



The Upper Triad Material

Commentaries X

Edited by Peter Hamilton

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Commentaries X

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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 X was written by Upper Triad staff members.

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

Additional Caveat

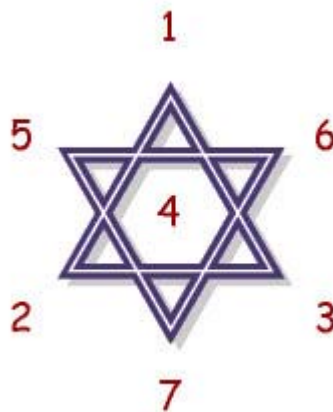
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There is a place, deep within the heart, where we touch God, and where God touches us, where human hearts achieve communion, with God, and with one another, there being no difference, no space between us.

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

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



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Antahkarana

The personality or lower self (on physical, emotional, and concrete mental levels) is ever linked to the soul or higher self (on abstract mental, intuitional (buddhic), and atmic levels). But for virtually all of humanity, that link is indirect in the sense that the waking consciousness has no conscious awareness or responsiveness to the soul and in the sense that the soul is therefore not concerned with the personality life (except in the general, assimilative sense). Consequently, the “presence” of higher life is only dimly and indirectly (unconsciously) perceived by the vast majority of humanity and virtually all of humanity live and work in this world asleep to the higher nature and the reality of God.

Those who approach the spiritual path and thereby begin to discover the higher reality for themselves embark upon the way with increased responsibilities and new-found objectives. One of the objectives of the aspirant or spiritual student is to build the antahkarana. The antahkarana is “the path or bridge between the higher and lower minds, between the higher self and the personality. This is built by the aspirant himself of mental matter. It is built out of the awareness of and response to higher spiritual energies.” The disciple is, then, in this sense, one who has developed this bridge in consciousness and in whom there is a direct flow of quality (consciousness) between the soul and the higher (more responsive) aspects of the personality.

The antahkarana is built almost indirectly and incidentally, as the aspirant focuses attention on the path and associated activities (service and self-development). As the student overcomes the materialism and egoism of the personality, as he or she refines the personality and integrates its aspects into a single, responsive whole, the antahkarana is naturally evoked into being and begins to serve as a channel for the higher qualification. The soul remains unconcerned with the personality as a personality, but is increasingly “present” in the sense of more direct qualification. As the antahkarana is built, the student undergoes a natural transformation and acceleration of nature (character, temperament, and values) and associated activities.

The antahkarana is not only a link within oneself, between the higher and lower aspects of the person. The antahkarana is also a bridge between the personal individuality (waking consciousness of the personality) and humanity and all of life, by virtue of the fact of the unity of the soul on its level (i.e., the individuality of the soul is simply an apparent (not particularly real) localization in a broader consciousness).

The keys to the building of the antahkarana are intelligent (higher) aspiration, meditation, and service. The lower (devotional) aspiration builds the foundation for the antahkarana, but the antahkarana per se cannot be built without the higher (integrated) aspiration to provide the causal flow (momentum), without intelligent meditation to stabilize and qualify the whole (lower) self, and genuine service to evoke (warrant) the interest of the soul. The antahkarana is first and foremost a bridge of consciousness for energy conveyance, as the soul begins to more directly qualify the personality as an instrument for sharing the higher energy. This is all part of the evolutionary process, as encouragement for humanity is conveyed primarily through those spiritual workers who are able to respond more or less consciously to that higher qualification and actually radiate the love and light of the higher self on lower (concrete mental and emotional) levels. Thus the antahkarana is the bridge of light and love (and life in the higher sense).

† Commentary No. 902

Chaos

Chaos is defined conventionally as a state of things in which chance is supreme, the confused unorganized state of primordial matter before the creation of distinct forms, and heterogeneous agglomeration. Occultly (metaphysically), exoterically chaos is more properly defined as a characteristic of the lowest, least organized, and least structured state of manifestation, i.e., the field of chaos which constitutes the lower three worlds of physical, emotional, and mental existence (the principal realm of human experience and expression), while esoterically chaos is more properly defined as the highest, least organized, and least structured state of manifestation (i.e., the state of lack of manifestation and the state of underlying causes for manifestation).

In a sense, the lowest and highest states of manifestation are the least structured (most stochastic), and yet within the least structured states there is still an underlying structure. But that underlying structure (at the extremes) is not so apparent, as it resides in the laws of chaos which govern how the chaotic behavior of things proceeds. In between the highest and lowest states there is a measure of imposed structure that varies by level and sequence (state) of manifestation, but the structure is primarily in the form of qualification of the periodic nature of manifestation and in the various laws relating causes and effects. Even where structure is imposed, the underlying chaos persists in playing its role.

Over all is the teleological qualification of manifestation that conditions everything, all life, all consciousness, and all form. Beginning with first principles of creative manifestation, laws are evoked and manifestation proceeds. As manifestation proceeds further, the "substance" of manifestation qualified by the precursory laws evokes additional (subsidiary) laws which further condition the manifested life (consciousness) (form). In short, manifestation proceeds through the emission of life and the qualification of manifestation by evoked laws. But one thing leads to another, and a whole panorama of broad and diverse manifestation is accomplished thereby. Yet all proceeds and persists within the context of the underlying chaos and subject to the laws of chaos. What appears to be random is (in the spatial-temporal perspective) nonetheless the consequence of precursory activity, however significant or otherwise it may be.

In fact, chaos does not convey confusion. What appears to be the confused state of (some levels of) manifestation is simply coherence of a different order, unfamiliar to our external (normal and para-normal) senses. Thus the organization or structure of manifestation embraces chaos and draws upon the order of chaos. According to James Gleick, "Nature forms patterns. Some are orderly in space but disorderly in time, others are orderly in time but disorderly in space." Our perception of space and time leads us to draw misleading conclusions about the nature and patterns of manifestation. But when and as we rise above the limitations of space-time, we begin to perceive the underlying (higher) order of life, the (intermediate) order of consciousness, and the (lower) order of form.

Chaos is randomness, but only in accordance with the patterns of chaos (underlying manifestation). The “hand” of God remains within the works, however subtle that may be. Chaos is essential to the working out of the plan, for it allows things to fall into place, for without chaos everything would be wholly deterministic and contrived. But with chaos there is freedom (free will) and genuine creative evolution, within the bounds of law.

† Commentary No. 903

Inner and Outer Senses

Sense is the faculty of perceiving by means of sense organs. The traditional human senses include hearing, smell, taste, touch, and vision. The so-called psychic senses are merely extensions of these functions into the super-physical realms (etheric, astral, and concrete mental) by means of analogous sense organs. All of these (physical and psychical) are considered “outer” senses in the sense that they rely on organic (physical and super-physical) means and are focused on external phenomena.

There are a number of problems or challenges associated with the outer senses, not the least of which is the self-deception involved in accepting sense impressions as factual reality (rather than merely indicators of reality but having inherent distortion). All of the outer senses rely on material means (organs) and material methods (perception by virtue of sense-impression followed by (largely unconscious) interpretation). Reliance (merely or predominantly) on the outer senses means continuing the absorption in the outer or external world (and its inherent delusion of separateness (individuality)). The psychic senses certainly (potentially) broaden the range of perception, but it remains “external” and usually leads to even greater self-deception in the sense that one falsely believes thereby that one “understands” what is being perceived. The psychic senses are notoriously misleading because without effective training the psychic observer allows all sorts of personal factors to distort and influence the perception, leading to further confusion (and compounded by the fact of not realizing that one is confused).

Even ordinary sense perception is filtered (conditioned) (distorted) by personal factors (the aura) (and largely unconscious assumptions, beliefs, character, desires, expectations, experience, feelings, habits, knowledge, memory, temperament, values, etc.) so that one tends to hear (see) (feel) (smell) (taste) (touch) [perceive] what one wants to and without realization of that “wanting” and its inherent distortion of reality. This is further compounded by language and the (false) assumption of common understanding.

All of these (outer) senses are contrasted with the various inner senses which are largely undeveloped and unrealized by the bulk of humanity. The “inner” senses are those which do not rely primarily on artificial (organic) means for perception and which are not focused (primarily) on external circumstances (impressions). For the inner senses to be developed and effectively utilized, one must be free from the preponderance of delusion implied by or conveyed with reliance on the outer senses, psychic or otherwise. Examples of “inner” senses are discernment (discrimination) and intuition. Both rely on the (refined and uplifted) mind for brain-registration (conscious awareness) but are essentially a matter of understanding and realization rather than “feeling” in the emotional sense or rationalization in the concrete mental sense. Both discernment and intuition (direct realization) are effective in inverse proportion to ego, as it is the ego which traditionally blinds and blocks the inner senses. Of course the outer senses are also more effective where the aura is clear and unbiased by personal factors (material absorption) (personality-centeredness) (self-centeredness) (ego).

The key to effective utilization of the outer senses is the development and primary reliance on the inner senses, while the key to effective utilization of the inner senses is freedom from the bias conveyed by the (personal) aura. As long as one has any mental or emotional attachment, one is not free. In freedom (humility) comes clarity, discernment, and direct (self) realization.

Ordering

As part of the great illusion of materialism (egoism), the sense of separateness in time and space, there is for many people the false notion that cause precedes effect, that the ordering of things is sequential in time (and space), that such ordering can only occur in one direction (forward in time and outward in space). However, in general, ordering is possible in virtually any direction. It is only our conditioning as personalities imbedded in time and space that inhibits our perception (and consequent realization) of multi-dimensional and multi-directional space-time.

Some, like P.D. Ouspensky, have quite usefully considered the spatial-temporal dimensional nature of things, reasoning from one-to-two-to-three-to-four dimensions and seeing how space and time can be perceived in various ways (e.g., in the form of angles in the absence of depth (higher-dimensional) perception) (e.g., how time can be viewed spatially and vice versa) and how one's spatial-temporal limitations condition us to think along certain lines (and ultimately, how one can or should proceed to overcome those limitations). But reasoning is not realization. And assuming that greater (higher) dimensions are merely extensive is misleading. Yet if one integrates in consciousness, over all of space and time, one can approach the reality (realization) of that (within us) which lives beyond mere space-time.

This notion of integrated time (space) is crucial to approaching the consciousness of the soul, for the soul is not as imbedded in space-time as the personality (mind) (ego). The mind-brain perceives only very dimly (partially) and is almost hopelessly conditioned by the habits developed by virtue of involutory and evolutionary experience. The mind tends to see things sequentially, and if the mind is able to reason then the mind tends to correlate things (naturally and usefully but incorrectly) according to perceived (assumed) sequential cause and effect. All of the present circumstances can be rationalized on the basis of previous (perceived) experience. And yet, from the standpoint of the soul, all of time (and space) has already been revealed. There is not at that level any notion of time or space. For the (integrated) whole is, necessarily, something else entirely.

The perception or realization of order (sequential or unidirectional flow) is based entirely on convenience (conditioned reality). Things are ordered only from this (worldly, personal) perspective. This is not to exclude any underlying causation, of action and consequence, of cause and effect, but to broaden one's perception of these things and processes. What is greater (more real) than cause and effect is quality and relationship. To approach the soul one must necessarily become like the soul, e.g., more refined and less personal (free from coarseness or materialism), more free (from conditioning) and less inhibited by space-time and the notions of individuality and separateness. In short, the soul can only be approached on its terms and on its level.

