body). Thus attempts to "mechanize" or "materialize" the "soul" by association with the lower (or lowest) of the bodies effectively discourages or inhibits any real appreciation of the soul or higher self.

And yet, this is true, in the sense of that aspect or portion of the soul that is descended or reflected into the lower self. When one states "I am That Soul" one is (properly) identifying with that higher self, indwelling and overshadowing, but it is wrong (or at least misleading and inhibiting) to think or associate that "soul" with some aspect of the lower self, e.g., to attribute lower human qualities (affection, anger, etc.) to the soul or higher self. The soul is, properly perceived, impersonal and unaffected by the trials and tribulations (attachments and entanglements) of the lower self (personality). The love-quality-wisdom of the soul is thus properly perceived as distinctly different (higher in quality and composure) than the lower self.

From the standpoint of higher reality, oneness prevails and we are more correct in perceiving the personality and soul and monad as a single, wholly integrated entity. But in practical (manifested) reality, duality is more honest and more effective in the sense that in consciously recognizing the distinction between the lower and higher selves, we are thereby able to aspire from one to the other, not by discarding the lesser, but by purifying (qualifying) (refining) (uplifting) the lesser onto the higher, by becoming in conscious awareness that higher self (not

by bringing the lesser aspects along with the waking-consciousness, but by assuming the attributes and quality of that higher self). In short, effective ascension means approaching the higher self on its level, not by trying to draw the higher self down to the lower levels of the ego-personality. In fact, even the soul immanent remains effectively on its own (higher) level, and it is only the limitation of human (personality) consciousness that confuses the issue.

† Commentary No. 869

The Lotus Heart

There are very many heart-centered mantras (as there are numerous head-centered mantras), and relatively many that bridge between the head and the heart for the heart-centered student, but relatively few that help bridge the gap between the head and the heart from the standpoint of the head-centered student. The mantra entitled "The Lotus-Heart" is such a mantra, designed to evoke heart activity in one who is currently head-centered and unaccustomed to working through the heart but who recognizes the need for such balance. It is also a relatively powerful mantra, that will not work well for emotionally-polarized students unless they are well-developed in the mind and able to focus effectively and relatively unemotionally.

The first stanza is "I Am the Lotus-Heart." This directs the waking consciousness to the heart center in its somewhat deeper sense (appealing to the mind). This is a first ray qualification that is focused in the heart. It aligns or links the personality ("I Am") to the heart center and begins the conditioning process. This stanza is properly considered as invocative rather than evocative, as it involves the reaching upward (inward) of the mind and personality toward the heart and soul (and to the monad, indirectly). The second stanza is "I Am That Heart, of Love-Wisdom." This expands the focus of the mind in the heart to embrace the second ray quality which is love-wisdom. It also begins the linkage or alignment with the soul, the second ray aspect of the human being, through "That." This is evocative in the sense that energy begins to flow downward into the mind and personality, but it is primarily a conditioning and qualifying energy at this point of the mantra.

The third stanza is "I Am That Soul." This reinforces and sustains the linkage and alignment developed in the previous stanza, and evokes the soul qualification for the entire mantric process. This is evocative in a first ray sense, as the power aspect (the relationship of the monad to the soul, and more practically, the relationship of the soul to the personality) is evoked to strengthen the alignment and qualification. This is the "building up" phase of the energy (power) of the mantra. As the energy builds up, it naturally exceeds the capacity of the mind to contain it, thus leading (naturally and without contrivance) to the fourth stanza.

The fourth and final stanza is "I Am That Flow, of Humility, Compassion, and Goodwill." While the previous three stanzas are preparatory in the sense of helping the mind to become effectively linked and subordinated to the heart in its higher aspect (i.e., the soul) and in the sense of evoking the soul's qualification of the mind and personality (albeit indirectly), the fourth stanza evokes a flow of energy from the soul, through the mind and personality, and out into the daily life and consciousness of that mind and personality. This is the real value of the mantra, for with that flow the alignment is sustained and the mind-heart is directed outward to humanity and the daily life where the soul's qualification is especially needed by the head-centered student. This fourth stanza represents the third ray aspect, both in the sense of personality and manifestation (specifically, the application of higher energy through the instrument of the lower self).

This mantra alone will not accomplish any great work, either within the student or in his or her expression (service). The student must be properly and effectively predisposed (which may be brought about by serious meditation work and other mantras) and the energy flow evoked must be sustained by a growing sense of conscious awareness of the evoked flow (and its objectives).

Withdrawal of Consciousness 2

Human consciousness actually manifests through three centers of consciousness, the monad on its level, the soul on its level, and the personality on its level. For all practical purposes, the perfected human being exhibits a personality consciousness that is wholly uplifted to, merged with, and responsive to, the soul on its level.

In the case of consciousness partially withdrawn from the lower self (as in sleep, coma, or some debilitating disease in which a person is awake but not really (wholly) "there"), the personality consciousness continues to function on astral and/or mental levels, according to its ability, but without being able to effectively utilize the physical vehicle (e.g., without being able to utilize the brain or without being able to properly control the movements of the physical body). However, in some cases, the "damage" is to the astral (emotional) or lower mental body (concrete mind), and the effects observed in the physical body are simple a reflection of that higher impediment.

It generally takes some higher perception to determine whether or not the silver cord is actually severed or the consciousness is merely partially and/or temporarily withdrawn. Whenever the soul is fully (irrevocably) withdrawn, the silver cord is also severed. But once the silver cord has been severed, which means the soul has consciously decided to terminate the incarnation, the astral and mental faculties are also withdrawn, in turn, as they have served their respective purposes (i.e., following purgatorial experience). In principle, however, a sufficiently capable (and sufficiently misguided) "dead person" or some other capable (misguided) entity can continue to (abnormally) animate the discarded body and/or lower vehicles, even as they disintegrate. Such an entity must provide considerable energy in order to slow down the disintegration process and to animate or otherwise utilize the (mis)appropriated body, and this is not very practical or effective. It also seriously violates the law. This phenomenon is one of the reasons why cremation is preferred over burial, as cremation hastens the dissolution of the bodies and prevents their misuse (and facilitates the passage of the newly "dead" on to other, more suitable levels).

In some cases, e.g., autism, the consciousness is partially withdrawn and functions in an “otherworldly” manner simultaneously with some presence and activity on the physical plane. In other cases, a person whose consciousness is withdrawn continues to function “consciously” on astral and/or mental levels, even if there is no memory of such activity brought back to the waking-consciousness. On the other hand, the one who withdraws has no more awareness on astral or concrete mental levels upon withdrawal than he or she had while wholly embodied, but such withdrawal does afford some resolution of difficulties (in consciousness) without further impediment of the physical body.

Withdrawal of consciousness, like every other aspect of life and death, is fundamentally a matter and function of karma (self-generated causal forces). The friends and family of a partially or temporarily or even permanently withdrawn but artificially-maintained person, can only complicate their own karma by interfering in these natural or unnatural processes. On the other hand, “encouragement” through love and compassion (albeit not through “attachment”) can facilitate the affected person’s resolution of difficulties (but of course, only to the extent that that person’s karma allows) (similarly, making demands of the affected person through attachments, etc., only complicates matters for all concerned). In short, compassion and kindness, without attachment or expectation, is always appropriate for the doer.

† Commentary No. 871

Ahamkara 1

Ahamkara in the lower sense is the so-called “one enemy” that must be eventually overcome by all who would successfully tread the spiritual path. Ahamkara refers to the sense of “I” and “me” and “mine” and is the principal sustaining power for separateness (duality) and separativeness. Some of the keys to overcoming this illusion are brotherhood and detachment.

The concept of brotherhood (the one soul of humanity) (the unity of all life) is relatively easy to accept, but relatively difficult to actually embrace and to put into practice. Practically all of the human experience to date has fostered a sense of separateness, one from another, and all of man’s normal sense-

perception processes support that unconscious sense of individuality and separateness. Consequently, the human lower self (personality) has developed a sense of independent self-existence and tends to cling to that sense at all costs. Consideration of the concept of brotherhood is a necessary first step, and embracing the concept in practice is a necessary second step (e.g., through unconditional kindness, benevolence, etc.), but even embracing brotherhood in practice does not suffice for overcoming the illusion (ahamkara in this lower sense).

The concept of detachment is also relatively easy to accept in principle, but relatively difficult to embrace in practice. Detachment implies effective non-attachment to material things, effective non-attachment (non-distraction) to (by) sense-impressions (desire) (feelings) (sensations), effective non-concern for status and other egoic considerations (e.g., attribution), etc. The effective combination of brotherhood and detachment, in practice, is even more relatively difficult, as one must (effectively) have (practice) compassion (brotherhood) and consideration (respect) while remaining undisturbed (spiritually poised) and detached (unentangled in personal energies (glamour)). But even this, while necessary, does not suffice.

What does suffice, in addition to these practical considerations (brotherhood and detachment in intelligent practice) is the attainment of the state or condition in consciousness in which there is no sense of personal or individual (separated) existence or any sense of ownership. This state cannot be achieved or attained without considerable spiritual growth and qualification, nor without considerable expansion of one's focus of consciousness to embrace the "flow" of life as it courses through all of humanity and all of life. It is not that the individuality is suppressed in any sense, but that the individuality is not enamoured by his or her sense of (lower) selfness and that that individuality is clearly overshadowed by a sense of participation in a flow greater than that selfness.

One must therefore rise above the pettiness of the lower self and entirely overcome the sense of (separateness in) time and space. Identification with one's own individuality precludes this ascension. Identification with one's higher self in the sense that that self participates in the one soul (life) certainly helps, but one must also project as part of that greater life into and through all

other lives, i.e., to actually sense the livingness through others without any sense that those others are others. In order to do this (properly) one has to let go of one's own ideas and see things in the broadest possible context. Any sense of (individual) selfness terminates and/or precludes this "higher" experience. In short, one progresses from individuality through participation to being. In so doing one does not lose one's individuality but one goes above and beyond it.

† Commentary No. 872

Beyond Discipline 1

Self-discipline is an essential preliminary to the spiritual path that continues through the intermediate stages of the path. It involves a number of spiritual practices that help prepare the student for spiritual work and spiritual growth. Gradually self-discipline is transcended by spiritual discipline, which is in turn transcended by being or unconscious and natural adherence to the patterns of higher life.

Self-discipline is entirely preparatory, while spiritual discipline involves becoming as a prelude to being. Self-discipline involves adherence to various (purposive) rules (which take advantage of natural law) intended to bring about a conquering of the (independence and relative coarseness) of the lower self (personality) (mind) (ego). Spiritual discipline involves more conscious realization of and adherence to more subtle rules (more subtle aspects of natural law) that facilitate real growth in (quality and extent of) consciousness (and particularly in the sense of conscious awareness). Spiritual discipline in no way undermines continuation of self-discipline (the preliminary adherence), as it includes the lesser and builds upon it. The difference is that in spiritual discipline there is no resistance to the preliminaries. Self-discipline has become (for the lesser self) a natural process (more properly, the lesser self has realized the higher naturalness of the discipline).

Proper discipline is an entirely healthy endeavor, undertaken without entanglement or attachment (but one is nonetheless serious and conscientious concerning the endeavor), and undertaken consciously and deliberately with full appreciation of its naturalness and its intended purpose. Beyond discipline is

adherence to the underlying patterns of the evolutionary flow, with conscious appreciation of the principles involved, but without necessarily a conscious appreciation of any of the details or specifics (which are just not important in themselves). Beyond discipline there is still growth in depth and breadth of consciousness and quality, there is still deeper awareness and understanding (more properly, growth in wisdom), and there is still an adherence to the disciplinary patterns, but they have become effortless and are wholly unimpeded by the lower self.