It does not really matter whether or not any or all of this is true (the actual truth will not change by virtue of one's agreement or disagreement (and the actual truth will be realized eventually)). What matters is that we remain open-minded, that we allow our minds to embrace the possibilities of things and processes that are not biased or conditioned by our experience, our beliefs, our habits of thinking. Thus only is there the possibility of learning, of growing, of realization. And as one rises above the limitations of spatial-temporal consciousness, then only is there real appreciation for the ordering of things (as one realizes that beyond the spatial-temporal realm there is no ordering).

† Commentary No. 905

Rapid Alignment

Rapid alignment is a meditative technique for bringing about a presumed alignment of the integrated personality with the overshadowing (underlying) soul (atma-buddhi-manas) rather quickly, enabling the student to proceed with the work of the meditation and/or to quickly evoke an aligned state preventative of mundane absorption, without much effort (time) (distraction) with the preliminaries of meditation. Students who subscribe to the concept of rapid alignment tend toward relatively short meditation periods of intensive activity rather than longer periods of sustained but less intensive effort. There are advantages and disadvantages to rapid alignment, depending on the student and his or her measure of understanding and ability.

One problem is that rapid alignment tends to ignore the purification (self-qualification) (refinement) element that is preliminary to more conventional meditation. That is okay if the (presumed) alignment is real, for in that case the soul energy evoked effectively accomplishes the purification activity, more or less incidentally to the meditation proper. And that is quite attractive, as the purification activity is precluded as a distraction in consciousness (the disciple should not ignore continual self-qualification and further refinement, but should be relatively more focused on the work (service)). The problem is that if the alignment is not real, but merely presumed, then the purification activity tends to be ignored entirely, and for those who are not aligned or who cannot achieve alignment that purification activity is (or should be) important.

This problem is potentially compounded in that most people seeking rapid alignment (a) do so because they are "lazy" and/or presume (falsely) that they are "beyond" need of the preliminaries and (b) have no way of really knowing whether or not they have achieved alignment (and, in fact, most of them are not aligned but believe (falsely) that they are aligned). If one is truly aligned, then one knows it. But if a student is not aligned, the student tends to believe (falsely) that he or she is aligned and (believe that he or she) knows so (falsely). On the other hand, for one who truly knows alignment, the techniques of rapid alignment are quite potent. But to act as if something is so, believing that it is so, without it really being so, is self-deceptive (albeit creatively so).

Yet (proper) alignment is simply not (effectively) possible for one who is not both integrated as a personality (being necessarily mentally polarized) and purified (qualified) (refined) to the point where the personality is responsive and receptive to the soul energy. Since most people (aspirants) (spiritual students) have no real grasp (intellectually or otherwise) of what the soul is, and since the mind tends to masquerade as the soul, many believe rather falsely in their own alignment. All the more reason for cultivating honesty and self-honesty. As the student matures in this sense, the honest and accurate perception of one's alignment (or lack thereof) is realized and progress can then be made toward effectively achieving (or maintaining) that alignment.

What is alignment is perceived rather differently by different people (and their respective schools). In a rather superficial sense, the spiritual student has some

measure of soul contact or qualification, simply by virtue of being a spiritual student (having become responsive enough to make some sort of commitment to the way). But “real” alignment is a matter of much more obvious infusion of the soul’s energy (potency) and tends to persist based upon the student’s overall quality of consciousness. Rapid alignment then refers simply to the exercise of renewing or strengthening the alignment.

† Commentary No. 906

Secrecy

Throughout history and in the context of the occult path there have been secret societies and the perception of secrets to be safeguarded and/or realized depending on one’s point of view. A great deal of misunderstanding exists in these matters, leading to all sorts of notions which distract the seeker from that which is needed (e.g., character-building and service).

Occult or esoteric knowledge is simply that body of knowledge that remains hidden from the bulk of humanity, not by virtue of any intention on the part of occult societies or the spiritual hierarchy, but by virtue of man’s inability to accept or comprehend this knowledge. As man’s ability to accept and understand “truth” grows, that which was esoteric becomes exoteric (at least for him). The deeper (greater) (higher) truths become self-evident as one gradually achieves self-mastery and overcomes the limitations inherent in ordinary human existence, as one progresses or evolves in consciousness, and as one develops the ability to actively (consciously and deliberately) embrace higher reality. In this process, nothing is deliberately hidden from the student. All of the truth lies within the human being and is available to the extent of his or her abilities.

There are and have been many so-called secret societies or occult organizations (most having questionable credentials (i.e., of less than noble character)) which have glamorized whatever fragments of the metaphysical or theosophical knowledge and understanding they have realized and which have glamorized the fact of their existence and the fact of their knowledge and (presumed) understanding. For the most part, these societies and organizations are merely imitating the real occult organizations which remain hidden for practical

reasons rather than any sense of exclusiveness, superiority, or other such (foolish) notions. Such organizations remain secret only because there is no need for revelation. Their knowledge or understanding remains secret only because man is unprepared to embrace it, and certainly not by virtue of withholding (truth ever persists (availably) within the field of consciousness).

Esoteric knowledge does not require safeguarding. Esoteric knowledge is by its very nature self-safeguarded. Telling someone a higher "truth" (that is beyond his or her comprehension) simply serves no purpose (not to mention the possibility that one's own understanding may be flawed). For the most part human language remains insufficient for expressing the higher truths. Man simply has no basis (experience) for understanding that which is esoteric. As man acquires that basis (experience, language (concepts), etc.), the higher knowledge and understanding come naturally. The keys to revelation are (1) the ready availability of the outer (deeper) knowledge (that which can be written or discussed) to those who are ready (and thereby seek appropriately) and (2) the ready availability of the inner (deeper) knowledge (that which can only be grasped subjectively) to one who effectively turns within. These two aspects balance each other and afford everyone an equal opportunity, to the extent of their qualification (preparedness).

The idea that the "higher" truths are dangerous and must be withheld from those who are not "pure" enough is also misleading. Higher truth does convey potential power, but those who are ill-prepared are generally those who have not the ability to utilize that knowledge effectively (for good or ill). Real understanding (and real ability to utilize knowledge) comes with refined temperament, such that "truth" is never dangerous in any higher or fundamental sense, although truth ever conveys consequence (as un-truth ever conveys even greater (albeit non-progressive) consequence).

Self-Remembering

In the Gurdjieff-Ouspensky philosophical “system” there are four (lower or personality) states of consciousness, (1) the sleeping state, (2) the waking state, (3) the state of self-remembering, and (4) the objective state. In this context, the sleeping state is that of ordinary sleep, the waking state is the state of sleep associated with the ordinary waking-consciousness, the state of self-remembering is the state of awareness in consciousness (in contrast with the superficial awareness (sleep) of the ordinary waking-consciousness), and the objective state is seeing things as they really are (in a comprehensive sense), rather than as they (merely) appear to be.

Of relatively great import is the double realization that (1) virtually everyone is asleep virtually all of the time (i.e., the ordinary waking state is entirely mechanical in nature and anyone in that state has no awareness of that fact (at least at that time)) and (2) the real and immediate evolutionary objective of the bulk of humanity is the achievement of self-consciousness. In this context, while virtually everyone thinks that he or she is self-conscious, in fact virtually everyone is merely asleep in mechanical activity and superficial awareness. The achievement of self-consciousness then requires real awareness, the continuous awareness of what one is and how one is.

These ideas are not new. They pre-date the emergence of humanity and have been a part of the ancient wisdom in one form or another (and under various names) for as long as there has been an ancient wisdom. These ideas are crucial to advancement in consciousness. In the broader sense, from any perspective in consciousness there exists a precursory state of consciousness which can be considered waking-sleep (e.g., a flower is “awake” compared with a “sleeping” rock, a dog is “awake” compared with a “sleeping” tree) [and a self-remembering person is “awake” compared with an ordinary human being]. The break-through in consciousness comes with the conscious realization that one is asleep virtually all of the time. From that break-through, one can begin the rather lengthy and difficult process of self-remembering (more correctly, periodically remembering (realizing) that one was asleep and thereby gradually lengthening the “waking” period until one is self-remembering all of the time).

This achievement of self-remembering (self-consciousness) (continual if not continuous awareness) is absolutely essential in overcoming all of the limitations (inertia) of material (egoistic) existence. Without this awareness one is simply enslaved by the mechanical nature of personality-centeredness and all of its associated (mundane and personal) absorptions, attachments, biases, buffers, delusions, desires, feelings, filters, habits, opinions, thoughts, etc. In this sense, one cannot actually “do” anything as long as one is absorbed in (as) a personality. Freedom (real (unencumbered) activity) is attained (revealed) (realized) through self-remembering.

Of course self-remembering goes hand-in-hand with honesty and humility, with humility being the first ray component, self-remembering being the second ray component, and honesty being the third ray component. In this sense self-remembering is the dynamic relationship (realization) (activity) in consciousness afforded to those who are free from the relative delusion (sleep) of material (personality-centered) (egoistic) existence. The effort to self-remember is the bridge in consciousness between the inertia of personality (matter) (mind) (ego) and the progressive (evolutionary) momentum of the spiritual path. Once a student consistently self-remembers, then transition to the objective state is possible.

† Commentary No. 908

The Triple Nature of Karma 1

Karma is that underlying progressive (evolutionary) force which provides focus (balance) within the context of manifestation (incarnation) (karmic law). It is the force associated with cause and effect, of action and consequence, on every level of consciousness. There are three principal aspects to karma which constitute its triple nature. These are samcita (sanchita), prarabdha, and kriyamana.

Samcita karma is the accumulated karma of past (present) (future) lives, or more properly, that unresolved accumulation of karma that is not evoked in the present incarnation or phase of manifestation but which necessarily provides a subtle evolutionary pressure by virtue of its existence. It is in a sense the

potential or non-kinetic dimension of karma, for it is neither active nor passive, but persistent. In another sense it is samcita karma that is the weight or burden of the soul, as by its very existence it prevents the soul from playing an active role in the life of the personality. For as long as there is samcita karma the soul remains predominantly on its own level, in repose, awaiting the development of the personality (lower self) and its eventual responsiveness to the soul (higher self). Samcita karma exists because and to the extent that a person is normally unable to fulfill all of his or her karma in a given lifetime. The action or activity implied in experience generates karma. That which is not or cannot be dealt with presently simply accumulates as samcita.

Prarabdha karma lies in the present (lifetime) and is manifesting karma, that which has commenced, that allotment or measure of karma that is evoked by the soul, which conditions or influences the current circumstances of the soul-in-incarnation (i.e., the personality). The soul evokes a measure of samcita for each lifetime until samcita is exhausted. The measure (prarabdha) is wisely (albeit not consciously) determined based on the ability (evolutionary state) of the person to learn and grow thereby (and the intention of the soul with regard to rate of progress).

Most souls are not concerned with rate of progress and evoke modest measures. Souls upon the spiritual path are more concerned with rate of progress and evoke larger measures in order to prepare the personality for service in the context of the path (of course rate of progress cannot readily be perceived from within an incarnation because it is largely a subjective matter (i.e., the assimilation of experience (on soul levels) may not be apparent to the mind). Prarabdha for those who are not upon the path tends to be modest in terms of overall measure but occasionally dramatic by virtue of the severity of lessons (impressions) warranted. Prarabdha for those who are approaching the path tends to be a larger overall measure, and somewhat more dramatic. Prarabdha for those who are upon the path may be comparable to that of those approaching the path, or more subtle in the case of those who have no great accumulation to deal with.

Kriyamana karma is that which is in the course of making, or "new" karma, from the activity of the person in incarnation. Along with prarabdha karma, kriyamana karma provides the dynamic or kinetic dimension to karma, with prarabdha being the active-present component and kriyamana being the active-

creative-future component. Kriyamana karma is that which is being created and contributes to (and potentially modifies) either prarabdha and/or samcita. Kriyamana is the subtle (anticipatory) evolutionary pressure, while prarabdha is the active “burden-of-the-personality” to be faced at the moment.

† Commentary No. 909

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali constitute one of the great formulations of the ancient wisdom. The Sutras form a synthesis of the science of raja yoga, as compiled in the form of sutras (threads) or aphorisms. These teachings cover the whole field of practical (physical, emotional, and concrete mental) yoga, from hatha yoga to (through) laya yoga to (through) bhakti yoga to (through) raja yoga (kriya yoga) proper, yet concisely and effectively. The Yoga Sutras form a basic system of yoga leading through various (preparatory) stages eventually to “the subjugation of the mental body and the control of the mind.” Ultimately, the Sutras lead to the soul and its unfoldment (the evocation of the soul in the life and consciousness (of the personality) of the spiritual student).

Patanjali was an Indian sage and scholar who assembled (collected) (integrated) the Yoga Sutras in their (its) present formulation. Patanjali was obviously a student of the mysteries. His “system” has now been utilized quite effectively for centuries. The relative timelessness of this formulation indicates its relative freedom from religious practice (and its relative freedom from intellectualization), focusing instead upon spiritual practice as it leads to understanding and wisdom.

Patanjali’s system of aphorisms is a convenient means of registration and conveyance (concisely) of a great deal of useful information. Although subject to translation, interpretation, and exposition, the Sutras represent an important element of the ancient wisdom. Aphorisms are concise statements of principles or terse formulations of truth, defining the wisdom as it is understood. Sutras are strings of precepts or aphorisms which are interrelated and lead forward in consciousness. The Yoga Sutras (aphorisms) are designed to progressively evoke the higher consciousness. As the basic teaching is understood and

practiced, the Sutras lead to the intermediate teaching (and likewise on to the advanced teaching). Like most proper scriptures, the Sutras can be embraced on various levels and applied in various ways.

The Yoga Sutras consist of some 195 or 196 sutras (depending on translation) organized into four books or sections. The first book or section consists of 51 sutras and is entitled variously and deals with yoga and its aims (the problem of union) (samadhi pada) (what is yoga) (the state of yoga). The second book consists of 55 sutras and is entitled variously and deals with yoga and its practices (the steps to union) (sadhana pada) (why one should practice yoga and how one should do so) (the instruments of yoga). The third book consists of 55 or 56 sutras and is entitled variously and deals with powers (union achieved and its results) (vibhuti pada) (internal practice) (the attainments of yoga). And the fourth book consists of 34 sutras and is entitled variously and deals with liberation (illumination) (kaivalya pada) (the fulfillment of yoga).

Numerous translations of the Yoga Sutras have been published, with associated commentary, including The Light of the Soul by Alice A. Bailey; The Science of Yoga by I.K. Taimni; Yoga, The Art of Integration by Rohit Mehta; and How to Know God by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood. Although consideration of the Sutras in the context of the underlying Sanskrit language has some value, the student is urged to place greater emphasis upon subjective understanding and practical application. All paths lead eventually to the soul, some more or less gradually, some forthwith (relatively expediently). The Yoga Sutras, properly embraced (implemented), constitute an effective and expedient means (path).

Transformation

The spiritual path is fundamentally a matter of experience and assimilation of experience, of growth and expansion in consciousness, leading to greater realization, service, etc. Much along the way involves extension and/or expansion, in the sense that what we are to be requires an extension from what we are now and an expansion toward that greater existence. The whole (necessary) process of purification, qualification, refinement, and upliftment is one of extension. The whole process of growth in consciousness from the physical, to and through the emotional, to and through the mental, and beyond, is a matter of expansion built upon the foundation of assimilated experience that allows extension (refinement) in consciousness.

The so-called Masters are (properly) those who have evolved beyond the human stage, who have entered the next kingdom in nature (the kingdom of souls), who have overcome the limitations (sleep) of human existence and who have expanded their consciousness well beyond that of being (merely) human. They do not lose their humanity, but they do lose all of the weaknesses implied in being (merely) human. And they become something greater-than-human. The masters are the real pioneers within and beyond humanity, who, by virtue of their relationship to (within) humanity, draw and inspire humanity onward and upward.

But are the so-called Masters merely extensions of humanity, having greater knowledge, deeper understanding, more power and wisdom? Do they also have expanded or extended egos and all that that implies? No. A human being does not achieve this mastery merely by extension or expansion (growth), although the evolutionary process necessarily includes both extension and expansion in consciousness, they are not sufficient. Mastery proper is achieved through fundamental transformation. The candidate must achieve a self-mastery which conveys a fundamental self-realization. This can only occur through radical change, through transformation of what a person is (as a person) to something else entirely different (yet related to that from which one comes).

This transformation is a fundamental conversion in composition and structure, in character and condition, and in function, a transmutation of the lesser (element) into the greater, a metamorphosis and a transfiguration. This transformation affects and effects the entire personality as the matter which forms each of the several bodies (dense physical, etheric, emotional (astral), and concrete mental) is purified, qualified, refined, and uplifted; as the refined personality is integrated and ultimately transformed in its functional existence from being more or less independent (as an ego) to being wholly infused (changed in its underlying polarization) by the soul. This transformation occurs as the consciousness expands and is transformed (radically) to embrace the underlying unity of all life, not conceptually or intellectually but actually. But (this) transformation cannot occur without (proper) expansion. And (this) expansion cannot occur without (proper) extension. All of the factors (aspects and attributes) of the human being must be fulfilled in order for this transformation to be possible.

Although fundamentally the factors for transformation are extension and expansion of consciousness, the process is necessarily synergistic and holistic. The real keys are the head and heart (and their suitability for transformation). Without temperance and balance, transformation is not possible. Without freedom (from attachments (ideas, beliefs, opinions), materialism, egoism, self-centeredness, etc.) transformation is not possible. In freedom (humility) comes transformation, and awakening from sleep.

† Commentary No. 911

Application

For the majority of people who are either approaching the path or who have embarked upon the way, the principal difficulty or failing is the lack of application of the principles and practices of the path. Naturally the emphasis in the early stages is upon seeking knowledge (understanding) (wisdom), but unless that knowledge (understanding) is applied in the day-to-day life then it serves no real purpose in consciousness. Knowledge without earnest application leaves a person at the intellectual level, absorbingly so.

This application is compounded by the nature of the various stages of the path in which some of the rules vary according to the place upon the path. For example, in the relatively early (and intermediate) stages there is strong encouragement toward learning (in the sense of basic knowledge anent the path) and self-discipline (preparation), while in the relatively later stages there is a stronger emphasis on service (the work). Thus the relative importance of seeking knowledge (understanding) (wisdom) changes along the way, from relatively important (vitaly necessary) to relatively incidental (being a distraction from higher qualification).

This is particularly so with regard to the intellect. The intellect must be developed as an effective instrument of consciousness, but if the student dwells entirely or too long in the intellect, without passing on to the intuitional levels, the student cannot be very responsive to higher qualification. But before that higher responsiveness can be achieved there must be some considerable mental (intellectual) development (properly balanced with self-refinement).

In a sense, the path is a continual process of development and application of various talents and then passing beyond those talents into a higher or deeper realm. Reliance on instinct (feelings) (emotional polarization) must give way to reliance on intellect (mental polarization) which must ultimately give way to reliance on buddhi (intuitional polarization). In each case one develops a capability and applies that capability before passing on. Passing on does not imply loosing the formerly emphasized talents. But it does mean letting go of any associated attachments (habits) at the lower (former) level in order to establish capability (responsiveness) (activity) on the higher level. If one is involved or entangled in (enslaved by) one's feelings, it is very difficult to develop the intellect. Likewise if one is involved or entangled in (enslaved by) the intellect, it is very difficult to develop the intuition. Yet feeling and thinking are still relevant and helpful, but in a higher context and without dominance (involvement) (entanglement) (enslavement). Where there is reliance on the higher faculties (intuition), the lesser (psychic, mental, and emotional) serve instrumentally and not centrally.

The key is passing beyond the mechanicalness of the personality (habits) (conditioning), through dynamic and relative progression. This comes primarily through the continual application of what is learned (known) (understood) and

cannot be accomplished simply by the accretion of knowledge. One who studies and/or meditates somewhat each day, even someone who serves somewhat each day, will not progress significantly or substantially unless the effort is applied on a broader scale and the whole life of the personality is included. The spiritual path is not and cannot be a part-time endeavor, to be embraced at the convenience of personal interests any more than one's religion can be properly embraced by virtue of an hour of superficial worship one day a week. One's values must be applied if they are to be truly assimilated.

† Commentary No. 912

Conversation 1

Conversation may be categorized in a number of ways. One approach is by virtue of nature and quality (rather than subject matter). In this sense there are (in one approach) five levels of conversation: (1) negative, (2) mundane, (3) experiential, (4) philosophical, and (5) cursory.

The first level of conversation is that of negative conversation, that which is destructive, by virtue of one's being actively (directly) or passively (indirectly) aggressive, antagonistic, argumentative, coarse, combative, contrary, critical, deceitful, harsh, hostile, judgmental, opinionated, separative, spiteful, etc. An example of passive negative conversation is gossip, however harmless it may appear to be. This first level is actually retrogressive, as it indicates a step backwards from the normal human state. Depending on the relative strength of the personality, negative conversation is a projection of substantial and forceful energy toward the object (subject) of conversation. And of course one is wholly (consciously or otherwise) responsible for the consequences thereof.

The second (first proper) level of conversation is that of mundane, idle, personal, secular, superficial conversation, which is the norm for the bulk of humanity (in the waking-sleep state). Like the first level, this level implies personality absorption, but unlike the first level, this level implies a lack of the destructive element. However non-destructive, mundane (personal) (secular) (superficial) conversation (chatter) serves no real purpose other than to entertain the personality (mind) (ego) (wasting energy in the process, sustaining one's

absorption (self-deception), and preventing or impeding any growth in consciousness). This does not involve much projection of energy, except in the sense that it definitely qualifies the whole aura and immediate environment with its mundaneness, further contributing to and sustaining the waking-sleep. Those who like to talk are hopelessly mired at this level, regardless of the subject matter.

The third (second proper) level of conversation is experiential in the sense that the subject matter relates to what is being learned from experience and the intention or motive is sincere in that sense of learning (otherwise it is not much different from the strictly mundane). If engaged openly and honestly, without it being merely a glamorous or intellectual exercise, experiential conversation can be quite constructive and helpful (and in some cases even a means of service (e.g., counseling)). The focus and emphasis needs to be on the relevant issues in experience and consciousness, not on the petty details and aspects or objects of curiosity. The third (and fourth) level(s) is (are) inherently projective and constructive, as energy follows thought.

The fourth (third proper) level of conversation is philosophical (spiritual) (theosophical) and is much less personal than the previous level. It relates to principles and concepts, embraced emotionally, mentally, and/or intuitionally according to the ability and capacity (and temperament) of the participants. It should not be a matter of imposition or in the domain of agreement-disagreement (which is really negative conversation disguised as philosophical). It can (and should) be a matter of consideration, of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom (and service), without being personality-centered. As the talent for proper consideration grows (properly) it naturally leads to the fifth level of conversation which is cursory. Conversation is ultimately transformed more into the telepathic regime (i.e., less conversational and more intuitionally), from the concrete to the abstract, from the personal to the impersonal, and beyond.