In a sense, the (preliminaries of self-discipline and spiritual) discipline is a matter of doing (and being) what is right (and what is needed) through some conscious albeit relative realization of values (rightness or appropriateness), but that sense of appropriateness comes more or less intellectually and through conscience. It may begin tentatively by adherence to rules that are not wholly understood but which become more and more realizable, and grow through adherence with full appreciation for the processes and results produced thereby. In understanding the (natural, cosmic) law (in its various forms or implementations), there is a natural consequence of adherence or collaboration. But in self-discipline and in spiritual discipline, there is the involvement of the waking-consciousness in a more or less deliberate way.

In the (necessarily non-spatial, non-temporal) domain in conscious awareness beyond discipline, there is a greater adherence to the evolutionary patterns, not in any sense a matter of reasoning or deliberation, but in the sense of unconditioned participation. In the preliminaries and intermediate stages, one overcomes the lower conditioning by imposing a higher conditioning and qualification. In the beyond, one proceeds in an unconditioned and unqualified sense. One has passed beyond conditioning, beyond qualification, beyond reasoning, to being.

Beyond Discipline 2

In the shila paramita, the paramita of morality and discipline (and beyond), there is a growing openness that allows and affords the student to participate less and less deliberately in the patterns of life, i.e., to participate more and more fully (properly) (in the higher sense), not passively but selflessly. In the paradox of discipline, it is not possible to reach beyond discipline without having passed through the preliminary and intermediate stages (of discipline). One cannot reach beyond conditioning and qualification without reconditioning and higher qualification. And when one is beyond these things, one appears yet to adhere to all of the lesser discipline, albeit less consciously and less deliberately.

The preliminaries are essentially (albeit purposively) contrived, the intermediate stages less so, and beyond not at all so. In the preliminaries there is a great struggle with the lower self (personality) (mind) (ego). In the intermediate stages there is an even greater, albeit much more subtle struggle, with the more subtle aspects of the lower self. But in the domain beyond discipline, one falls naturally into patterns that persist unaffected by the apparent (lower) chaos of manifestation (being wholly involved in the (higher) chaos of manifestation). The preliminary and intermediate stages are marked by effort and achievement; the third stage (beyond) is marked by effortlessness. But in this (higher) effortlessness is a great wisdom and realization. There is pure, absolute, and superior action.

Some may think themselves to be beyond discipline, but they are simply enchanted by the ego and the glamour of the path, using that enchantment (delusion) to excuse themselves from what the lesser self wishes not to do or be. The ego naturally resists any form of spiritual progress and resorts to increasingly subtle means to maintain itself. Anyone who makes such a claim (of being beyond discipline) is obviously deluded. Those who are beyond discipline are generally not even recognizable as such except by those who are "there" already or who are close enough to perceive and comprehend that essential nature (beyond even quality). The ideal and intended goal may be comprehended, but it is rather (most) difficult of achievement. In fact, passing beyond discipline is an achievement in non-achievement.

In this paramita, morality is discipline and discipline is morality. This great (intended) participation in life (morality) is without attachment and without entanglement, without reasoning or rationalization, without struggle and without ego, and yet one must pass through all of these things before one can rise above (beyond) them. The keys to this passage beyond (ascension) are preparation and service, and in both preparation and service there must be a letting go of selfishness and all self-centeredness, a letting go of all attachments, of all preconceived notions, of all beliefs and opinions, thus allowing realization (self-realization) to occur. Beyond discipline is allowance, the great freedom of being one with all. Beyond separateness is reality. To go beyond is not to leave, but to be.

For all of the students approaching and upon the path of becoming, there is continual (periodic) (not continuous) meditation, that is premeditated (necessarily contrived). For those beyond there is unpremeditated and constant (continuous) meditation (and nonetheless participative in life). Beyond happiness there is happiness. Beyond meditation there is meditation. Beyond discipline there is discipline. Beyond the self is realization. Beyond realization is self-realization.

† Commentary No. 874

Contrivance

Contrivance is defined as the act or faculty of contriving, the state of being contrived, or a thing contrived. Contriving implies deliberation toward some conscious objective. At best contrivance is a rational and reasonable process (e.g., applied to some reasonable objective), while at worst contrivance is a process of unconscious and self-deceiving fabrication (distortion of reality). All forms of manipulation and scheming, which are by definition selfishly motivated, sincerely or otherwise, fall within the range of contrivance. The true objective of the spiritual student is simply non-contrivance, meaning that “nothing comes from the ego.”

The problem of contrivance is two-fold: (1) the relatively simple effects or consequences for others, i.e., victims beyond oneself, and (2) the relatively more

complex effects or consequences for the one who contrives (the one who contrives is his or her own principal victim). Contrivance is compounded by force of habit and by the broader consequences of furthering the human perception (more properly mis-perception) of world maya (glamour) (illusion). Every contrived action (behavior) (feeling) (thought) furthers the entanglement of the contriving person in maya (glamour) (illusion) and thereby further limits the freedom of the contriving person for enlightened action. Every act of contrivance (on any level) relatively and substantially undermines any attempts toward honesty and truthfulness (including realization of truth).

Contrivance involves the personality at the expense of precluding alignment with the overshadowing (indwelling) soul or higher (spiritual) self. For most people contrivance is an ordinary and routine practice and commensurate with their relative consciousness (quality). Since most people are not approaching any consideration of (or responsiveness to) the soul, the problem of contrivance is (should be) mostly a matter of ethics and responsibility, and, depending on the relative place upon the path, a matter of preclusion. However, for the spiritual student, that preclusion is the central issue. For the spiritual student, any habit or tendency toward contrivance is undermining, and must be overcome to enable realization and responsiveness to higher impression.

In a sense the personality is self-contrived. The soul on its level contrives to develop the personality in the first place, albeit that contrivance is not so deliberate as it is conforming to the karmic flow and obligation of the soul. On its level, the personality becomes more contriving as it develops, and ultimately becomes self-contrived, believing (hopelessly) in its own existence (separateness). From that point on and until this sense is fully overcome, the personality (ego) contrives to sustain the illusion in consciousness. This is inner contrivance. The outer contrivance (activities of the self-sustaining (self-centered) personality) follows from the inner, and greatly (and necessarily) compounds the difficulties of life in the lower worlds.

In a sense, the self-contrived personality and the great illusion of objective existence are simply intended for the experience of overcoming, of rising above these inherent limitations. Consequently, much in terms of capabilities and wisdom ultimately derive from the struggle and experience in the lower worlds. As the truth of contrivance (maya) (glamour) (illusion) gradually dawns (over

several lifetimes) and as the student gradually unfolds the inherent potential selfness, then the student gradually becomes less and less contrived, and ultimately becomes non-contrived (embodies non-contrivance), as truth and the Way prevail.

† Commentary No. 875

Cosmic Fire 84

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division E) continues consideration of motion on the plane of mind through Part 2-E-IV entitled “The Turning of the Wheel” or the nature of the wheel in which we are turned, the wheel of samsara.

While the planet revolves upon its axis and travels in its path around the sun, so does the sun (solar logos) relate to a cosmic center as the “entire solar system revolves upon its axis” and travels in its path around the immediate cosmos. There are thereby wheels within wheels extending beyond throughout the universe and within throughout the composite systemic lives. Each of the seven planes and sub-planes of consciousness, each of the seven rays and sub-rays, each of the seven great lifewaves (logoi), globes, chains, races, etc., each forms and plays its respective role within the great wheel of life (manifestation). For convenience these are usually viewed in their spatial and temporal context (more properly viewed otherwise, but given man’s inherent (conditioned) spatial-temporal fixation, the higher perspective is most difficult to embrace).

Monadic cycles can ultimately be viewed in terms of consequences or results of apparently earlier cycles producing apparently current conditions and factors (dharma and karma). That which draws some monads into activity and leaves others to progress on their own level without descension (reflection) is a result of apparently earlier experience. Each follows the law, nonetheless. The interplay of forces within and beyond the system, the momentum toward greater equilibrium (rhythm) (balance) (harmonization) (effective coordination), the overlapping of cycles within cycles (wheels within wheels and spheres within spheres), all contribute to the ebb and flow of various conditions and factors, sweeping some lives into activity as others pass out of the active phase into pralaya. It is easier for the (human) mind to embrace these concepts in spatial and temporal context, as differentiated phenomena, than in their true state

which is beyond space-time and beyond such differentiations as are apparent or convenient to human comprehension (i.e., differentiation helps to explain relationships but is, nonetheless, misleading in the sense that it therefore ignores the greater (whole) (flow) by focusing on the lesser).

While learning details can be quite helpful in developing the mind, one must ultimately rise above and beyond details in order to grasp the essential significance of the whole. One must therefore be wary of drawing conclusions or generalizing based upon some analysis or embrace of details. The great wheel is vastly more complex than can be imagined, yet conversely vastly more simple than any imagined complexity. The mind is characteristically blind and leads itself (astray). The wheel is embraced properly (conceptually and practically) only where the mind lets go of its various notional attachments. There is no time. There is no space. But there is motion on the plane of mind. Even more correctly, there is.

Each turn of the wheel (at any level) has some implied purpose, with energy (life) provided and force (consciousness) applied. The triplicity of the wheel includes "the central point of active positive force (the hub), the negative stream of life (the radiating spokes), and the sphere of activity itself, the effect of the interplay of these two (the circumference of the wheel)." Given the activity (activeness) of the (turning) wheel (multi-dimensional sphere), the contributive role of each of the elements becomes apparent. The continuity conveys greater reality than the composite lives. And the integral conveys even greater reality than the continuity.

Cosmic Fire 85

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division E) continues consideration of motion on the plane of mind through Parts 2-E-V and 2-E-VI entitled “Motion and the Form-Building Impulse” and “Effects of Synthetic Motion” respectively.

The human being is not an isolated form in time and space, but a continuity throughout the embraced time and space (and in an even higher sense, more even than the integral of the entire spatial-temporal existence). Even the apparent isolated human being is a life and conditioned consciousness continuously flowing through the apparent form (and actually constituting or evoking that appearance). The nature of that flow is such that form (matter) (deva substance) is associated with the matrix or archetype, through the medium (manipulating force) of conditioned consciousness.

The effects of motion in the physical and astral sheaths are separation, momentum, frictional activity, and absorption. Each of these convey conditioning and constructive (purposive) (experiential) consequences, yet each also constitutes limitation that must eventually be transcended as one progresses further to and through the withdrawal (assimilative) process (and each ultimately conveys the means of such (higher) achievement). Separation (and separativeness) (maya) follows from this natural and necessary motion (yet ultimately reveals an integrating factor). Momentum (inertial inability to free oneself from the absorbed or entangled state) is likewise naturally consequential (and ultimately reveals a higher momentum). Frictional activity provides both a binding force (differentiation, diversification, relationship, and interactiveness) and a force for liberation, depending on quality (progress). Eventually, a greater light dawns to progressively dispel the delusion, and hidden (higher) forces are progressively revealed to draw the entangled soul from the (lower) absorbed state. Thus the nature of motion on the mental plane (in this human context) begins with absorption (distraction) (entanglement) [in the matter and forces of the lower planes] and ends with liberation (absorption in the higher sense).

More properly, the human being is the monadic expression as causal body or lotus-self (soul), which is better described as a confluence of forces relating to the three sets of petals (knowledge, love-wisdom, and sacrifice) which constitute the causal field (sphere) of which the human personality on physical, emotional, and mental levels is but a dim and partial emanation. The various streams of force (consciousness) that play through and constitute the various petals (more properly standing-waves) relate that (dim) human form (personality) (in its various aspects) to various aspects of the great wheel (motion on the plane of mind). Inertia is superseded by mobility and then mobility is superseded by rhythm.