Disentanglement

While many of the developed capabilities and talents of the personality, such as curiosity, a keen intellect, etc., directly serve the purpose of evolution in consciousness, having served their purpose they then become impediments to further progress because of their absorbing, distracting nature. Most people, for example, function at the instinctive level, relying on physical and emotional sense-impression. As long as a person is entangled or absorbed or englamoured at that level, he cannot move on to intellect. And as long as a person is entangled or absorbed or englamoured in the intellect (and ego), no matter how noble the life may be, he cannot therefore move on to intuition.

The mind by its very nature seeks entanglement. It naturally looks out toward the world, identifies with its worldly or at least personality-centered experience, on whatever level it is polarized. It seeks and achieves attachments and entanglements, by way of personal relationships, by way of sensation-seeking, by way of having beliefs and opinions, by way of dominating the waking-consciousness such that the higher impressions, from the soul, are ignored. Instead of listening, the bulk of humanity are too busy noise-making, through idle or absorbing (petty or egoic) conversation, and through incessant thinking and feeling, being distracted by memory or anticipation (the past (present) (future)), being distracted by interests of various kinds. Even in a life of practical service, the bulk rely on personality-involvement.

But the disciple must pass beyond all of this in order to become responsive to the soul, in order to serve much more effectively, in order to focus on what really matters rather than what the personality thinks or feels matters. The disciple must work toward that state in which he or she does not identify with the body or mind in any way. That lower self must be viewed as an instrument and not as oneself. The focus of attention must be raised to the soul and one must let go of all things associated (identified) with the personality. This does not mean that one must give up all of one's possessions, but that one must no longer be attached to any possessions. Likewise beliefs and opinions.

The disciple must loosen the hold of the personality (mind) (ego) (feelings) (intellect) and its various attachments however noble they may appear to be. And the disciple must learn to listen and observe rather than persist in talking and thinking. The disciple is properly reticent in speaking and thinking. So that speaking and thinking are evoked by the higher energy (of the soul) rather than the lower, absorbing energy of the personality life and its conditioning, habits, and patterns. Of course the disciple must also learn discrimination, to be able to discern the difference between the soul and the masquerading mind, between reality and illusion. The disciple must pass from the unity of the integrated (dominating) (string) (independent) (self-absorbed) personality through the field of duality (personality and soul) and discrimination to the unity of the soul.

Anything that empowers the personality to function independently of the higher self must be disentangled. Anything that interests the personality must ultimately be disentangled. Eventually, the soul can shine through the disentangled (purified, detached, responsive) personality without impediment. That soul functions intuitively, without thinking about what is happening or what needs to be done. Such a person works appropriately, without recourse to conventions, traditions, personality interests, intellect, ego, or any other inhibiting factor. In humility, there is no self-will, there is only the will of the higher self, in the context of the whole of life.

† Commentary No. 914

Intellectual Honesty

The intellect is the rational or reasoning capacity of the mind. The intellect is necessarily superficial in every respect. It consists of the superficial levels of the concrete mind, both conscious and unconscious levels (but nonetheless superficial), and is unable to function in ways other than superficial. It has access to sense-impressions, is somewhat intelligent in its own right (but not particularly so), and operates largely independently of the waking-consciousness or focus of consciousness.

The intellect is directly related to the ego, and both are artificial entities. That artificiality is compounded by identification (of the waking-consciousness with

the intellect) and by its own lack of realization of its artificiality. The intellect is therefore naturally self-absorbed and protective of its apparent existence. It fears the truth about itself and creates protective buffers and barriers. The habits of thinking and feeling (and all other personality conditioning) all contribute to the illusion of independent existence and the (false) potency or superiority of the intellect. The intellect is able to induce and/or manipulate physiological, emotional, and mental activity in support of its (self-centered and/or egoistic) interests.

Although the intellect is a considerable and evolutionarily-intended achievement, it is intended as an effective tool within the mind, and is not an end in itself. Identification with the intellect is a natural stage through which we all pass. But if the intellect is over-developed, overly-relied-upon, or overly-identified-with, then the intellect becomes a rather formidable barrier to higher consciousness (much like over-developed, over-relied-upon, and/or overly-identified-with emotions inhibit proper mental development). A "fair" intellect is one that is trained in logic such that there is a continual awareness of distinctions between facts, assumptions, premises, conclusions, etc. A "good" intellect is one that exhibits intellectual honesty, which realizes the limitations (futility) of logical (rational) (reasonable) thinking, and which is responsive to higher impression (intuition).

The first key to progress in this regard then is intellectual honesty. Intellectual honesty is the recognition and realization of the superficial nature of the intellect and of its inherent limitations. Intellectual honesty is the means by which one can gradually overcome the inherent limitations of the mind (intellect) (ego) and pass beyond the mind to the intuitive levels of the soul. The mind that is filled with its own ideas and/or compounded by assumptions taken as facts, is a mind that is unresponsive to the truth. Thus intellectual honesty also involves intelligent discrimination, emptying the mind of its (false) notions, its habits, its mechanicalness, learning to defer judgment (conclusions) until realization can occur. Of course the intellect will naturally fabricate "realization" to compound matters (and protect itself), but with a commitment to truth one is able to gradually establish an intellectual honesty that allows one to recognize and realize the fallacies of the intellect even as they occur and/or dominate the waking-consciousness.

Intellectual honesty is not so easy to achieve. It requires dedicated persistence (to honesty) over a relatively long period of time. It requires a continual habit of self-observation. It requires the rejection of certainty and the rejection of identification with intellect (certainty is just another form of self-delusion) (certainty is an aspect of close-mindedness). Intellectual honesty does however lead to greater things, such as greater and higher qualification and the dawning of the (spiritual) intuition.

† Commentary No. 915

Racial and Cultural Bias 1

Each human being is conditioned in a number of ways, some preponderantly and directly, and some less so, in more subtle ways (less directly). The principal bias is that which dominates the personality and includes both hereditary and environmental factors. A secondary bias is that which affects the personality from within, being a measure of responsiveness of the personality to the soul. For the bulk of humanity the secondary bias is not apparent, as almost everyone is absorbed (asleep) within the personality field (i.e., within one's own ideas, feelings, activities).

The advanced of humanity are those who have consciously recognized and overcome the various (primary or lesser) biases that play upon or within the personality and who have thereby allowed the secondary or higher bias to emerge. The student needs to understand all of his or her own lower nature, all of the various biases and conditioning, and accomplish the implied self-transformation, all the while continuing to serve (work) within the context of the path. The keys are knowledge (understanding) (wisdom), patience (persistence) (perseverance), and detachment (freedom from entanglement).

Two of the principal biases are racial and cultural. While racial (hereditary) characteristics provide a conditioned basis for various abilitative aspects and attributes (abilities, characteristics, potential along physical, emotional, and mental lines), cultural (environmental) characteristics provide more of a conditioned basis for various perceptive and interpretive aspects and attributes (tendencies). While racial bias is inherent in the genetic (hereditary) basis for incarnation, cultural bias is acquired more so through the cultural (family)

(religious) (personal) environment. Each of the various races within humanity contributes directly to humanity by virtue of its characteristics (physical, emotional, and mental factors) which form a direct and underlying basis.

Each of the various cultures (which may or may not coincide with racial background) contributes directly albeit less obviously, by virtue of its psychological conditioning. In this sense, both family and religious biases are considered to be cultural rather than racial. These racial and cultural biases serve a definite and constructive purpose in the evolutionary development of humanity, but at some point along the way (the spiritual path) one must rise beyond the lesser conditioning in order to be responsive to the higher. Consequently, the masses generally identify with and are naturally entangled in their racial and cultural aspects, while the relatively more advanced within humanity have achieved some relative freedom from these biases and perceive and value things in broader, deeper terms (e.g., humanity as a whole, the soul rather than the personality).

It is essential for the spiritual student to identify and understand all of the various biases affecting oneself as a personality, in part so the student can more fully appreciate, develop, and/or utilize the implied (conveyed) (potential) talents and opportunities, and in part so the student can overcome the implied limitations in consciousness (and ultimately all (worldly or personality) conditioning). Consequently it is also important to distinguish between the various sources of bias as their resolution is generally source-dependent. In the case of cultural biases it is also important to recognize and understand cultural differences as a means of overcoming (or pre-empting) misunderstanding (tension) that results from lack of awareness and lack of appreciation for those (natural) differences.

Racial and Cultural Bias 2

For example, in some cultures direct eye contact is considered offensive or disrespectful, while in other cultures indirect eye contact is considered cowardly or passive-evasive. Of course there is nothing inherently wrong in either case, except (1) where there is imposition (expectation for compliance with cultural biases) and (2) where there is lack of respect or appreciation for differences (i.e., it is wrong to assume that another person consciously or unconsciously subscribes to one's own cultural biases). Racial and cultural biases (while relatively helpful in some relatively narrow context) are inherently superficial and of less value than more universal principles.

One should not judge another on the basis of one's own racial or cultural biases. One racial or cultural bias is not necessarily (or even generally) better than another. Some biases convey moral or ethical values and indicate evolutionary accomplishment (or lack thereof) along some line, but in general the various cultures are comparable in overall achievement (evolution), but not uniformly so (some cultures are "advanced" in some ways (but not in other ways) and other cultures are "advanced" in other ways but not in some ways). For example, the "norm" in one cultural setting may be much more emotionally expressive than in another. Thus, one should be very wary of generalization (and stereotyping).

While racial and cultural biases may pervade a particular group of people, one should not assume that everyone within such a group is comparably (or generally) biased. There are always exceptions, as some people develop or evolve more readily than others (or along different lines) and move beyond their racial and cultural conditioning in advance (or differently) of the bulk of the group. The spiritual student should (in principle) recognize, understand, and appreciate the various racial and cultural biases (while intelligently (consciously and deliberately but not passively) conforming (or respectfully not conforming) appropriately). It is essential for the spiritual student to awaken (and remain awake) and not sleep the waking-sleep of racial and cultural conditioning.

Thus while various racial and cultural biases may be helpful, even necessary at some stage, they ultimately limit further growth in consciousness. The

objective is to see beyond one's bias (superficiality and narrowness), thereby overcoming and transforming limitations into strengths (depth and breadth of perception and understanding), passing into the greater fellowship of humanity (and life) as a whole and toward greater reliance on the soul rather than the imbedded (inertial) personality. Freedom from bias (conditioning) generally leads to a measure of (hopefully intelligent) non-conformity.

Passive conformity to racial and/or cultural (social) expectations is inherently dangerous (not constructive) for the spiritual student as it simply deepens or sustains the waking-sleep. Of course it is also (and even more so) dangerous to openly challenge or to be antagonistic toward those expectations. One must learn and practice diplomacy, wherever possible, without losing one's commitment and adherence to the higher principles (and practices). For example, one can, in principle, be a non-smoking, non-drinking, vegetarian surrounded by smoking, drinking, meat-eating fellows, without being antagonistic. Thus one should neither impose on others or allow others to impose on one. Yet ever one must realize the underlying unity of all, so that one's relative freedom from racial and cultural bias is inherently constructive (and not separative). Such is the challenge.

† Commentary No. 917

Sadguru

"The sadguru is the teacher or guru within. Any sense of an external guru is, if true, principally a reflection of one's inner guru." Many insist that a guru is necessary to one's spiritual development or unfoldment, that one cannot either safely or effectively embrace the ancient wisdom or spiritual practice without such an advisor. However, this notion is an indication of the first (more historical) stage or phase of spiritual approach where reliance upon a teacher may be necessary in order for the student to develop right focus.

An (external) teacher may be helpful or appropriate in a number of ways, particularly where the student lacks sufficient will (or discrimination) or lacks the inner resources to proceed effectively, and particularly in the absence of widespread availability of philosophical (spiritual) (theosophical) materials. But there are also dangers inherent in external teacher relationships, e.g., in the

student's lack of discrimination with regard to selection or acceptance of a teacher, in the student's reliance on the external teacher at the expense of reliance on the divinity within, in the potential undermining of the student's ability to think for oneself, etc. Also there is the factor of glamour, which often colors the whole process. Yet even so, there are times and circumstances in which some measure of reliance upon an external teacher is appropriate.

More properly, in the esoteric philosophy (in the second and third stages of spiritual approach), there is no reliance on external teachers or gurus, although all whom we meet upon the path are considered to be teachers en passant (i.e., non-authoritative teachers from whom or with whom there is potential learning, yet ever with self-responsibility). With the widespread availability of the basic and intermediate teachings and with an emerging sense of discretion (discrimination) and self-reliance, it is more appropriate for most people upon the path to look inwardly for (impersonal) guidance, from the soul and conscience rather than from external teachers or through reliance on the (superficial) intellect.

In the second stage there is a natural and emerging self-reliance in the lower sense of reliance on one's personal (lower, superficially independent) resources (ego, intellect, mind, personality), while in the third stage there is a more natural self-reliance in the higher sense of humility and subordination to the (wisdom and quality of the) soul, as the strength of personality (ego) (mind) (intellect) yields to the greater strength (depth and breadth) (impersonality) (wisdom and quality) of the higher self. The student must learn to make his own decisions and accept responsibility for the consequences. Ultimately, one must learn to accept the inner authority as the only authority. Sadguru is the light of the soul as embraced by the mind and heart of the personality. It is the conscience or reservoir of assimilated experience (knowledge, understanding, wisdom) that resides on causal (soul) levels (atma-buddhi-manas). It is the voice of the silence, the quality of (higher) consciousness that speaks without sound or thought or words. "There is no authority higher than Truth."

And yet, there is great difficulty in beginning (learning) to listen to the God-voice within (and learning to discern that God-voice from the pretenses of the ego-intellect). Therefore intelligent association with other spiritual students and teachers can be quite helpful in the sense of the continual reminding of

oneself of one's (higher) self. In this sense, sadguru emerges in the context of sangha (spiritual community) which leads in turn to sadguru.

† Commentary No. 918

The Triple Nature of Karma 2

Together samcita-prarabdha-kriyamana wholly condition the incarnation, providing the circumstances, ordering, internal and external factors, etc. for all of life's experiences and opportunities for expression, from the subtle and indirect pressure of samcita through the direct pressure of prarabdha, to the dynamic dimension of kriyamana.

In addition to the triple nature of karma (samcita-prarabdha-kriyamana), prarabdha is also of triple nature in the sense of there being essentially three kinds of karma-to-be-faced-in-the-present-life. These are dradha, adradha, and dradhadradha. Dradha karma is that which is fixed and unavoidable, immutable. It provides certain keynotes or milestones within the incarnation, factors and circumstances that remain fixed. Adradha karma is that which is not fixed and is therefore avoidable in the sense of being changeable, either in timing, scope, or intensity. And dradhadradha karma is that which is both fixed and not fixed, being more fixed than adradha but less fixed than dradha.

And yet, in no case is any karma evadable. That which cannot be modified is simply faced, for whatever it conveys in the way of factors, circumstances, lessons, etc. That which can be modified (by kriyamana) cannot be evaded, but the experience can be hardened or tempered by virtue of our attitude toward it (which is, after all, the proper essence of kriyamana (toward prarabdha)). If we approach our conditioning (internal and external factors) and our circumstances (and thereby our experience) in an open-minded, responsive manner, then we learn and grow in consciousness as we fulfill our (prarabdha) karma. If, on the other hand, we seek to evade or ignore the afforded opportunities and lessons, then the karmic (evolutionary) pressure continues inexorably (if not with even greater intensity), albeit potentially in new and different ways and with new and different means.

The distinction between dradha and adradha is relatively clear. But dradhadradha requires considerable effort for either modification or transcendence (fulfillment). If one does nothing in response, it is as if it were dradha. But if one applies sufficient intelligent (honest, open-minded) effort toward resolution, then it is as if it were adradha. In practice, prarabdha is a combination of these three dimensions, with some aspects being fixed, some being not-fixed, and others being fixed-not-fixed. Likewise, for most people, "karma" is really a combination of samcita-prarabdha-kriyamana. The key is responsiveness. If one is responsive, then the karmic dimension is broader and deeper. If one is non-responsive, then the karmic dimension is relatively narrow and fixed (measured). Similarly, those who sleep through their lives on earth are continually creating new karma by virtue of their associative conditioning, while those who are more-or-less awake are simply (with kriyamana) resolving their (samcita-prarabdha) karma without creating new entanglements.

While prarabdha-kriyamana is continuous, as considerable progress along the path is achieved, samcita is gradually reduced and eventually eliminated and prarabdha-kriyamana becomes the dominant (creative) factor for the soul's emergence into activity (expression). But when the person (focus of consciousness) emerges into the consciousness of the soul, then one simply acts from that state of being, without the entanglements of karma. The whole process of karma, the law of action (the personality) (the astrological domain of personality-centeredness), is then fully superseded by dharma, the law of being (the soul).

Samadhi Pada 1

The first book or section of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras considers raja yoga and its aims (the problem of union) (samadhi pada) (what is yoga) (the state of yoga). The problem of union is the difficulty encountered by the personality (the soul absorbed in incarnation) in recognizing its absorption (sleep), understanding its place, recognizing the soul (the way), becoming responsive to the soul, and achieving union with that soul.

Union is ultimately achieved through self-mastery, gaining control of the lower self and overcoming all of its nature (conditioning). Once some degree of (preliminary) discipline (refinement) of the physical and emotional nature has been achieved (i.e, that which is preliminary to raja yoga), then the mind must be restrained. In this context, restraining the mind properly means achieving the state in which the mind does not function independently. It is not a matter of passivity or blankness, nor of forcing the mind into new patterns, but rather a matter of un-doing the conditioning of the mind and evoking a new qualification of the mind (or temperance) such that it becomes responsive to the quality of the soul. Without restraint (higher qualification), the (untempered) mind assumes an endless succession of associated conscious and unconscious forms or "modifications of the thinking principle." Without restraint, the mind is not responsive to the light of the soul and the only light that emerges is the (relatively) dim light of the mind itself. But with restraint, the mind allows a shining forth of the light of the soul, without the impediment of thinking (thought-form-making).

The practical aim of raja yoga then is the knowing-of-reality (the self or soul as it is), through dis-identification with the lower self and its absorption in the senses and through identification with the higher self or soul (God-self or Christ within). This is the achievement of spiritual consciousness, a living in the reality (consciousness) of the higher self rather than in the superficial consciousness (delusion) of the lower self. Man naturally identifies with his lower nature and its sense impressions, without consciously realizing this identification. Thus one must become dis-associated from these lesser matters before one can turn toward the higher (light). For as long as the mind is passive,

one cannot even accomplish the preliminaries. Likewise, for as long as the mind is active (independent), one cannot go beyond the preliminaries. But once the mind is non-active (i.e., intelligently quiescent or reflective), then spiritual poise (union) is achieved.

“The (unrestrained) activities or modifications of the mind are correct knowledge (based upon correct perception, correct deduction, and correct (accurate) observation), incorrect knowledge (based upon perception of the form and not upon the state of being), fancy (resting upon images which have no real existence), passivity (blankness) (mechanicalness) (lack of awareness) (sleep), and memory (retention of thought-forms) (attachment to that which has been known or experienced).” All of these activities (kama-manas) must be brought under the control of the (waking) focus of consciousness or overcome as limitations (distractions) in consciousness, “through tireless endeavor and through non-attachment.”

The (proper) restraint of the mind (non-attachment) is a subtle matter, resulting in clarity, purity, and quietude (intelligent, non-thinking repose). Non-attachment evokes (affords) higher perception and understanding. But before this can occur, the mind must be fully and properly trained (qualified) (tempered) through right (proper) meditation. [Book I, Sutras 1-16]

† Commentary No. 920

Samadhi Pada 2

The principal tool of the aspirant is meditation. Meditation leads the student from aspiration through several stages (concentration, meditation proper, contemplation) to samadhi (the quiet mind) (illumination and inspiration). In this process, the mind is progressively applied or focused upon some object, first “with consideration for the form, through examination; then with consideration of its quality, through discriminative participation; then with consideration of its purpose, through inspiration; and finally through consideration of the soul, through identification.”

The brain is thereby brought directly into the field of influence of the mind and the mind is brought directly into the field of influence of the soul. But along the way one must become progressively less attached to the object(s) of consciousness. If one gets attached at some level, then one is absorbed (asleep) and will not progress on to the next level (until the gradual force of evolutionary pressure emerges into manifestation). Until the mind is properly tempered, it will naturally seek attachments and divert the consciousness through its (insidious) associative (dynamic yet mechanistic) stream. Thus keys to success in this endeavor are pre-determination, determination, patience, and persistence (will). The process eventually yields the intended stillness of mind. One must keep in mind, however, that the objective is not knowledge. The objective is not even understanding. The objective is wisdom (quality). Knowledge and understanding are merely stages in the process of fulfillment (wisdom). There are many paths toward the objective, but all have certain characteristics in common, which are the prerequisites in consciousness for fulfillment (completion), regardless of the particular methods and means employed. Depending on (prior) qualifications, the way is relatively difficult (easy) and the relative strength of character (quality) (will) determines the pace (while the relative temperament determines the particular path (methods)).

Essential to this process is discrimination between the self and the not-self, for otherwise the student is continually (even progressively) self-deceived in his or her associations, conclusions, identifications, etc. Once the self (soul) (Ishvara) is discerned intellectually (conceptually), one must pass on to actual realization of its existence. "By intense devotion to the soul (the heart or God-consciousness), realization is achieved." The head-centered student must develop the heart-centered nature (as the heart-centered student must develop the head-centered nature) until the needed balance (equilibrium) is achieved.

The nature of the soul is difficult to apprehend without direct experience. The soul is "untouched by limitation, free from karma and desire" and "being unlimited by time condition." Being one with God, the soul apprehends directly, without recourse to the senses. The student who can achieve samadhi can begin to evoke the realization of the soul, as the light of the soul begins to qualify the lower consciousness (mind and heart of the personality). The "Word of God (Ishvara) is AUM (OM)." This refers to the cosmic Christ (manifestation of consciousness) and every correlative (something that is

correlated) (e.g., the individual soul) and relationship. "Through the sounding of the Word and through reflection upon its meaning, the Way is found."

Once the Way is found, progress is assured. The Word evokes higher qualification of the lower vehicles (bringing weaknesses to the surface to be transformed into strengths) and leads the ardent student to the Voice of the Silence. [Book I, Sutras 17-28]

† Commentary No. 921

Mechanical Life

In The Fourth Way (and other works) P.D. Ouspensky explores the ideas of (1) mechanical life, (2) personality sleep, (3) the many "I"s, (4) personality integration, and (5) awakening through self-remembering. All of these ideas are crucial to the transformation from personality-centered existence to soul-centered existence, which is, after all, the practical objective of those of humanity who have more or less exhausted the lessons afforded through personality-centeredness. Of course one also needs an appreciation for the spiritual path, the place and reality of the soul, etc., but the process of awakening begins with the realization of one's absorption in the mechanicalness of mundane, personal, secular life.