The monad views the external world (of physical, emotional, and mental phenomena) through the jewel in the lotus, "situated between manas and buddhi," and to the extent that the jewel is revealed (developed) (unfolded). For the most part, the monad remains unaffected by the activity of the soul, as the soul remains poised on its level, unaffected by the affairs of the personality. The periodicity of the monadic and solar waves continues. But as the various fires are blended, and as the various patterns of consciousness (force) are brought into balance and thereby synthesized, an alignment of sorts is achieved between the monad and the soul and the personality (culminating in the essentially irrevocable revocation of the personality). Yet the wheel ever continues to vibrate and life-consciousness-matter continues to flow.

† Commentary No. 877

Learning and Experience 1

One of the attributes of the spiritual student is his or her recognition that the purpose of life is the evolution of consciousness through progressive experience and expression (leading to service). This recognition leads to the wholesome attitude of seeking to learn and a certain measure of openness to learning or responsiveness to the lessons available through experience, both of which are inherently crucial to learning in near-real-time (or at least within the present incarnation).

In this context, the principal challenge for most people is the development of that recognition, positive attitudes toward learning experience, and openness to that learning. In other words, most people “learn” passively and unconsciously (indirectly) as they pass through many experiences over a relatively large number of lifetimes (incarnations). Such passive learning requires a great deal of experience in order to leave sufficient “impression” in consciousness for “learning” to occur. As one progresses further, and particularly along the spiritual path, one begins to learn more consciously and more deliberately (directly) [and about more relevant things], as one applies more conscious awareness and deliberation (consideration) to each experience. As one progresses even further, the direct or active learning begins to dominate the indirect or passive learning (and “learning” is gradually transformed from primarily a matter of knowledge through being primarily a matter of understanding to being primarily a matter of wisdom).

The mechanisms (processes) of both dharma and karma provide consequential experience and opportunities for learning in virtually every experience. The flow of life (karmic consequences and opportunities therein) for someone or some group involves challenges both consistent with dharma and karma and commensurate with the attitude toward learning and measure of openness demonstrated. A smooth flow does not necessarily mean that one is receptive and responsive to learning experience; indeed, it may imply the opposite, or it may just imply that one does not merit substantive opportunities for growth. Similarly, a harsh flow need not imply receptiveness or responsiveness, but it does necessarily imply that lessons or adjustments are thereby potentially conveyed.

But both dharma and karma are not merely individually inspired; there is a group context as well as particular relationships with others to be considered. So a smooth flow (or a harsh flow) may be inspired with regard to a particular person in some group or broader context or it may actively involve all of the affected participants. Thus circumstances may or may not relate to a particular person, though that person may be involved (incidentally) in some manner. Thus significance may not be apparent nor even substantial for all participants.

More correctly, the flow is always and ever “smooth” while one’s interaction may be relatively smooth or relatively harsh depending on the measure of

responsiveness. For example, if one is attached to some notion and one has sufficient consciousness (potentially) to progress beyond that notion, but one has sufficient inertia or resistance (unresponsiveness), then “difficult” circumstances may be relatively dramatic and persist until the intended lesson is learned or the intended adjustment is made. On the other hand, difficult circumstances may unfold and convey more subtle lessons or be primarily related to other people. In this sense one may (should, ever) embrace difficult circumstances in a harmonious and poised manner, learning more or less directly throughout the experience. And it is in difficult circumstances that real learning opportunities are mostly afforded.

† Commentary No. 878

Learning and Experience 2

For the more earnest student, the seeking to learn from every experience can itself be a problem, for not every experience, difficult or otherwise, may convey even potentially any significant learning opportunity or opportunity for adjustment in consciousness, i.e., looking for something that is not “there” can be a great waste of time and effort. Each “difficult” experience certainly conveys an opportunity for learning or adjustment, but not necessarily for all who are involved or affected. But being responsive and receptive to learning opportunities is still important, as long as one understands that there is not necessarily any particular significance in every particular experience. For the serious student, making anything (particularly) important can be a substantial distraction and needless entanglement.

Most serious problems require that the student become detached and unentangled from the problem in order for a solution to be realized. Being attached to and/or entangled in the problem or being attached to or entangled in the process of understanding the problem (and its solution or resolution) definitely “blinds” the student to some extent and inhibits or retards the learning process. In fact, the single most significant impediment to learning is, paradoxically, the most effective instrument one has for learning, and that is the ego or strength of personality. As the ego is more fully overcome and tempered by higher values and deeper (less personal) focus, the student is able to be more detached and unentangled in personal (superficial) (circumstantial) (mundane)

aspects. On the other hand, being so detached that one is wholly unconcerned about learning is comparably ineffective. Thus one should strike a balance between responsiveness and detachment. One who is thereby detached (unentangled) and responsive to learning has optimized the whole process.

At some stage, however, in this process of learning and experience, the spiritual student makes a rather (relatively) remarkable transition from a "learning" or developmental focus to a "service" focus. The more the balance shifts in favor of service, the more effective the student is in the dharma or work of the path, for, in the final analysis, evolution is a group process and individual development is relatively less important and less significant than the corresponding group development in consciousness (character, quality, temperament, etc.) and much less so than group realization (particularly at the level and scope of humanity as a whole).

In the service focus, the disciple is still subject to karma but is increasingly subject to dharma, as karma becomes a more or less incidental phenomenon at the individual level. The karmic bounds (rules and consequences of karmic law) for the disciple are more severe than those for the aspirant, but the disciple is, by virtue of his achieving discipleship, less encumbered by karma, having little or no residual karma and being relatively highly responsive to learning opportunities, however incidental they may be. The disciple is actually more able to learn and grow and adapt and adjust in consciousness to the extent that he or she is devoted to the service focus (the dharma of the path). Moreover, one who is primarily concerned with learning and growing is thereby and inherently less responsive to the flow (dharma) of the path.

For the advanced spiritual student, service naturally takes precedence over individual development, growth, or even self-realization. The keys to this effectiveness are the service orientation, increased awareness and clarity of perception, and minimal personality presence (absence of ego). Learning and experience go hand-in-hand, but both are subsumed in sincere spiritual service.

Music and Magic 1

Music is one of the great and practical facilitations of creative and destructive processes, and is therefore and thereby a tool for (creative) magical work on various scales. Through history (and pre-history), music has had a considerable influence on both culture and consciousness, and, at the same time, culture and consciousness have been reflected in the various forms and qualities of music.

In the highest, extra-planetary sense, music (i.e., the music of the spheres (the sound of manifestation (the sound of the processes of creative manifestation))) appears to be causal and inductive. But in fact, music is the intermediary between the creator and the created, between the cause of manifestation and manifestation per se. Thus music is not causal, either as a force or as a reflection or indication of consciousness. Consciousness is causal, and music interacts with consciousness, in both directions (as each influences the other). But music is a tool of consciousness and facilitates causally induced processes and their consequents.

As above, so below. Music on "human" levels is a result of the creative process, inspired or otherwise from various levels of consciousness, within or beyond. Music formulated through man, however inspired it may be, while not in itself causal, is nonetheless consistent with the "karmic flow" of man's consciousness. Music influences, and potentially a great deal, but not causally. Music is more properly viewed as an indication of man's and a country's consciousness, both concurrently and in the sense of anticipation. The higher forms (more refined quality) of music inspire (more properly, encourage inspiration) to higher levels. The lower forms (more coarse quality) of music tend to sustain or encourage one's measure of coarseness. The higher forms anticipate higher consciousness and encourage those who are responsive to embrace that encouragement.

Music is related to glamour and illusion, and to their overcoming. Since music inspires, consciously and unconsciously, there are associated consequential (responsive) feelings and thought-forms which, if reinforced individually or collectively, can be sustained for long periods of time, further encouraging (or

enslaving) (depending on the respective quality and the nature of one's consciousness). Harmonious music tends to encourage or sustain. Discordant music tends to break up or destroy the habits in feeling and thinking to which that music is directed. Music is also a relating mechanism for humanity and the deva kingdom, as the devas are actually involved in the form, character, and quality of music (as they are to some extent in all aspects of manifested existence). Those devas who work with or are evoked into activity by music are drawn to music or are involved in the impact of music (respectively) according to their quality, character, and temperament.

Music can also be quite depictive, and thereby convey potentially a great deal of insight, consciously or otherwise, to those who are suitably responsive. So it is not only a matter of qualitative encouragement and/or inspiration, but of conveyance of energy (and ideas) as well. The variety of music available, both in terms of form and quality, is an indication of relative freedom and flexibility within a culture, and an indication of variety in consciousness. The "tone" of music can be utilized constructively or oppressively, according to intent (and karmic allowances). That which is conveyed by or through music is inherently related to the consciousness of those involved (human and deva) and inherently involved in the respective group and individual karma.

† Commentary No. 880

Music and Magic 2

The principal application of music in the more personal sense is as a means to facilitate self-qualification. The magical properties of music lie in the ability of music to influence on physical, emotional, and/or mental levels, according to the music's nature and according to the needs and responsiveness of the person. In the less personal, more general sense, the principal application of music is in the establishment of a suitably qualified environment.

The power of a given piece of music may be on one level or another, with lesser strength on other levels (e.g., with power principally on emotional levels and secondarily on physical and mental levels). On the other hand, in general, people respond distinctly differently to a given piece of music, with some

responding primarily on physical levels, some on emotional levels, and some on mental levels. But on the average, the power of music on a given level is coincident with the majority response. The majority of people are emotionally polarized and response to music is primarily on emotional levels, but the quality of music (and emotional response) varies considerably. Growing numbers of people are becoming mentally-polarized and able to respond to music without becoming entangled in physical and emotional effects. Yet most who respond favorably to more refined music (e.g., classical) are themselves emotionally-polarized and responding emotionally, while the relatively few who are mentally-polarized can respond mentally to both classical and sub-classical music.

In the lower sense, any response to music that involves physical movement implies a physical-emotional polarization that limits the ability of the student to respond on higher levels. In the higher sense, with the physical body stilled and the emotions uplifted, the student can function quite effectively on mental and intuitive levels. The real key is whether or not one can become oblivious to the separateness of the personality. One must learn to participate in the unifying aspect of music (through the soul) rather than participate in the separative aspect of music (through the personality).

For the emotionally-polarized spiritual student, more refined music (than that which the personality would prefer) can be used to calm, refine, and uplift the emotional body and make it more responsive to the mind, culminating in the integration of the entire personality. Similarly for the mentally-polarized spiritual student, more refined music can be used to lift the waking-consciousness from concrete mental to abstract mental and intuitive levels. But care must be taken not to rely on the means of music (nor upon any external or artificial means) for achievements in consciousness (i.e., someone who can achieve a given state of consciousness only with the aid of musical means has not really achieved that level and cannot evoke that level at will).

But music can be used effectively to facilitate and encourage, to break down various impeding habits in consciousness (and other conditioning factors), to establish and sustain a more spiritually-amenable environment, on group levels as well as on individual levels, and to condition and qualify the personality in deliberate ways. As a means of encouragement, music is ethically sound. As a

means of imposition, music may be quite practical, but imposition per se is ethically unacceptable (for the spiritual student). The magic of music is both inherent and amenable to direction or associative qualification. Music (sound in general, music in particular) is inherently magical (superphysical) in its application and effects on consciousness. And music (like symbols) can convey energy and understanding that lies beyond language and the ability of people to articulate.