From the point of view of the soul, and in the sense of the unresponsiveness of the ordinary personality to that soul, and in the sense of the overwhelming lack of awareness of reality of the waking-consciousness of the ordinary personality, virtually all people and all of life are entirely mechanical in nature. This is easy to understand with regard to the subhuman lifewaves where there is no so-called self-consciousness. In the subhuman lives awareness is limited and there is no real awareness of oneself as an individual entity, although there are individual characteristics and in some cases individualistic behavior. Ordinary human life is not much different, in the sense that it too is quite mechanical, being determined almost entirely by internal and external forces acting on consciousness that is unaware of its own mechanicalness and artificiality.

Human beings are, of course, self-conscious, but only in the lower sense of having a dim awareness of themselves as separate entities, thinking, feeling,

and acting largely unconsciously as individuals. However, man suffers the illusion of self-consciousness in that he thinks of himself as a personality (ego) (feelings) (intellect) as being real, as having real volition. But in fact, virtually all people live mechanical lives, being almost entirely conditioned by internal and external factors (forces). Man acts according to habits evolved. Man thinks and feels according to habits and circumstances (conditions). Man does not really think for himself, or feel for himself, or act for himself (or others). He simply acts, feels, and thinks according to his conditioning.

This problem (illusion) is compounded by the fact that man thinks that he has self-consciousness and thinks that he has volition (i.e., man unconsciously assumes that his will is unconditioned). Man does of course have and exercises free will, but that free will is almost entirely conditioned by karma (karmic circumstances) (internal and external factors (forces)). Man does learn, grow, and evolve in consciousness as a result of his (mechanical) experience, but there is (for the vast majority of humanity) no real awareness of either oneself or the reality of life.

And virtually all of the people involved in metaphysics (theosophy) (the spiritual path) are not really any different than ordinary humanity except in the sense of (potentially) having a better knowledge and understanding of the nature of things and in the sense of (potentially) being better qualified in consciousness, but unless that knowledge and (intellectual) understanding (and qualification) is translated into real awareness, then the philosophical, religious, and spiritual students of the world are just as asleep in their mechanicalness as are the non-philosophical, non-religious, non-spiritual students.

Personality Sleep

Thus, from the point of view of atma-buddhi-manas (the soul), the personality is, in virtually every case and instance, asleep and unresponsive to direct higher impression. In this context, sleep-sleep refers to the sleep in the conventional sense of being unconscious, dreaming, etc., while waking-sleep refers to the sleep of the waking-consciousness of the personality, of being absorbed in physical, emotional, and mental activity to the exclusion of any conscious realization of higher impression. In this sense, virtually everyone sleeps through the waking hours of their daily life, being absorbed in the conditioned mechanicalness (and illusion) of personality-centered existence.

Man is generally so absorbed with being himself as a personality that he identifies completely with some aspect of his lower self or personality, e.g., with his body, feelings, intellect, etc. As long as a person acts, feels, or thinks without conscious realization that it is (merely) the personality acting, feeling, or thinking (and not himself in reality), that person is absorbed on the lower (personality) level and is thereby unconscious of and unresponsive to any higher impressions. Consequently, whenever one exhibits desire, feelings, likes or dislikes, beliefs, opinions, thoughts, etc. (which are all necessarily mechanical in nature (resulting from conditioning)), one is thereby or therefore asleep (absorbed as a personality) [unless one is consciously and simultaneously detached from the mechanical and aware of the mechanicalness, its nature, and the reality of oneself as other-than-the-personality].

Even conscious (intellectual) realization of these things is still a matter of sleeping through life, as awakening transcends any intellectual activity (i.e., intellectual activity of any kind is necessarily mechanical and part of the waking-sleep). One must also (ultimately) realize that waking-sleep is superimposed upon sleep-sleep, that is upon waking up (from sleep-sleep to waking-sleep) the mind (intellect) (feelings) continues to function in the sleep-sleep state even as another part of the mind (intellect) (feelings) is involved in the waking-sleep state. This is important to understanding (real) self-consciousness, because that (self-consciousness) is induced within (superimposed upon) waking-sleep and sleep-sleep (i.e., even when one is truly

self-conscious, there is still (concurrently) (simultaneously) sleep-sleep and waking-sleep activity).

The keys to understanding all of this are (1) true realization of the essential completeness or pervasiveness of one's mechanicalness [that one is not really self-conscious and that one cannot therefore "do" anything] and (2) honest, earnest (and detached) self-observation. If we continue to deceive ourselves into thinking that we are self-conscious and "doing" then we continue to sleep. Without honestly and earnestly looking at ourselves and seeing what (how) (why) we are as personalities, we cannot really understand the phenomenon. The mind (intellect) is potentially extremely (pervasively) talented in its ability to self-deceive. All of these problems are self-imposed.

The keys to overcoming personality (waking) sleep [the achievement of self-consciousness] are (1) honest, earnest (and detached) self-observation and (2) considerable effort toward increasingly recurrent self-remembering. Continual self-observation leads to more frequent and more lingering self-remembering. By utilizing one aspect of mind to monitor (self-observe) all of the activities of the mind, emotions, etc., while remaining as detached and unentangled in the process as one can, one can gradually and eventually rise above the intellect to the higher mind and spiritual intuition (buddhi).

† Commentary No. 923

The Multiple Personality 2

The human personality is a fairly complex, inherently and entirely mechanical, three-fold instrument of the (overshadowing, indwelling) human soul, with closely-linked vehicles (aspects) on physical (etheric), emotional, and mental (intellectual) levels, all of which need to be integrated into a complete and qualified (refined) whole before it can be properly aligned with the soul. But the non-integrated personality is also multi-dimensional in another sense, that of there being multiple personalities or many centers of personality within the actual personality, all of which are artificial.

In the Gurdjieff-Ouspensky system, these many centers are called the many "I"s and are a dynamic yet superficial aspect of the personality (which is itself

(as a whole) relatively superficial). Every desire, like, dislike, feeling, belief, opinion, preference (personal (personality) value), thought, etc., belongs to one or another of these centers, most of which normally and naturally compete with each other for attention (of the waking-consciousness which is deceived into identification with whatever dominant (albeit transient) center is manifesting at the time). For example, anytime one says (or feels) (or thinks) "I am happy" or "I like green" one is necessarily (and mechanically) identifying with that little self (I) to the exclusion or suppression of what one truly is. And one is necessarily (mechanically) (superficially) functioning at the personality-centered level, however useful that may be for experience and expression.

The non-integrated personality, viewed from the perspective of the waking-consciousness (focus of conscious attention), is a continuous succession of (necessarily superficial) physical, emotional, and intellectual activity, as one state leads (mechanically) to another. Through identification with our various conscious and unconscious values, thoughts, opinions, likes, feelings, dislikes, beliefs, attachments, etc., we continue to deceive ourselves (denying the underlying reality) and we continue to be absorbed in the mundane (secular) (personal) drivel of ordinary existence (experience and expression, however useful it may be in the process of gradual (mechanical) evolution).

In order to effectively integrate the (whole) personality, one must establish a single personality energy (entity) that absorbs (or dissolves) all of the many "I"s so that there is no longer any substantive internal competition or distraction. The "I"s on each level (physical, emotional, mental) must be combined (or otherwise resolved) on their respective level, and then the three levels must be combined into a single personality field. Similarly, ties (relationships) between centers on different levels must be resolved. One must also overcome (and dispel) any false personality (and all that that implies). Ultimately, one must be free from maya, glamour, and illusion, in full-self-consciousness realizing one's place in the greater whole and losing one's (individualistic, separative) self in that greater life.

Of course the achievement of an integrated personality in itself in no way implies that it is any less asleep than the non-integrated personality, but the integrated personality is a necessary precursor to awakening. One may awaken either through integration and subsequent self-observation leading to self-

remembering leading to realization, or through self-observation leading to (incidental but nonetheless effective) integration leading to self-remembering leading to realization. The ultimate (practical) purpose is to live (serve) (be focused) in the consciousness of the soul such that one looks and acts through the fully-integrated, highly refined and responsive, personality instrument.

† Commentary No. 924

Awakening 1

The spiritual path of conscious, creative evolution necessarily includes the process of integrating and refining the personality, awakening from the waking-sleep of mechanicalness and personality absorption, and becoming more and more (directly and indirectly) responsive to the higher self (the soul (atma-buddhi-manas)).

While integration and refinement can occur gradually (consciously and/or unconsciously) (in either case mechanically) and during personality sleep (waking-sleep), and while self-remembering does not necessarily include soul realization, direct and effective responsiveness to the soul can only occur when the personality has been transformed and awakened into intelligent subordination to the soul, which requires all of these (integration, refinement, alignment) to be achieved within the context of conscious awareness of the soul.

There are actually four stages in the awakening process (from this point of view): (1) the stage of the complete, natural (default) absorption in the mechanicalness of material, mundane, personal, and secular absorption (personality-centeredness), (2) the stage that ranges from occasional focus on metaphysical, theosophical, and esoteric matters (i.e., some conscious attention to the path) to a more-or-less continual focus on matters pertaining to the path (metaphysics, theosophy, self-development, service, etc.) (all of which focus is still more-or-less mechanical in nature, however enlightened it may be), (3) the stage that ranges from occasional moments of self-remembering to more-or-less continual self-remembering, or being consciously aware of the mechanicalness of the personality and simultaneously being aware that one is something else, even if one cannot or does not consciously realize what that something else (the soul)

really is, and (4) the stage in which the conscious awareness includes realization of the soul and allows that soul's energy to flow unimpeded through the waking-consciousness (and entire aura). It is possible for stage (3) to precede stage (2) [and in practice there is a combination of the two], but both occur between stage (1) and stage (4).

The evolution of consciousness proceeds throughout the four stages, but it is only when some progress is made in the middle stages (and subsequently) that "real" (non-mechanical) (accelerated) progress is made. Wherever the emotions are untempered, the intellect functions independently, the ego is manifesting, etc. Where the person wants to do something (talk, feel, have, think), the individual is necessarily personality-centered, lacking (significantly limited) in awareness, and largely unresponsive to higher impression.

Much like the principal impediment to self-remembering (being one's belief in his or her actually having self-consciousness when one is actually in waking-sleep), the principal impediment to (real) awareness is the (false) belief or notion (conscious or unconscious) that one already has such awareness, i.e., if one does not know what one is lacking there is no possibility of awareness of same. Most people have no real ideas about the soul. Even most people who have encountered theosophy, the ancient wisdom (esoteric philosophy) (or whatever it may be called) still have no real understanding of what the soul (atma-buddhi-manas) really is, how it functions, what it "feels" like, or anything about it, really. People tend to make assumptions about the soul, equating it with being somehow better or more refined or otherwise an extension of that with which they currently identify (which is the lower self (personality) (ego) (intellect) (no matter what they may call it) rather than the higher self). All of which leads to a continuance of personality-centeredness.

Awakening 2

Yet the soul is something else and cannot be defined effectively in “human” terms because it is simply not at all like the personality-individuality to which we are accustomed to (though the soul is the more real part of the human being). In order to awaken to the soul, to the voice of the silence, one necessarily has to temper the personality such that the soul can be heard, or else there will not be any realization of the soul nor any real awakening.

The soul is more effectively defined in terms of what it is not (what is left is the soul). The soul is not egoistic or materialistic in any way. The soul does not act, feel, think, or talk. The soul has no likes or dislikes. It does not agree or disagree. It is not happy or unhappy (yet there is happiness). It has no possessions and feels no sense of individuality (though there is a slight sense of locality within the field of souls). The soul is responsible without feeling responsibility. The soul loves and yet is wholly impersonal. The soul lives through all of the personality and yet is not attached to or entangled in personality concerns at all. The soul has (is) a sense, but that (real) sense does not rely on sense-impressions.