† Commentary No. 881

Ahamkara 2

While ahamkara in the lower sense refers to the “I-ness” of the personality or ego, that sense of separateness and self-centeredness that must be ultimately dissolved or overcome as the focus of consciousness is shifted to the higher self, ahamkara in the higher sense refers to the “I-ness” of the individuality or soul, which is a very different sense altogether.

This higher sense of individuality is very, very subtle. It is not so much a matter of individuality as it is a dim sense of individuality within a much stronger sense of collective consciousness or being. This higher individuality is not separate nor is it separative. It conveys no sense of separateness nor expresses any separateness. It is a non-self-centered rapport with all souls as one soul, without completely losing the sense of individual distinction, but that distinction becomes more and more subtle as the soul progresses. The higher sense of individuality conveys no real or apparent “sense” of individuality.

This “I-ness” of the soul is the product of nirvana, that sense of losing oneself in the plenum of the all (nothingness in the fullest sense). It is the identification of the individual soul with the one life and the direct participation in that one life as it thrills through all lives everywhere. Such a soul (consciousness) knows no distinction between itself and the lives through which it lives. Even where that expression is localized in consciousness (i.e., directed to or through particular lives), the distinction between oneself and those through whom one is working is very subtle indeed. Although one is thereby conscious of being those through whom one is working, those through whom one is working are not thereby necessarily conscious of the one nor of any distinction within the one.

This participation in consciousness is a matter of rapport between souls (within the one soul), and may be expressed through the corresponding personalities, but it does not constitute any imposition upon those corresponding personalities because the respective souls are participating willingly and responsively in the process (even if the lower expression is oblivious). If one works on personality levels, and merely projects one's selfness upon or through another, however sincerely, that is imposition and a grave transgression of occult propriety (law). But if one works on soul levels, there is no possibility of imposition.

Within the oneness of the soul, one is linked to and through all lives within (and to some extent beyond) the planetary scheme. One can project one's focus of consciousness (more properly, being) to any life or group of lives, at will, and perceive the experience of that life or group of lives, without regard to spatial or temporal limitations. One simply participates consciously and willingly (localized or otherwise) within the framework of the flow of that one life. In this sense, one is God, as one lives through God to an extent comparable to that God living through oneself. One is nonetheless subordinated to the God-life without "feeling" subordinated, because one is participating therein as God. But there is therein no "sense" of self either, nor any sense of individuality except in the most subtle sense of peripheral awareness of what one is (was) or from where one comes (came). Where there arises even a glimmer of (expression of) separateness or selfness (individuality), there is an immediate loss of the higher consciousness (connection) and reversion to the lower consciousness (personality) (ego). One thereby learns how to achieve (allow) and maintain (sustain) the (awareness of) higher rapport or ahamkara.

The Dawn

Dawn is the first appearance or beginning of something, e.g., in the physical sense of light from the sun in the morning (the emergence of light) and in the psychological sense of the beginning of perception or understanding, the growing of light, symbolized in the physical dawning of light from the sun (and associated revitalization). The dawn traditionally represents commencement or beginning. But metaphysically, the dawn (additionally) illustrates timelessness in a number of different ways.

In the physical sense, the dawn is normally perceived as a regularly recurring phenomenon in time, i.e., from the point of view of someone embedded in time and space, the dawn appears each morning and has some modest duration, such that one naturally thinks of each dawn as a separate event. But in fact, even physically, there is but one dawn, and that dawn has existed since the beginning of physical planetary manifestation (rotation). If one views the planet from a distance, one can see that only one dawn is being manifested and that that dawn continuously progresses around the planet, with one complete cycle per day. What the individual normally calls the dawn is therefore more properly referred to in time and space as the interaction of one's consciousness with that (singular) dawn, each such interaction being a discrete event, with the (singular) dawn being a continuity.

What this physical example conveys, potentially, is the realization of natural delusion (of separateness), that one normally perceives things in a very limited manner, with the mind interpreting each moment in the light of previous experience and conditioning. But with a broadening of the mental perspective, and a deliberate effort to overcome one's conditioning (mental habits and instincts), one can perceive a greater reality (greater light) (which is ever more integral). The habit of thinking in spatial-temporal terms is self-limiting, for in the next order of reality one naturally integrates over the spatial and temporal factors to a realization of spacelessness and timelessness. Even the presumption of time-ordered cause and effect relationships is overcome in that higher order.

Similarly, one can view the dawn in terms of consciousness, so that in the self-limiting sense the dawn occurs periodically as one becomes (hopefully) progressively more enlightened (self-realized), and in the not-self-limiting sense (the student having achieved some measure of self-realization) the dawn is a continuous experience of enlightenment, without recourse to either spatial or temporal discretion. Or in other words, in the self-limiting sense one gets absorbed (distracted) (entangled) in mundane (personal) (secular) affairs while in the not-self-limiting sense one remains free from such absorption, being continuously aware of (through) the light from within.

The dawn not only illustrates timelessness but leads (potentially) to a progressive sense of union, helping to overcome the instinctive sense of individuality (ego) and associated separateness and separateness. In the dawn (light) is found the soul or higher self of love-wisdom. In the dawn is revealed the continuity of humanity and of all life. In the dawn is revealed the glory and majesty of the logos and the realization that each and the logos are one. The dawn is thus the light of the soul and the light of the logos. But the dawn conveys more than light, for it also conveys associated love and life (power (for good)), for the many are seven and the seven are three and the three are one. The dawn is the beacon of light and love and power. The dawn is That. The dawn is All.

† Commentary No. 883

Objectivity 1

Objectivity is defined as the quality or state of being objective, of being able to perceive and interpret sensible reality (sense impressions) as it is (they are), or at least without being distorted by personal reflections or feelings. In the ordinary, day-to-day life in the external or “objective” world, few people actually perceive and interpret their sense impressions or experience objectively. And likewise few people actually think clearly on any subject, due to their lack of objectivity.

Most people are heavily biased by their own character, temperament, opinions, feelings, values, etc., and tend to see what they want to see, hear what they want to hear, and think what they want to think, that is, consistently with their

own habits of thinking and feeling. This phenomenon is compounded as a problem by virtue of the person being largely unconscious of the process. In other words, sense impressions are normally unconsciously interpreted according to whatever particular personal biases a person might have. What is "perceived" is then used as if it were factual and the person naturally then draws conclusions or makes judgments based upon it, without realizing how non-factual the interpretation is in the first place.

Before the spiritual student can effectively perceive and interpret superphysical impressions (or work effectively on superphysical levels), he or she must first learn to perceive and interpret the ordinary (physical plane) sense impressions more or less objectively. This involves becoming honest in every sense of the word, intellectually and otherwise. This also means becoming more and more objective, being able to discern things clearly and in an unbiased manner. This requires a great deal of effort, training, self-discipline, etc. It means thinking for oneself rather than passively accepting what is apparently presented to the senses or suggested by others. It also means overcoming the self-centered (personality-centered) bias that results from the undisciplined and unrefined nature of the emotions and lower, concrete mind. Any degree of dishonesty, with oneself or others, undermines objectivity.

One of the keys to becoming objective is learning to discriminate effectively, being able to see or discern (real) distinctions, being able to see things as they are rather than as they may appear to be (even on the physical plane), or how one is accustomed to thinking they are. Of course on the next higher level, even discrimination must yield to realization, but discrimination is nonetheless invaluable in the process of the student becoming objective (and thereby being able to see the meaning of things rather than drawing incorrect or misleading conclusions). Another key is learning the rules of logic (or more properly, learning to avoid the pitfalls conveyed by the lack of logic) [and of course, on the next higher level, learning to overcome the habits of rationalization].

One of the tendencies to be overcome (in becoming more objective) is the tendency to make wild inferences or to "read into" what is said or written, instead of accepting statements (and behavior) more objectively (truthfully) (accurately). The imagination is generally the culprit, as one infers what one wants to infer rather than inferring what is intended. Realistically, one should

consider the possibilities of other inferences, but not assume that any inference is actually correct (unless there is objective evidence or substantiation). The intuition is generally a good guide, beyond the reasoning or rationalizing faculty, but most people confuse their own imagination with their intuition and that only compounds the problem.

† Commentary No. 884

Objectivity 2

“Problems arise when semantic meaning is over-whelmed by pragmatic inferences.” This leads to innuendo or boomerang effects, where “readers and listeners make pragmatic interpretations that may be entirely contrary to the semantic meaning of statements.” Semantic meaning is what a statement is literally intended to say, while pragmatic meaning is what a person thinks (more or less unconsciously) of why a statement was made. “Innuendo effects are so powerful that they can distort intentional meanings even in the most innocuous of cases.” Inferential interpretation is a quagmire for the less-than-objective student, who is not even really conscious of the fact that inferential interpretations are taking place.

These problems may be categorized in two ways, the problem of inferential interpretation, and the problem of not being aware that an inference has been made. These problems are further compounded by any attachment to conclusions that the person may have (which is fairly common) (i.e., where the student allows personal bias to so condition the process that one is “certain” of the correctness of the (wild) inference) (and of course, one “sees” whatever supporting evidence one wants to see). Spiritual students must overcome both of these problems if they are to progress beyond the mundane consciousness that so englamorizes and so enchants the masses.

Another aspect of the problem is the “denial of reality” syndrome, where a person so wants to believe that something is true (or false) that every sense impression or experience is interpreted to be consistent with that sense of reality. This is true for the whole physical plane phenomena (where virtually everyone is deluded into believing in physical appearances) as well as for more personal aspects (e.g., a person who wants something (or wants something to be

true) will naturally rationalize and justify his desire (or belief) and interpret experience to support the belief that what is wanted is okay (or that the belief is true)) [this rationalization process, however conscious or unconscious it may be, is fundamentally dishonest, even if the belief or object is okay or true, respectively].

Stereotyping is another aspect of lack of objectivity that must be overcome. A stereotype "represents an oversimplified opinion, affective attitude, or uncritical judgment" in holding individuals to be representative of some (biased) mental picture. Any form of generalization is dangerous, because it leads to self-deceptive (unconscious) bias that simply may not be fair or accurate. The self-centered opposite of stereotyping is also a problem, in which a person views himself or herself as the "exception" to the general case, usually self-deceptively and heavily biased by the imagination. Any sense of oneself or others that is unrealistic compounds the problem of trying to see things objectively.

Since one generally perceives things through the emotional-mental aura, one of the approaches to resolving these problems is purifying and clarifying the aura such that personal bias is minimized if not eliminated entirely. The first step is realization of the existence (prevalence) of one's own bias. The second step is discerning the nature of that bias and its attendant habits in feeling and thinking. And the third step is the actual purification and clarification of the aura so that it more clearly reflects realistic impressions rather than biased ones. The overriding and underlying key to all of this remains increasing honesty (and associated humility), the incorporation of a strong sense of (realistic) fairness in all things.

The Great Realization

The great message or realization is two-fold: On the “down” side (internal realization) it is the message of the truth about oneself, that each person is wholly accountable for what he or she is and for everything that happens to him or her, that virtually everyone is asleep in the maya (glamour) (illusion) of materialism, duality, ego, etc., and that in order to achieve awakening there is a very great price indeed to be paid. On the “up” side (external realization) it is the message of the truth about life, the world, evolution, unity, momentum, etc., and the Way to enlightenment. Of course from the higher perspective there is no “down” side at all as both realizations afford progress and the inner realization is actually priceless.

While (relatively) many are eager to embrace the message concerning the world and the path, few are willing to take seriously the message concerning accountability and self-delusion, and therefore few are able to overcome these limitations and the inertia of their own personalities and embark upon the path (though many deceive themselves into thinking they are taking the path seriously). Most people who think they are on the path are just as much asleep as the average person, not being aware of the truth about themselves and not even being aware that they are largely asleep. Accepting the teachings is one thing and involves merely intellectual understanding. Living in accordance with the teachings is another thing altogether and involves a great deal of effort and dedication. The key is determination to be absolutely honest in all matters (even mentally and emotionally), for otherwise it is not even possible to awaken from the lethargy of personality-centeredness.

True realization (self-realization) is a matter both of internal and external realization, simultaneously achieved as one consciously reconciles the inner and outer aspects. One must not only be honest and humble, but one must also live accordingly. That honesty and humility must be expressed in one’s aura and consciousness as well as behaviorally. The requisite openness to the truth must actually be an active openness in order to overcome the habits in thinking and feeling that are natural to anyone who is thinking and feeling for oneself. In short, one may have beliefs but not opinions or other attachments. One can

embrace the esoteric philosophy in its various aspects, one can even “know” fully the truth thereof, but one must not be attached even to that truth, which is, after all, only relative and conditional. As one grows, one must be willing to embrace relatively higher truth, and that means not being encumbered by the lower truth (however noble it may be).

Once one accepts the truth about oneself in the sense of accountability and self-delusion, then one is relatively better able to properly and fully realize the “up” side of inner realization, that of oneness (God-ness). If one embraces oneness intellectually, without accepting conscious accountability and the determination to progressively overcome one’s own self-delusion, then that sense of oneness will remain merely intellectual and actually serve as a barrier to further progress (i.e., one who thinks he knows the truth is limited thereby). In other words, it is not what is known that matters, it is one’s character and temperament and values that matter. The proper character and temperament for the spiritual student is intelligent humility and openness to realization.

The internal and external realizations thus go hand-in-hand. Truth is gradually and progressively revealed as one fits (and refits) oneself for that (continual) revelation. Knowledge must be transmuted into understanding, and understanding must be transmuted into wisdom.

† Commentary No. 886

Cosmic Fire 86

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 2, Division F) considers the law of attraction, its various subsidiary laws, its effects, and group relations. The law of attraction is subsidiary to the law of synthesis and serves as the fundamental law of adjustment or balance (karma) for manifestation and produces the intended results of manifestation by virtue of its relationship to the second aspect (the soul, consciousness). The law of attraction is the law of Vishnu as it relates to the interaction (relationship) (synthesis) of Brahma (manifestation) and Shiva (the central life).

Included within the law of attraction are eleven subsidiary laws, each of which is simply an aspect or point of view (or point of application (expression)) within

the law of attraction. (1) The law of chemical affinity “governs the soul aspect in the mineral kingdom.” (2) The law of progress relates to sensation and the plant kingdom (and to the “informing consciousness of a part of the deva kingdom”). (3) The law of sex involves the animal nature (in both the animal and human kingdoms) and marriage on various levels. (4) The law of magnetism “produces the unifying of a personality.” (5) The law of radiation relates to the highest aspect of each lifewave and its relationship to the next higher lifewave.

(6) The law of the lotus is a triple law of solar heat (relating to the knowledge petals), solar light (relating to the love petals), and solar fire (relating to the sacrifice petals). (7) The law of color in the sense of the “attractive quality of the central life.” (8) The law of gravitation relates to underlying cohesion during manifestation. (9) The law of planetary affinity relates to the interaction and eventual synthesis of the various planets within the system. (10) The law of solar union relates to the interplay of the suns “from the material aspect and from the consciousness aspect.” (11) The law of the schools is the “law of love and light” and relates to the various higher expansions of consciousness.

The law of attraction is, as any cosmic or systemic law, a consequence of higher purpose and a means of teleologically qualifying or conditioning the manifested life (consciousness) (form). The law of attraction is key in the sense of its role in qualifying relationships at all levels within the system, for evolution proceeds largely on the basis of results produced by interactions or relationships. All of the various lives and forces must be balanced in some manner or another if the entire system is to be cohesive (and progressive in a constructive manner). Without underlying (cohesive) purpose and without progressive (impelling) balance, manifestation would simply cease (and the participants in manifestation would dissolve).

The effects of manifestation are (1) association [mutual, purposive interaction], (2) form building [in support of consciousness and the purposes of consciousness (involutionary and evolutionary experience and expression)], (3) adaptation (progressive relationship) of form to life (which is the bulk of manifested activity) [for efficiency and effectiveness in utilization (and in relation to the various creative hierarchies)], and (4) group unity [the progression from a sense of separate existence to intelligent cooperation within a context of realized

group unity]. Group relations involve seven laws of group work (sacrifice, magnetic impulse, service, repulsion, group progress, expansive response, and the lower four) and twenty-two methods of group interplay (the basic vibration and “the three ways in which the groups on any particular ray interact with each other”).

† Commentary No. 887

Cosmic Fire 87

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 3, Division A) considers the electric fire of spirit through “certain basic statements.” The teaching anent electric fire (and every teaching that is actually and not merely superficially esoteric) can only be comprehended to the extent that the monadic influence can be felt. The real value of studying cosmic fire in its various aspects is the stimulation that results, a stimulation that helps draw the mind (and integrated personality) into alignment with the soul. Thus it is not really important for the conscious mind to comprehend directly any of these teachings, provided a more or less meditative approach is utilized. But electric fire relates more to the monad than to the soul and very few are able to work on levels on which the monad can be contacted (or even sensed). Thus the presentation is more or less limited to evocative symbols of a more or less abstract nature.

“The goal of realization for man is consciousness of the nature of the soul ... More it is not possible for him to do.” Only when man is functioning consciously as a soul (on soul levels) can he (it) embrace the “jewel hidden at the heart of his own being” and the “greater jewel which lies hidden at the heart of solar manifestation.” Perception ever precedes comprehension. But the timescale of manifestation is so much more vast than “man” can appreciate, and our perception necessarily exceeds our ability to comprehend. Man thus normally draws conclusions about things that are far beyond his comprehension. The esoteric student refuses to confuse and delude his mind and heart by making assumptions or drawing conclusions about these matters. Instead, the esoteric student approaches the jewel subjectively and without expectation. An embrace is then (and only then (and only that is)) possible.

“The wise student will likewise regard all forms of expression as in the nature of symbols. A symbol has three interpretations; it is itself an expression of an idea, and that idea has behind it, in its turn, a purpose inconceivable as yet.” These three interpretations are (1) exoteric, (2) subjective, and (3) spiritual. Exoteric interpretation is largely superficial, relating to its objective utility and “gives some faint indications as to the idea or the concept” and “limits and confines ... the idea.” Most people are wholly deceived by appearances. Great care must be taken to ensure that one does not confuse the symbol itself with its objective interpretation (nor with the energy or underlying idea). “The subjective interpretation is the one which reveals the idea lying behind the objective manifestation.”

Through the soul one can embrace that idea and begin the (cooperative) creative work. “The spiritual meaning is that which lies behind the subjective sense and which is veiled by the idea or thought just as the idea itself is veiled by the form it assumes when in exoteric manifestation.” Purpose leads to ideas which in turn lead to their emanation or expression (manifestation). “Man on the physical plane is the exoteric symbol of an inner subjective idea which is possessed of quality and attributes and a form through which it seeks expression. That soul in its turn is the result of a spiritual impulse.”

“The wise student will also ponder well the mystery of electricity, which is the mystery surrounding that process which is responsible for the production of light and therefore of vibration itself.” The average person is wholly absorbed in the realm of effects. The occult student is largely absorbed with the more subjective side of life but even so is dealing largely with intermediate cause and effect relationships. The esoteric student touches merely the cause behind the cause, and even then, just barely.

Cosmic Fire 88

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (Section 3, Division B) considers the electric fire of spirit through “the nature of the seven cosmic paths.” Each path is a stream of energy which constitutes a relationship. Those who have reached the level at which one of the paths is embraced have chosen consciously and deliberately, and yet have no real choice in the sense that by that time they have become that stream of energy by virtue of their group relationships and the character of their own higher nature. The paths exist beyond color, beyond the veil of form and therefore within the realm of energy, beyond even the realm of awareness. The names and descriptions of the seven paths are necessarily superficial and all should be considered not with regard to humanity but with regard to the life (consciousness) beyond the human stage.

Path I is the path of earth service. “The first path is the one that keeps a man linked to the Hierarchy which is pledged to the service of our planetary scheme.” This is the path of the familiar masters, yet relatively few embark upon this path. Path II is the path of magnetic work. Path III is the lotus path, the path of training for planetary logoi. This involves a great deal of preparatory work for the next solar system and its manifestation through seven planetary logoi and forty-nine sub-planetary logoi. While man thinks almost entirely of the current solar system, some (beyond humanity) are actively and currently working on the system to follow, aeons hence. Path IV is the path to Sirius and concerns the bulk of humanity. Path V is the ray path and “leads to the next cosmic plane.” This path is the logical extension and follow-on to the seven ashrams of activity within the human hierarchy. Path VI is the path of the solar logos. Path VII is the path of absolute sonship.

These seven paths are all very closely related, and in some cases one leads to another. A person (soul) is fitted for a particular path based on experience, evolved quality (character, higher temperament, particular sensitivities, etc.), and (ashramic) relationships, and is therefore drawn naturally to a particular path. It is at the level of the seven paths that the two great streams of life (deva and human) are properly merged and blended. It is also the realm in which planetary lives (logoi) and solar lives (logoi) are related to each other, are

blended together, and are ultimately transcended. Needless to say, one must necessarily pass beyond being human in order to comprehend any of these paths.

Thus “cosmic fire” leads from the fire of matter through the fire of consciousness to the fire of spirit. The realm of comprehensible service includes the fire of matter (the fundamental service of providing and maintaining the means of manifestation) (which is accomplished largely through the personality level) and the fire of consciousness (the fundamental work of achieving the objectives of manifestation through the means of consciousness in its relationship to form) (which is accomplished largely through the soul level). The realm of incomprehensible service involves primarily the fire of spirit (the fundamental work beyond consciousness) (which is accomplished largely on monadic levels and beyond).

The various commentaries on cosmic fire serve merely as introductory material. The source must ever be embraced, periodically and meditatively, for “actual content” to be realized. [A Treatise on Cosmic Fire](#) (Section 3, Division C) concludes the treatise with “seven esoteric stanzas” which, along with the [Stanzas of Dzyan](#), convey the subjective essence upon which the entire treatise is based.

† Commentary No. 889

Mantric Repetition

The repeating of a particular mantra tends to enhance or increase the potency or efficacy of results evoked by the mantra, to the extent of the effectiveness of the mantra per se, to the extent of effectiveness of the method utilized, to the extent of the quality and character of the environment in which the mantra is sounded, and to the extent of the quality and character of consciousness (intelligence) (wisdom) employed. Mantras sounded (physically, emotionally, or mentally) merely passively are generally not very effective. Mantras sounded actively, with full attention and proper focus of the waking-consciousness are generally much more effective.

Two exceptions to these rules are (1) the case of programmed association, of passively (incidentally) sounding a mantra that has been embraced by

consciousness as a result of prior and periodic active sounding, i.e., one can incidentally evoke effective results based on prior programming (qualification) of one's own consciousness (where such incidental sounding triggers a largely unconscious occult activity), and (2) the case of collective and/or regularly periodic sounding of a mantra where sufficient and prior purpose has been established (e.g., within the context of a religious service, even where most of the participants are unaware of the purpose or process) (in which mantric patterns have been established within the particular (local) atmosphere or aura). In each of these two cases even an incidental sounding can be relatively effective (potent).