The unevolved soul is just as pure (in quality) as the fully-evolved soul, the only distinction being one of relative completeness and capacity (responsiveness to even higher factors). The soul is not mechanical in any way. Nor is the soul contrived or given to contrivance. The soul is being and expresses itself in terms of quality (and through qualification of its instruments). The soul is not concerned about anything. And yet the soul’s qualification is responsive to the needs of evolution and in the embrace of the hierarchical plan. The soul is conscious on its level, but not in the same way that the personality or waking-consciousness is conscious. The soul lives in the silence of the monad.

In order to understand (intuitively if not intellectually) the soul and its nature (quality), the spiritual student must learn to listen, not passively but actively, without thinking, without even self-observation in the preliminary (Ouspensky) sense. Self-remembering is a precursor. Integration and refinement are precursors. Intelligent detachment is a precursor (having opinions is one of the

most difficult impediments to awareness) (of course passive acceptance of others' beliefs and opinions is even more devastating to progress in consciousness). Discrimination and patience are also precursors (discrimination in order for the waking-consciousness to discern the difference between the quality of the soul and the contrived or fabricated quality of the masquerading ego (intellect) (unconscious mind)) (patience because the whole process takes sustained effort over a relatively long period of time).

The process of awakening is quite gradual and requires sustained effort, but not intellectual effort. It requires the effort of the mind to temper the intellect, not forcefully but through qualified detachment and dis-identification from things (acts, feelings, thoughts) of the personality (ego) (mind) (intellect) (while remaining wholly responsible for same (i.e., mechanicalness does not relieve responsibility or accountability)). Above all, the process of awakening requires a letting go of all the habits and notions (expectation) (knowledge) acquired as a personality (save the qualitative commitment to the path and its associated (qualitative) discipline). As long as we think we know something (definitively) we are thereby enslaved. As long as we are filled with our own ideas and notions we cannot awaken to the greater reality of what we are truly.

† Commentary No. 926

Detachment 2

In a sense, the first stage of the spiritual path is a matter of approach, learning, and preparation for spiritual work, e.g., studying the basic philosophy of the path, embracing the preliminary discipline, refining the personality, etc. In this sense, the second stage of the spiritual path is a matter of deepening, of upliftment, of actual spiritual work. Likewise, the third stage is a matter of ascension (completion) (fulfillment). While much progress can be made in the first stage without necessarily becoming impersonal and achieving detachment, both are necessary to the second stage. For the third stage a certain freedom from detachment is also required.

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.” Both kinds of detachment are necessary for the spiritual student to work effectively. Without detachment there are just too many conditions for the consciousness to function effectively or freely. With detachment comes increasing freedom from all of the conditioning that so inhibits spiritual growth, deepening, awareness, etc. The properly detached and dispassionate spiritual student is in no way separated from humanity or cold and insensitive to the condition of humanity. But the properly detached and dispassionate spiritual student is able to see (relatively) quite clearly and express the greater, impersonal love (of the higher self) much more effectively by virtue of freedom from encumbrance (i.e., the delusion of the senses and the delusion of ego).

Detachment is “a state of impersonal observation. Through detachment one learns to withdraw one’s interest and consciousness from the things of the senses and the calls of the lower nature. More and more one assumes the consciousness of the soul.” Detachment affords awareness, seeing things as they are, not as we expect them to be due to our conditioning (desires, beliefs, opinions, bias, prejudice, etc.). Detachment affords freedom and that freedom in the personality (lower) nature allows the soul (higher) nature unimpeded access for expression of the higher qualification. The process of detachment, of becoming unentangled from the senses (and their objects) is a relatively long and difficult undertaking.

The key to proper detachment is balance. Without balance, detachment becomes a negative or separative condition in consciousness. With balance, detachment becomes a positive and non-separative condition in consciousness. In this sense, balance is implied between the head (mind) and the heart (soul), with reliance on the heart. It is the mind (intellect) and the emotional nature that get entangled in maya (glamour) (illusion) [sense impressions and ego]. Detachment implies a letting go of all attachments (to objects, impressions, peoples, and ideas (beliefs and opinions)) and entanglements (etheric, emotional, and intellectual) without passing judgment (which is just another form of attachment). Mature relationships, founded upon respect and consideration (but not attachment) are simply not (negatively) affected by detachment.

When the mind and heart are free from attachments and entanglements, the spiritual student is free to observe all things in an unbiased and unprejudiced

(unconditioned) manner. This is sometimes called “higher qualification” but really means unconditioned experience and expression. For the properly detached and dispassionate student, it is simply not possible to “have” opinions, make judgments, or in any other way separate oneself from the soul and humanity.

† Commentary No. 927

Sangha

Sangha refers to the community and companionship of people on the spiritual path. In earlier cycles sangha was an important means of conveyance of knowledge concerning the path and its associated disciplines. Now that much of the basic and intermediate “knowledge” is widely available through published media, sangha is more so a means of encouragement for understanding and wisdom and for awakening from the sleep (absorption) of the waking-consciousness (i.e., from personality-centeredness).

The problem is, in part, a matter of the inherent limitations of the intellect in passing from knowledge through understanding to wisdom. One can learn from the various “teachings” and one can grow (understand) to some extent from the various spiritual practices, but to do so “on one’s own” is a more difficult undertaking (yet, if successful, brings subsequently greater results) than to do so in the context of a spiritual community. On the other hand, living in an isolated spiritual community does not address the need of the spiritual student to work within humanity and to develop and grow in the context of the world (i.e., self-mastery cannot be achieved in isolation, but only in the context of the stress of the world) (e.g., the ability to meditate effectively in an environment of isolated peacefulness does not prepare the student for meditation under more difficult circumstances (until one can meditate effectively in the most difficult of circumstances (maintaining one’s spiritual poise at all times), then one has not really mastered one’s circumstances)).

Consequently, sangha is more properly viewed in terms of a community of encouragement within the broader community of worldly distraction (and service). The student should continue to live in one’s place in the world (in accordance with one’s karma and dharma), all the while practicing the spiritual

discipline, yet periodically (as often as daily) withdrawing from the world into the encouragement of the spiritual community (and the greater encouragement of the soul). In this way the student serves as an expression (extension) of the higher forces (quality) within humanity, yet “enjoys” continual renewal.

A proper spiritual community offers the continual if not continuous encouragement for awakening, responsiveness to the higher self, and spiritual adherence (practice) (service). On the other hand, being merely associated with a spiritual community in which everyone is asleep in waking-consciousness affords no real encouragement for awakening (i.e., personality-centered communities, however sincerely and spiritually motivated (incidentally useful), from the higher perspective (of being awake) merely foster continued personality-centeredness). A proper spiritual community involves continual “pressure” toward awakening (and toward sustaining the members in their awakened state) (i.e., fellowship with people who are “awake” is a continual encouragement toward one’s own awakening (of course, one still needs to be responsive)).

Physical proximity, while it may be convenient and while it strengthens the “form” of encouragement, is not entirely necessary to sangha. The community of the path is more properly viewed as a collective consciousness of all upon the way (and the telepathic rapport of one’s own particular affiliation (group) within the overall consciousness of the path). Consequently, one can draw encouragement from one’s subjective association at any (all) time(s). The key is self-remembering and the extent to which the spiritual community helps to evoke that awareness.

The Soul and Associated Notions

In most cases people (wrongly) consider the brain synonymous with the mind, without realizing that the brain is (merely) a physical instrument and that the mind is something else entirely, which just happens to utilize the brain (sometimes). Similarly, most people (wrongly) consider the soul as a matter of their innermost feelings and “true” nature, and thereby consciously or otherwise associate that (soul) with the higher and deeper part of the human personality (psyche). Those who actually think about the soul as an entity (reincarnating or otherwise) then usually progress to an association of that soul with the (even) more noble aspects of the personality. In short, virtually everyone (then) naturally (and wrongly) associates the soul with that with which they identify, which is, after all, the most noble aspect (of themselves) that a person can easily conceive.

Yet this is one of the biggest errors-of-thinking that we can make, i.e., viewing the soul or higher self as the more noble part of the human personality, as merely better and more noble than the human animal, yet an extension of the personality (e.g., being more kind, having greater reliance on reasoning, etc.). By attributing (unconsciously or consciously assuming) human (personality) (lower self) characteristics to the soul, e.g., as having noble desires and interests, we become entangled in our notions. This concept of the soul contrasts with the actuality of the soul, which is beyond the personality and of an entirely different order or dimension. As long as we view one as an extension of the other, we will continue to delude ourselves. It is only when we fully and consciously realize this distinction that union of soul and personality becomes possible.

Whenever we assume something that is not correct or real, then that assumption creates a very real barrier to the perception of the truth and subsequent understanding. Thus our assumptions, beliefs, opinions, etc., are all obstacles to union with the soul. If the waking-consciousness that identifies with the personality aspect (wrongly) assumes that it is the soul, then a rather formidable barrier is thereby established. If the waking-consciousness accepts the delusion of reality in three spatial dimensions and time, then a very substantial barrier is thereby established that prevents apprehension of the

fourth (spatial) dimension and that which is beyond time. In a sense, virtually every notion we have is a limitation of some sort. It is only when we pass beyond notions that we can embrace the truth of anything. By virtue of our lack of involvement (attachment) we are able to see clearly.

The problem comes from both the natural identification with the senses (the delusion of external and separate existence) and the reliance on intellect. The senses are greatly deceiving, even though they serve a purpose. When we identify with the senses, we deceive ourselves even further. We confuse our impressions with reality. We therefore “believe” based on superficial observations compounded by our own conditioning. When the intellect is brought to bear, it generally complicates matters by virtue of its lack of realization, i.e., if it does not (because it cannot) recognize the soul for what it is, it imagines or postulates or assumes or reasons what the soul must be, and then loses even the realization that this is merely imagination (postulation) (assumption) (reasoning) [respectively] and accepts its conclusions as facts.

Through detachment (more properly through intelligent non-attachment), one can (and must) rise above the notions of the intellect and (without expectation or preconception) actually contact the soul and (ultimately) achieve union.

† Commentary No. 929

Samadhi Pada 3

There are a number of obstacles along the Way. These obstacles are all within the field of personality consciousness. At some point along the Way, the aspirant comes to realize his (her) true existence, begins to understand his (her) true nature, and eventually becomes determined to eliminate them. Once the aspirant has experienced the “touch” of the soul, then real progress begins.

According to Patanjali, “The obstacles to soul cognition are bodily disability, mental inertia, wrong questioning, carelessness, laziness, lack of dispassion, erroneous perception, inability to achieve concentration, failure to hold the meditative attitude when achieved.” Bodily disability is resolved through “wholesome, sane living” leading to physical, etheric, and emotional health

(vitality) (balance) (purification) (tempering of the animal nature). Mental inertia is resolved through “control of the life force” and the uplifting of the concrete mind and transcending attachment (beliefs) (habits) (opinions). Wrong questioning is resolved through “one-pointed thought” and overcoming doubt or the reliance on outer authority and the inertia of ego. Carelessness is resolved through “meditation” and overcoming the lack of proper focus, such that one is no longer “carelessly” making (needless) thought-forms.

Laziness refers to the inertia or “slothfulness of the entire lower nature” (inertia is a consequence of man’s material nature (i.e., on physical, etheric, emotional, concrete mental levels) and is resolved through “self-discipline”). Lack of dispassion refers to kama-manas or the “desire for material and sensuous things” and is resolved through “correct analysis.” Erroneous perception refers to man’s identification with the lower self and all of its attachments and entanglements (desires, beliefs, habits, opinions), i.e., man’s delusion of (in) (by) the senses, and which is resolved through “illumination.” Inability to achieve concentration and failure to hold the meditative attitude refer to the emergence of self-discipline and a focusing of man’s resources (and will) upon the Way. Man suffers in accordance with his attachments (the extent to which he is entangled in these obstacles). The will must be invoked along with coordinated determination and adherence to the preliminaries.