A basic problem of mantric repetition has to do with the hypnotic factor. If a mantra is sounded repeatedly and without active focus of consciousness, i.e., merely passively, the results are most likely to be the self-hypnotic relaxation of the personality, without any regard for quality or application of consciousness. This often leads to a false sense that one is actually meditating or doing something useful when in fact one is merely undergoing self-hypnotic relaxation. Depending on the context and circumstances, this passive condition then may form the basis for being (potentially) externally influenced or manipulated (however sincerely or otherwise) (e.g., along religious lines rather than along the lines of spiritual self-fulfillment). Self-hypnosis may be good for personal relaxation, but it is not good (nor is it necessarily bad) for growth in consciousness which must necessarily be an active process (or at least not a passive process).

Where mantric repetition is moderately and actively (fully-consciously) employed, then considerable occult work can be thereby accomplished. The key (for good or ill) is conscious, deliberate, purposeful focus of attention. Energy follows thought. And the force of that energy is increased in effectiveness where there is a sustained and emotionally coherent association of thought and feeling. If the mind is not actively involved in the process, the process tends to be undermined. If the mind is actively and constructively involved, then the process tends to be much more effective. If the process is coherently and consistently repeated, then it is even more effective as each act builds upon the earlier efforts. Likewise, if the process is collective or contributes (coherently) to a collective effort, then it is much more effective.

Another key to effectiveness is relative simplicity in the form of the mantra. If the mantra is without constructive associations then it will be rather ineffectual. But if the mantra has constructive (and consciously realized) associations and is relatively simple (more generally qualified for good), then that simplicity (and implied sincerity) adds to the effectiveness.

† Commentary No. 890

Points of Light

A person functioning as a point of light is a very real phenomenon, as there are many people throughout the world who consciously or unconsciously irradiate the astral and concrete mental planes with the light of their (quality of) consciousness. These include people who are simply men and women of goodwill and/or good nature who serve more or less unconsciously as well as men and women who are fully conscious of invoking and evoking (and subsequently channeling and wisely directing) the light and/or love energies. Every act of goodwill, every physical, emotional, and/or mental expression of kindness, and every expression of compassion for others conveys energy not only toward the object of goodwill (kindness) (compassion), but to the immediate (astral and concrete mental) environment as well. Provided the energy is not imposed on anyone, the energy expressed will qualify the environment (aura) such that anyone who comes into that environment will be potentially affected (to the extent that they are responsive to the character and quality of energy).

Points of light (love) (spiritual poise) within relatively dark places are essential to humanity's progress, e.g., within prisons and jails, within hospitals, orphanages, and mental institutions, within the military, and within government, business, and industry (wherever the animal nature tends to prevail, wherever materialism and egoism dominate, wherever people are not considered with proper respect and consideration for equity and freedom). And points of light are also essential wherever hearts and minds are being influenced by conventional (religious and secular) materialism, e.g., in the churches, schools, media, etc. In short, points of light are needed everywhere in the world, but particularly in the darker places to which spiritual students might not (as

personalities) be attracted. Relative darkness may be found almost anywhere, yet so can the light emerge within the surrounding darkness.

In the case of prisons and jails, for example, prisoners, prison guards, and visitors would do well to realize that the fact of karmic consequences (i.e., that a person is where he or she is for reasons of consequence) in no way excuses the spiritual student from extending respect and consideration. Those who can embrace the light and serve (occasionally or persistently) within these (relatively darker) places are particularly effective in encouraging growth of consciousness. And those, further afield, who can meditate effectively, linking up with those who are within some place of relative darkness and who are responsive to the light, perform a worthy service to humanity.

On the other hand, one should not really think of a place of relative darkness as a place of darkness, but rather one should think of it as a place of relative light within a somewhat darker field. After all, one should be encouraging the light rather than the darkness. But one must also be realistic about these matters and remain wary of entanglement, and remain wary of any extent of imposition. One should work with those who are responsive, rather than directly with those who are not responsive to the light. One should not (ever) work from any sense of superiority, even relative. And someone who lives (works) (serves) in a relatively dark place may be there actually entirely for reasons of spiritual service.

The spiritual student (of some potency) must therefore (by virtue of potency) be careful not to express any character or quality other than those more noble virtues. Thus spiritual discipline ever goes very much hand-in-hand with spiritual service. In light, and love, and power do the men and women of goodwill persist in their labors.

Dispassion

Dispassion is defined as the absence of passion, the state in which one is not influenced to distraction by strong feelings, being not affected by personal or emotional involvement. Dispassion certainly does not preclude having or expressing feelings. But it does imply and convey a sense of poise resulting from the ability to “feel” more or less objectively, remaining calm in the face of what might otherwise be considered stressing circumstances. Likewise, dispassion in no way precludes or limits any sense or expression of compassion. Indeed, it raises the sense of compassion to its own level, which is non-reactive, yet benevolent. And dispassion does not in itself convey coldness. Indeed, spiritual dispassion and coldness are mutually exclusive.

According to Sri Samkaracarya, “External attachment is to objects of sense, internal is to egoism and the rest. It is only the dispassionate man ... who is able to renounce them.” Thus dispassion is essential to spiritual progress, to overcoming the distractions of (and absorption of consciousness in) the sensual, materialistic, egoistic life. Dispassion is the means by which one reaches detachment, in overcoming the various external and internal attachments, entanglements, and involvements which limit the higher expression (quality) and prevent the student from seeing clearly and embracing the higher reality. In short, one can serve (and grow) much more effectively within humanity where one is not distracted by attachments, entanglements, and involvements. The spiritual student needs to be free of these “things” in order to participate in the (higher) flow of life and consciousness, which incidentally serves humanity much more effectively because such a student participates in humanity on a higher level and in higher ways.

Dispassion is “an attitude which imparts complete control of reactions to life, events, and circumstances. Dispassion is acceptance of God’s will, and the ability to accept, with understanding, the circumstances of life.” Having a higher perception or vision, or at least having faith and understanding of higher things, one is not so easily deceived or distracted by matters of a personal, spatial, or temporal (transient) nature. In learning to accept the flow of life, one is thereby more able and more free to work effectively (constructively). With

dispassion one is not discouraged by apparent inner or outer circumstances, for circumstances are seen in a higher context (as transient and consequential), being only part of the flow and not the whole. One may not understand everything that “happens” but with dispassion one has the correct “attitude” toward life, which is accepting of things as they are while working progressively to improve the overall (collective) consciousness. With dispassion, one perceives things (relatively) both positively and realistically, to the extent of the quality of consciousness achieved.

According to Sri Samkaracarya, “The result of dispassion is right perception; of right perception, abstention from the pleasures of sense and ceremonial acts. The peace that comes from the realization of the true is the fruit of abstention from ceremonial acts, from the pleasures of sense.” In renunciation of sensual things one achieves a great freedom in consciousness and for service. In the resulting right perception, progress is assured.

Dispassion implies or conveys a relative lack of prejudice, a relative impartiality, a relative lack of excitability, and a relative indifference to inconsequential things (mundane or personal matters) [i.e., having rather a focus on consequential matters]. Dispassion is thus consistent with having a higher value system.

† Commentary No. 892

The Greater Work 1

The greater work refers to the dharma of the spiritual path, which is service to humanity (and to some extent to related lifewaves), and particularly in the sense of responsibility for service at the highest order at which a spiritual student can effectively work.

The first order of service is that which can be accomplished primarily on the physical plane and with ordinary (personality) means and relates primarily to individuals or to groups of individuals (i.e., not in the context of group consciousness). Included are virtually all aspects of what are considered charitable and/or humanitarian efforts, any expression of goodwill, etc. These activities are essential to human progress, not that the apparent effects or

objectives of humanitarian efforts are particularly useful (indeed, many are counterproductive from the standpoint of learning (e.g., healing without consideration for understanding the causal relationships and therefore without consideration for bringing about changes in consciousness) or are karmically neutral), but because the energy of goodwill (service) demonstrated or expressed within humanity has such a positive, inductive effect on (within) humanity.

The second order of service is that which (a) relates primarily to groups of people (in the context of consciousness) and/or (b) is accomplished primarily and consciously on the astral (emotional) plane. More properly this order (a) is a matter of group effort rather than supportive of particular groups in any distinctive (separative or exclusive) manner. And this order (b) can relate to individuals or groups in some astral or etheric context. Examples in this second sense (b) include the work of "invisible helpers," providing prana or vitalized energy for healing purposes, and/or working directly with a patient's aura, but more properly include qualifying the astral atmosphere of the planet, either in the localized sense or generally (purposively). The second order of service also and properly (primarily) includes working with (the overcoming of) maya and glamour.

The third order of service, and the highest at which many spiritual students (in incarnation) are able to work (if they would only apply themselves appropriately), is that which (a) relates directly to humanity as a whole and/or (b) is accomplished primarily and consciously on concrete mental levels. The third order of service also includes working with (the overcoming of) glamour and illusion. Beyond this third order, the masters work primarily on soul levels (abstract mental, buddhic, and atmic levels) and rely on those spiritual students (disciples) who can effectively bridge between soul and personality levels (primarily between the abstract and concrete mental levels) (and to some extent between buddhic and astral levels) for implementation and fulfillment.

The spiritual student should serve as an instrument of distribution of higher energies (qualification) at lower levels, by virtue of his or her presence (character, quality, and temperament) within humanity. Thus serving primarily on the higher (astral and concrete mental) levels in no way precludes the more or less unconscious (incidental) service on lower levels (etheric and astral) (which can be just as important and just as relevant). But the student should strive to work

on the highest level and broadest scope at which he or she is effective. Opportunities for service are both a matter of group and individual karma and a matter of responsiveness. In order to serve, one must be responsive to opportunities to serve. But one must also exercise discretion in service and not permit personality attachments to interfere with one's ability to serve primarily at higher levels.

† Commentary No. 893

The Greater Work 2

According to law (karma) and in the context of the spiritual path (dharma), the spiritual student is obliged to work primarily at the highest level that he or she is capable of working, of primarily supporting that which he or she perceives or recognizes as the highest expression of service. This rule should be obvious to the aspirant, but many are distracted by lesser opportunities and thereby lose the greater, and fail to fulfill that which is needed and in accordance with their abilities (some, too, wait for greater opportunities and fail to apply themselves to the current (highest immediate) opportunity).

Every student has a limited measure of power (energy) (force) [flow] to apply or express in a given (distributed) opportunity. Duty requires that the student apply or express that measure in the most effective manner, to the most appropriate task or function. For the true disciple there is no distraction by more personal (lesser) service opportunities. The lesser opportunities are left for those who are better suited to their fulfillment, while the disciple proceeds with what is, for him or her, the higher work, according to his or her abilities, temperament, and calling. Along with the admonition for the spiritual student to work primarily at the higher levels is the corollary, that the spiritual student should strive (non-competitively and without ambition or pride) to be the best that he or she can be, in consciousness, at all times.

Greater (higher) and lesser (lower) in this sense refer to the context of level (order) and quality of consciousness, not to any absolute value! If a student capable of working on the mental plane "spends" his or her time (attention) and energy in physical or emotional plane (service) activities, then that time and energy is truly wasted, in the sense that there are relatively few who can work

on the higher levels and relatively many who can work on the lower levels, and where the higher work is not accomplished, the lesser could have been accomplished by others. One might think that the greater work should be left to those who are not in incarnation, yet the real value of the greater work lies in the fact of the server's physical plane existence, for such service is performed from within incarnated humanity rather than from without, and that service is therefore much more effective in leading humanity onward.

It is fundamentally a matter of priorities. Those of higher calling (the so-called masters of wisdom) are drawn ever onward and upward (and are therefore not able to "work" on lower levels). Those who follow must fill the needs on those (to them, higher) levels, to the full extent of their abilities and training. There is always more work to be done than can be accomplished. That is the nature of the path (and associated work) [and such is the nature of humanity's karmic balance, favoring progress]. And that is a consequence of karma in the broader sense and context. Yet progress on all real levels requires that the "greater work" be embraced and that the "lesser work" be foregone. In this sense the higher work refers not only to level of consciousness (e.g., mental is "higher" than emotional) but also to scope of service (e.g., helpfulness to individuals is a "low-order" service, usefulness in some group context is "intermediate", but real (high-order) service is that which serves all of humanity).

In the final analysis, one should do what is before one to do. If a choice exists (where one's obligation is not apparent), then one should choose the higher alternative. In the greater work one is also (incidentally) serving on lower levels as well, by virtue of the student's physical plane existence (aura). But the focus of attention should ever be on the greater work.

The Greater Work 3

Another aspect of the greater work is the service pyramid or chain of service activities reaching from the lowest levels of special interest work and individual support activities (normal effects-oriented charitable and humanitarian activities) through the intermediate levels of causal service, to the highest levels of group or collective service well beyond the ken of humanity.

The chain is represented as a service pyramid because the largest number of workers function on the lowest levels and the smallest number of workers function on the highest levels (and proportionately in between). Most people in incarnation are more or less conscious on physical levels and that minority of humanity, those men and women of goodwill, who work (serve) on those more or less objective levels are quite numerous with regard to the majority of humanity. Relatively few are able to work more or less consciously (or at least deliberately) and constructively on astral levels, and fewer still are able to work more or less consciously and deliberately on concrete mental levels. So a natural, hierarchical progression exists from the base (humanity as a whole) to the superhuman kingdom (of masters) and beyond.

The service pyramid is represented as a chain in the sense that one level or scope of service naturally leads to another, higher or broader level, as the worker evolves or progresses in service (dharma). By progressing in this sense of service, one is increasingly albeit gradually increasingly responding to higher need and simultaneously inducing or drawing others onward and upward from lower levels (without deliberation or manipulation or imposition or compulsion). From this point of view, the greater work is in fact the means whereby all of humanity is impelled onward and upward, from within. Those at each level extend their helpfulness to those within reach (responsiveness), who in turn extend their helpfulness to others. The chain thereby constitutes a multi-dimensional and bi-directional inductive (and responsive, respectively) flow of evolutionary energy. Purpose (qualification) (encouragement) flows "downward" from the higher levels, while the products of responsiveness (assimilated experience) flow "upward" from the lower levels. Any one who serves (collectively) as a link in that chain is contributing directly to the whole.

Paradoxically, as one grows onward and upward toward the peak of the service pyramid, one's level and scope of service is broadened (although one may have some specialization, one is increasingly able to (and drawn to) work in a broader context). And of course one never reaches that peak, as the peak recedes in accordance with the broadening (deepening) of one's vision. While one should strive to work at the highest levels that one is effectively able, one should also be wary of the glamour of service (and the glamour of the path in general), particularly the glamour of significance or importance. All spiritual work is important and none particularly so.

"Lower" work is just as essential as the "higher" work, and while working at the higher levels implies some measure of ability (and calling), with wisdom the spiritual student realizes the continuity of consciousness that exists between all levels (in fact ultimately recognizes the fallacy of levels) and simply plays his or her role in accordance with his or her calling (dharma and opportunity based on ability and circumstances), without any sense of individual significance. In fact, the further one progresses the less is that sense of personality or ego and the greater is the sense of humble participation in the greater life, at whatever level.

† Commentary No. 895

The Tarot 1

The tarot is a particular symbolic and procedural system embodying some degree of metaphysical philosophy, utilizing a combination of particular and various symbolisms, through the medium of a (tarot) deck of cards and their various relationships one to another and through the medium of utilizing those cards according to particular and various methods.

The higher purpose of the tarot is to provide a convenient and portable mechanism for the embodiment and representation of the ancient wisdom (esoteric philosophy) that can be utilized effectively as a point of focus for occult work. Since the basis of the tarot is natural symbolism, it can easily convey its content and quality to (and be effectively utilized by) any trained spiritual student (of any system), while safeguarding that content and quality from any

person ill-prepared and unfamiliar with the natural, underlying basis of all occult systems. There is no lower purpose of the tarot, although it is often (and necessarily poorly) utilized by the unqualified and pseudo-qualified for (presumed) fortune-telling and other (relatively foolish) personality-centered operations.

The tarot design can vary a great deal from deck to deck, although those decks that are designed properly, according to the natural, underlying system, are sufficiently similar in the important aspects. The embodied quality and depth (breadth) of content can also vary a great deal from deck to deck, according to the qualifications (knowledge, understanding, wisdom) of the designer. A highly qualified designer will generally produce a highly qualified tarot design (high deck). A poorly qualified designer will generally produce a poorly qualified design (low deck). Consequently, the usefulness and utility of a deck is limited by both the quality of the design (embodied knowledge, understanding, and wisdom) and the quality of the operator (reader) (user) [capacity of the operator for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom].

A high deck is only really useful to a highly qualified reader. Anyone less qualified will simply be unable to discern the embodied quality and content. A moderate deck is only useful to moderately and highly qualified readers, although for the highly qualified reader a moderate deck cannot convey the higher aspects of the teaching. A low deck is not really useful to anyone, although the unqualified readers generally do not discern the relative (real) quality of the deck being utilized, being able to judge only on the basis of (superficial) appearance. In other words, the key to effective utilization of a tarot deck lies in the resonance (potential) that exists between the deck and the reader. A low deck has low potential, even for the enlightened reader. A high deck has a range of potential, depending on the potential of the reader. One can only extract what has been embodied and only to the extent that one already possesses the embodied knowledge, understanding, and wisdom (and only to the extent that one is properly attuned to or aligned with one's own higher nature). The intellect is not an effective operator.

The tarot is properly utilized (1) as a focus for (unspecified) occult work (service) (white magic), (2) as a point of focus for evoking knowledge, understanding, and wisdom that is not otherwise readily available to the waking-consciousness (but

which has been otherwise personally realized), and (3) as a self-psychological tool. The tarot is improperly utilized for any personality-centered, self-centered, or selfish purposes, or for any mundane or personal interests (e.g., fortune-telling). The tarot is merely a point of focus, and can be used or mis-used according to the reader's intention.

† Commentary No. 896

The Tarot 2

The (proper) tarot deck consists of 78 cards in three parts. The first part consists of 21 numbered cards. The second part consists of card number zero. And the third part consists of 56 cards in four suits (signs) (elements) (seasons) (principles) (cardinal points) of 14 cards each. The first two parts constitute the major arcana, while the third part constitutes the minor arcana.

The cards of the major arcana are known by various names, each of which constitutes an entire symbolic sub-system and is related to every other according to the various embodiments. The following are among the various names. Card I is the Magician. Card II is the High Priestess. Card III is the Empress. Card IV is the Emperor. Card V is the Chariot. Card VI is the Lovers. Card VII is the Hierophant. Card VIII is Strength. Card IX is the Hermit. Card X is the Wheel of Chance. Card XI is Justice. Card XII is the Hanged Man. Card XIII is Death. Card XIV is Temperance. Card XV is the Devil. Card XVI is the Tower. Card XVII is the Star. Card XVIII is the Moon. Card XIX is the Sun. Card XX is Judgment. Card XXI is World. Card XXII (Zero) is the Fool. The first suit of the minor arcana is called clubs or sceptres and represents the first principle (fire). The second suit is called hearts or cups and represents the second principle (water). The third suit is called spades or swords and represents the third principle (air). And the fourth suit is called diamonds or pentacles or disks and represents the fourth principle (earth). The popular deck of "playing cards" is a derivative of the minor arcana.

The symbolism (properly) embodied in the tarot is multi-dimensional, with numerous symbolic threads (consistencies) running throughout the various cards and in various directions. Since the tarot does, in its higher sense, rely on an intuitive (non-egoistic and non-rational) appreciation of the "deck" and its

manifestation (application), one can only really learn the tarot by actually utilizing a (high) deck. Once a person has a suitable feel for the tarot, then one can study the various writings on the tarot, but ever relying on the intuition for that sense of appropriateness (for what rings true and for what rings not so true) [for much of what is written concerning the tarot is without much meaning to the spiritual student]. One can ill afford to approach the tarot in a strictly rational manner, for much will be missed thereby, and one can ill afford to approach the tarot with unbridled or untempered imagination, for much that is false will be gained thereby, thereby deceiving the student and distracting the student from what is true. The only truly effective means of embracing the tarot is intuitively, without recourse to psychic (astral) (emotional) abilities and without recourse to rational (intellectual) abilities.

The tarot is both a definite system and a means by which any (proper) system may be embodied. The tarot is both a systemic doctrine and a system of methods. The tarot is a book of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom that can be read in any number of different directions (ways). The tarot is both definite and indefinite. The mind must therefore be tempered and qualified by the intuition to effectively interpret the higher impressions without prejudice. One must be able to embrace both abstract and concrete concepts. One must be able to discern the sense of things (patterns) as well as to discriminate vital distinctions. Above all, to achieve any real understanding of these things, one must be both open-minded and impersonal.

In a sense, and in the final analysis, the real intention of the tarot is to conveniently evoke within the consciousness of a reincarnated student all that he or she had previously learned of the esoteric philosophy.

Inscrutability

Inscrutability is defined conventionally as the state of being not readily understood, the state of being enigmatic, hard to grasp, and/or mysterious. It refers, in this conventional sense, to the condition in which one lacks the experience and/or ability to readily understand or comprehend something. That something (that which is inscrutable) may be apparently abstruse, ambiguous, paradoxical, subtle, transcendental, and/or vague. In fact, that which is inscrutable may not in itself have any apparent meaning, but the encounter with that which is inscrutable may convey something nonetheless. Inscrutability may therefore refer to some (inscrutable) person and/or to some idea or concept (e.g., an inscrutable statement).

The key to inscrutability, even in this conventional sense, is that real understanding comes not from trying to understand in any intellectual or rational sense but from an unconditioned and intuitive sense of grasping some whole of which the (representative) inscrutability forces the mind out of its normal pattern. In short, inscrutability is an uncontrived tool for understanding that which is not otherwise readily understandable. The uncontrived methods or application of inscrutability are comparable to the utilization of symbols to convey ideas or concepts that are not easily explained or conveyed. Properly qualified symbols appeal to the higher senses and convey a deeper sense of understanding, even if not easily expressible. Inscrutability is more aggressive in the sense that symbols can easily be ignored, while an inscrutable presence is more compelling.

Thus, inscrutability is more properly defined as “the experience of fulfillment and uncontrived, spontaneous achievement.” According to Chogyam Trungpa, inscrutability follows from the achievement of meekness (being uncomplicated, kind, humble (in the sense of depth of spiritual strength), modest, and confident (in the sense of self-composure)), perkiness (being energetic, cheerful (delightful) (in the sense of quiet joy and spiritual poise), and artful), and outrageousness (being fearless in the sense of hopelessness (in having no hopes one passes beyond fear)), all of which are (progressively revealed by) authentic presence.

Inscrutability conveys a sense of “predictability within the context of unpredictability.” Inscrutability is a state of positive nonconformity, of being spiritually poised and self-composed, yet with considerable strength and confidence to do what needs to be done, without being constrained by convention or tradition (or external (internal) expectations). The expression of inscrutability conveys the implication of truth rather than (necessarily) the truth itself. Inscrutability is a state in which one lives the truth rather than a state in which one merely expresses the truth. There is, however, a false inscrutability (glamour) in which the ego seeks attention.

Inscrutability (proper) is egolessness and the refusal to be absorbed in personal or mundane matters, while at the same time refusing to take anything too seriously. It conveys a great freedom from conventional (personality-centered) and conditioned existence while maintaining a strong (inner) sense of dharma or duty (responsibility). With inscrutability, one lives without any of the (normal) personal insecurities (ego), living not to please others but to serve humanity in the broader sense (of participation in the way). With inscrutability, one lives without hope or expectation, confident in the way and confident in one’s relationship to the way (more properly without even the distinction of separation).



Commentary No. 898

Occult Reticence

Reticence is defined as the state of being reserved, inclined to silence, and/or restrained in expression, presentation, or appearance. Such is properly the condition of the spiritual student, who is naturally contemplative, inclined to speak only purposively, and who is free from the (ego) needs indicated by any behavior that calls attention to oneself as a personality. To the world, the spiritual student may be perceived as uncommunicative, but in fact, the spiritual student properly is quite communicative, albeit in more subtle ways than the ways of the world (i.e., he (she) may not appear to speak much, but he (she) is continually if not continuously constructively sharing energy, consciously or unconsciously). His or her “self-restraint” is properly a natural matter, without contrivance or self-suppression.

Occult reticence or silence has been defined as “the making of no claims with regard to oneself or one’s work; a withdrawal of attention to inner group purpose and plan. Disciples are taught to make light of their personality standing, while exalting the nature of their inner God, identical in all people, and to refrain from speech unless it serves group purpose by stimulating the highest aspects in every person. Occult reticence leads to detachment from the form nature, and to identification with the soul.” More properly, occult reticence follows from such detachment and identification. All claims-making is a matter of ego (the personality-centered nature) and serves no purpose other than to sustain the separation of the personality (mind) (ego) from his (her) soul. Truth is never a matter of authority or apparent source. Likewise the standing of the disciple or advanced student is really of no concern to anyone, for without ego, these distinctions are merely pragmatic.

The advanced student is characterized in part by his or her degree of purification (higher qualification) (refinement) (upliftment) [which is also an indication of relative detachment from the form nature]. But the real mark of the advanced student is the extent of egolessness. That egolessness is indicated by a variety of characteristics common to those who are beginning to touch the soul (or who are more or less consistently expressing their higher nature). The advanced student goes beyond frivolousness to seriousness, while retaining an innate (albeit quiet) cheerfulness. The advanced student is necessarily more quiet, as the voice of the soul can only be heard in the silence of the mind. The advanced student is necessarily more contemplative, as he or she is an observer on several planes of consciousness, and a contemplative nature allows the higher nature to work more effectively through the lower nature.

The first sense of occult reticence, then, is that which the mind (personality) undertakes (of its own accord) as it approaches the soul. The second sense of occult reticence is that which is evoked by the soul within the responsive mind (personality). The advanced student is simply not personality-centered (self-centered); for being personality-centered (self-centered) blocks the flow of energy (higher qualification) from the soul. That flow is a triple-manifestation of light, love, and power (purpose) (vitality), that further tempers the personality nature and brings about the distinctive reticence (second sense) of the serious student.

Occult reticence is not really a goal or objective of the spiritual student (as are many other aspects of the path), but occult reticence is increasingly a manifestation of the student's evolving character, and temperament, and quality. In the final analysis, the student is simply reflecting the nature of the soul.

† Commentary No. 899

Energy Levels 2

The value of the perspective that embraces energy levels and energy quality, life as waveforms, progress in terms of energy balance, etc., lies in the resulting detachment from the ordinary (limited and limiting) personal-spatial-temporal perspective, enabling the student to reach higher and more practical energy levels without being inhibited or constrained (or deluded) by the ordinary perspective. Moreover, the energy perspective is simply more real, being closer to the truth of the way things are rather than the way things appear to the senses.

For the human being, in or out of incarnation, energy quality (in the higher sense) refers to the states of consciousness characterized in terms of quality rather than in terms of magnitude or "level" per se. The human being is seen to be an energy resonance (localization) within the lifewave that is humanity (the wave of human experience and expression). There are many ways to characterize the various states of consciousness, but quality is the more fundamental way, as it illustrates the underlying evolutionary nature of consciousness. Other measures (e.g., intellectual development) do not necessarily indicate or reflect either quality of consciousness or evolutionary achievement, whereas quality of consciousness is relatively more permanent and relatively more integral to a person's progress.

Even on etheric levels, one can view the entire framework of existence (experience and expression) (manifestation) [on etheric levels] in terms of a universal flow of energy (prana) from the logos, embracing the planetary scheme and all lives and forms therein. How one responds to that flow (on various levels) determines one's vitality and one's energy balance. Some are primarily passive energy-wise, receiving and assimilating energy without sharing, while

some are more active in receiving, transforming, and sharing the energy. Those who accumulate energy tend to weaken thereby, while those who share tend to have a more or less unlimited throughput of energy, ever remaining fully vitalized and uninhibited. In this sense, energy level refers to the relative abundance of energy for one's apparent needs or intentions.

With increasing quality of consciousness, that process of energy receipt, transformation, and sharing is improved and enhanced such that one becomes an active force of inductive encouragement for others, albeit primarily incidentally (naturally and without contrivance or imposition). Some (spiritual students) work primarily on etheric levels, directly with prana or maya. Some work primarily on astral levels, providing coherence and stability within the field of glamour. While others work primarily (and analogously) on concrete mental levels (within the field of illusion).

But while the planar level of consciousness (i.e., physical, emotional, mental) is relevant, it is the sub-planar level of consciousness on the respective plane that is (relatively more) important, because it is the sub-planar level that indicates quality. On each plane, the higher sub-planes are more refined and reflect the higher quality of consciousness within that level. Low energy quality implies polarization on one of the lower planes and sub-polarization on one of the lower sub-planes, while high energy quality implies polarization on one of the higher planes and sub-polarization on one of the higher sub-planes. Sub-polarization is actually a misnomer, as one's sub-planar energy level tends to vary more or less temperamentally with circumstances, although the (mentally-polarized) disciple tends to be more coherent and stable in this sense than the (emotionally-polarized) aspirant.

Consecration

Consecration is defined as the process (act or ceremony) of consecrating (or the state of being consecrated), of ceremonially dedicating some person or object to or for some general or particular (preferably sacred or altruistic) objective or purpose. In occult work, it is fairly common practice to magnetize or otherwise qualify some object for some particular purpose. Where that qualification constitutes a consecration, i.e., an effective religious or spiritual qualification, then the process is dramatically enhanced thereby.

Consecration is fundamentally an association of purposive, "good" energy with some object or place. A properly consecrated object retains its magnetization or qualification much longer than would otherwise be the case, and can be periodically renewed as appropriate. A consecrated object that is transferred to another person will naturally convey to that person the intended qualified energy, at least to the extent that the recipient is responsive thereto. Any physical object can be consecrated, although magnetic properties vary and more or less energy may be required depending on those properties. Any place can be effectively consecrated, particularly so if the consecrated qualification of a place (room, church, office, etc.) is reinforced by the exclusive utilization for consecrated purpose (as in the case of a meditation chapel) or by periodic (daily) qualification.

In a sense, one's aura naturally and passively qualifies every object within its field. If the qualification process is more conscious and more deliberate (either by virtue of affirmation, visualization, or some other (more effective) focusing technique (e.g., etheric touch reinforced by coherent emotional and mental focus)), then the object is more actively (fully) magnetized or qualified. If the qualification process involves higher evocation (e.g., (1) in group formation as in group meditation on the mental plane or (2) the active involvement of the soul or divine self), then the effectiveness is maximized (of course that is not possible for any "personal" intentions, as the soul will only respond to the more noble (impersonal) invocations). The "power" of a church or its priests derives in a large measure from consecration, sustained or enhanced through group ritual.

Wherever there is purposive repetition and group (collective) intonement or participation, there is enhancement.

Consecration can also refer to people as well as objects, as in the ceremonial (religious) vestment of (consecrated) powers and in the sense of self-consecration where one deliberately consecrates one's own aura and consciousness for some noble and continuing purpose. The spiritual student properly frequently invokes (and evokes) the ritual (and power) of self-consecration, in order to focus the lower (personality) life and consciousness on the higher purpose and associated activities (service), in self-purification and refinement, in overcoming maya (glamour) (illusion), and in achieving and maintaining freedom from mundane and personal absorption.

Consecration in another, related (higher, greater) sense is "the complete surrender of the whole personality to control by the soul, the sacrifice of the human personality will (man's own selfishness) to some special service." This is what happens, necessarily and inevitably, once the soul has consecrated itself to the spiritual path. The personality must then, eventually, respond in kind to that higher commitment by consecrating itself to the soul. Once a person has touched the soul there is no going back entirely to the self-deluded state, for there will result periodic reminders of one's true nature and an increasingly compelling urge toward union with the soul.



Index I

Ahamkara 1	117
Ahamkara 2	134
Articulation 1	54
Articulation 2	56
Articulation 3	57
Articulation 4	59
Avatars	6
Awareness and Thinking	69
Awareness of Personality 1	21
Awareness of Personality 2	22
Awareness of Personality 3	24
Awareness of Personality 4	31
Beyond Discipline 1	119
Beyond Discipline 2	121
Beyond Egoism	32
Bias 1	41
Bias 2	42
Bias 3	44
Bodily Polarity 1	101
Bodily Polarity 2	102
Body Logic, The	4
Consecration	166
Contrivance	122
Convection 2	7
Cosmic Fire 69	19
Cosmic Fire 70	26
Cosmic Fire 71	34
Cosmic Fire 81	104
Cosmic Fire 82	106
Cosmic Fire 83	107
Cosmic Fire 84	124
Cosmic Fire 85	126
Cosmic Fire 86	142
Cosmic Fire 87	144
Cosmic Fire 88	146
Dawn, The	136

Index 2

Democracy	36
Descension or Reflection 1	109
Descension or Reflection 2	111
Descension or Reflection 3	112
Dispassion	151
Dissociation 1	71
Dissociation 2	72
Echo of the Soul, The	37
Emotional and Mental Health	84
Energy Levels 2	164
Expectation 1	14
Expectation 2	16
Fire Elementals	64
Fires of Evolution 1, The	51
Fires of Evolution 2, The	52
Focus and Attention	74
Food and Strength	76
Great Realization, The	141
Greater Work 1, The	152
Greater Work 2, The	154
Greater Work 3, The	156
Incarnation and Pralaya	17
Inscrutability	161
Learning and Experience 1	127
Learning and Experience 2	129
Light, Love, and Power 1	1
Light, Love, and Power 2	2
Lotus-Heart, The	114
Man as Creator	66
Mantra for Goodness, A	67
Mantric Repetition	147
Music and Magic 1	131
Music and Magic 2	132
Nature of Magic, The	82
Objectivity 1	137
Objectivity 2	139

Index 3

Occult Reticence	162
Pledge-Fever	86
Points of Light	149
Purpose of Life 1, The	27
Purpose of Life 2, The	29
Ring of Truth, The	39
Rules for Magic 1	96
Rules for Magic 2	97
Rules for Magic 3	99
Seeking and Self-Realization	87
Seven Schools of Yoga 1	61
Seven Schools of Yoga 2	62
Spiritual Retreatment 1	46
Spiritual Retreatment 2	47
Svadharna	49
Tarot 1, The	157
Tarot 2, The	159
Teachers and Self-Will	77
Thinking and Feeling	89
Time and Eternity	79
Unanswered Questions	91
Unquestioned Answers	92
Value Systems 1	9
Value Systems 2	11
Value Systems 3	12
Will Aspect and Creation, The	81
Withdrawal of Consciousness 1	94
Withdrawal of Consciousness 2	116