The Way is a matter of balance, as the student must necessarily learn to live in the world without being of the world. The student must evoke the heart nature and relate properly to all other lives, yet without attachment or involvement or entanglement (and without imposition). Only thereby (with peace of mind (the quiet mind) and overall dynamic equilibrium) can one evoke and share the higher energy. This peace is also “brought about by the proper regulation of the prana or life breath” (more properly, several coordinated practices (one of which is proper breathing) that lead to the quiet mind). There is no one remedy that leads to awakening (realization) but all of the ways of the Path must be embraced in some measure.

Through proper meditation, the senses (and centers) (man’s nature) are examined, and through effective (unbiased) observation and understanding, non-attachment is eventually achieved. The light is embraced and evoked throughout the lower self. The lower self is stabilized and purified, its

indulgences (and reactivity) are overcome, and the student is thereby freed from maya (glamour) (illusion). The dream (waking sleep) brings experience (knowledge) which must be assimilated, contributing to peace (the quiet mind). But somewhere along the Way, the student must come to the realization that he or she is asleep, that the personality is deluded by the senses and its attachments thereto. [Book I, Sutras 29-38]

† Commentary No. 930

Samadhi Pada 4

Through proper study (self-observation and meditation), the student should also consider that which the lesser self holds to be important, i.e., its values (desires, motives, habits), so that in understanding this conditioning the student can transform those values into the higher values of the Path (soul). It is not enough to merely affirm the higher values or agree with them, one must admit that the lower nature has its own values, identify those values, and overcome them. The higher values must be embraced and made manifest. Theory must result in application (adherence to the Way).

Through proper embrace of the depth and breadth of manifestation (from the lowest to the highest, from the smallest to the largest, from the most inner to the most outer) the mind and consciousness are expanded and deepened such that union is achieved between inner and outer reality. "The knower, knowledge, and the field of knowledge become one." Separateness (and separateness) is (are) wholly overcome as the ego is transcended and one then lives through all lives (and without being limited by particulars). In this sense, one passes from meditation with seed (which involves the lower self (concrete mind or intellect) and is therefore separative) to proper (seedless) meditation (which involves the higher self (abstract mind and intuition) and is therefore non-separative). Thus reasoning (rationalization) (thinking) (thought-form-making) (reliance upon memory) is transcended and union (truth) (reality) (the soul) achieved. When words and thoughts are transcended (in this higher sense), what remains is reality.

Meditation with seed (object) (focus) leads from the gross state (most entangled in form), through a succession of more refined (less entangled) (ever more subtle)

states, to the formless state. In this process, there is both a passage through a progressive continuum of states within each level and progressive repolarization through the various levels. Coarseness implies separateness, while purity conveys the ability to blend and merge. To pass from one state to another requires refinement and upliftment. To pass from one level to another (e.g., from physical to emotional or from emotional to mental or from mental to intuitional) requires a different kind of focus in consciousness (altogether) and a letting go of the habits of the lower level. To transcend the emotions one must learn to think. To transcend the mind, one must learn to not-think. In order to rise above and beyond the concrete mind, one has to let go of all the notions associated with experience in the lower worlds, so that the dimensionality and character of the higher world (level) can be embraced. "Clear perspicuity (pure spiritual realization) follows through the quiet mind."

"With clear perception, only the truth is revealed." This does not mean that one can "explain" the truth, but that one can fully realize the truth. Reality persists beyond limitation, beyond the formulatory existence. Human evolution is fulfilled as time and space (and all notions thereof) (more properly, all notions) are transcended. The rational mind is simply unable to embrace the (higher) reality, but the waking-consciousness can so embrace reality, and the energy or qualification of that embrace can be brought forth into the lower life (as qualification), but is necessarily constrained thereby (as its dimensionality is reduced).

Thus Patanjali describes the entire scope (and problem) of union (yoga). The many paths are resolved in the one Path. The challenge is made and the path (pattern) evoked. [Book I, Sutras 39-51]

Body Language 1

Body language is defined as a means of communication in which aspects of physical posture, gestures, facial expressions, demeanor, etc. are interpreted with some presumed significance. Although body language is a “real” phenomenon (process), there are associated problems. The real problem of body language is that in a particular instance, it may be intended or otherwise, it may be real or imagined (i.e., significant or not), and/or the “recipient” may be interpreting body language consciously or unconsciously, correctly or otherwise. Additional complications are cultural context, generality, and degree of personality integration (polarization of consciousness). The whole phenomenon of body language is a consequence of the passage of the human lifewave through the animal kingdom, where non-verbal communication was considerably developed.

The actual relative significance of body language depends on the relative consciousness of the sender. Almost everyone is emotionally-polarized and therefore (for most people) a person’s thoughts and feelings are to some extent (and largely unconsciously) reflected in his or her body language. That reflection is, in turn, qualified or conditioned by some variability and within some cultural context. This is “natural” body language. However, a person of deliberation may mask his or her thoughts and feelings, to some considerable extent, by consciously manipulating his or her body language. This is “artificial” body language.

Moreover, someone whose personality is fully integrated and who is mentally-polarized or intuitively-polarized will not generally reflect thoughts and feelings in the form of body language, naturally or artificially, because in such a case the body is naturally “poised” and qualified (and responds only in the active sense), whereas in the “normal” (emotionally-polarized) case, the body responds passively and automatically to thoughts and feelings. The perceived relative significance may be something else altogether (i.e., other than intended and/or other than real).

The cultural context often dominates body language, in the sense that one's cultural (tribal) (family) conditioning qualifies one's body language such that there is some general consistency within a given culture (tribe) (family). Thus a problem for one who would interpret body language is the assessment of the cultural context and degree to which the body language is consistent with that cultural context. Cultural conditioning can vary a great deal from one country or culture to another. And cultural conditioning can vary a great deal even within a culture. The interpreter must also assess the degree of contrivance, if that is even possible, or else draw wrong inferences and conclusions. Likewise, the interpreter must appreciate the extent of personality integration, etc., or risk substantial misunderstanding.

The problem, then, for any interpreter of body language is correctness or validity of interpretation (inference and conclusion). Yet many people interpret body language unconsciously, based upon their own cultural conditioning, so the result is a consequence of a person unconsciously "sending" body language and another person unconsciously "receiving" body language. In either case, or both, the potential for misunderstanding is considerable. Even where the interpreter is conscious of body language and intelligently reading the perceived (presumed) signals, there is generally some degree of misunderstanding. In any case, reliance on observed body language is dangerous, and interpretation of body language is generally inconclusive or only partially conclusive (yet self-deceptive if presumed to be conclusive).

† Commentary No. 932

Body Language 2

The value of body language lies in its offering of information that might not otherwise be readily or easily (or politely) available. The problem of body language is its inconclusiveness. If a person interprets body language unconsciously, then the objective should be to transcend such unconsciousness and achieve conscious awareness. If a person interprets body language consciously, then the objective should be to do so without presuming validity.

The problem of any emotional or intellectual process is the presumption of correctness, which compounds the problem with self-deception. In wisdom, one

considers whatever evidence is presented either to the senses or to the mind, without presuming any conclusion, except potentially or tentatively. This allows the possibility of truth and reality emerging into conscious realization, while without such tentativeness such possibility is impeded or constrained by one's presumptions. Wherever one is convinced of correctness, then the problem of presumption is further compounded (in this context, it does not really matter if one is correct or not, self-deception and unresponsiveness to the truth are "bigger" problems). Moreover, the whole process of reliance upon body language is a "lower" process that feeds the lower nature by drawing upon bodily instincts and emotional instincts (and even intellectual instincts), without regard (necessarily) for the truth.

While there is a conventional, cultural basis for body language, based on conditioning, the spiritual student tends to pass beyond that conditioning, becoming increasingly non-conforming (albeit not necessarily evidently so to others) until the student is fully integrated and mentally-or-intuitively-polarized and relatively free from external (cultural) conditioning (of course the student still has to overcome the internal conditioning (ego) (personality) (intellect) (illusion), but such a student will generally not conform to "normal" expectations (i.e., at that point the student generally has substantially different character, temperament, and values from the general population, yet appears more-or-less the same to anyone who does not share the character, temperament, and values)).

For the relatively mature spiritual student, there is evoked a poise of higher contact (of personality with soul or higher self), or at least the quality thereof, that is reflected in the student's consciousness and demeanor, albeit in subtle ways. The student has no need of masking his or her thoughts and feelings, for the body is so conditioned and qualified that it simply does not respond passively and reflectively. In short, while the normal person reflects his or her thoughts and feelings largely unconsciously and passively, the (relatively mature) spiritual student naturally (instead) reflects poise and quality of consciousness.

Consequently, (1) the relatively mature (mentally-or-intuitively-polarized) spiritual student does not rely on body language (nor intellect) as higher awareness (intuition) is more reliable and (2) anyone attempting to interpret the

body language of such a (relatively mature) spiritual student will likely misinterpret the presumed signals and draw wrong (or at least misleading) conclusions (i.e., emopols (emotionally-polarized people) tend to see whatever they want to and/or allow their imagination to amplify and distort perceived (presumed) signals). On the other hand, it would be inappropriate for the student to contrive his or her body language to conform with someone's expectations, so the spiritual student remains, for the most part, indifferent to body language in both directions.

† Commentary No. 933

Conversation 2

Beyond the fourth level of conversation, beyond consideration of the principles and concepts and philosophy (theosophy) of the spiritual path, the fifth (fourth proper) level of conversation is entirely impersonal and cursory. It is impersonal in the sense that (ideally) the personality does not play any role other than sounding the words. It is cursory in the sense that the words or sounds themselves are entirely superficial, serving not as a means of communication but instead serving as a means of symbolic indication, with a nature and quality that transcends the personality levels.

In this highest level of conversation, the actual communication (conveyance of informational energy) is, properly, telepathic and intuitive, without recourse to thinking or any intellectual activity. In this sense, words are used only as pointers or triggers (catalysts) for (evoking) synonymous intuitive realization. Once this stage is reached it is relatively easy to pass beyond even cursory conversation, but reaching this level is relatively quite difficult as it implies (requires) an almost complete refinement (temperance) (transformation) of the personality (ego) (intellect) and a strong commitment to the path (soul).

The great value of cursory conversation lies in the qualifying absence of (impeding) personality (in this sense, any personality presence at all is an impediment). Cursory conversation also transcends language and culture (and in principle all conditioning), in the sense that where two or more people are able to interact more or less intuitively, without the impediment of thinking, then language (which is necessarily imperfect) is not part of the process of

communication. Communication then takes place en rapport, in mutual realization rather than in perception, evaluation, and interpretation, all of which are largely subject to the conditioning and self-interest (bias) of the personality (ego) (intellect) [which lead to sustaining differences rather than realizing the common ground].

Cursory conversation may outwardly involve some word or phrase (or sound), that draws the consciousness intuitively to some common source of realization. Where such an intuitive rapport does not exist, or where it exists only partially (i.e., where the personality emerges in some way), then cursory conversation is not very effective, as the participating minds then get caught in the perception-evaluation-interpretation trap. And of course cursory conversation cannot be utilized to focus on anything of interest to the personality. The focus of cursory conversation must therefore necessarily be upon abstract and/or subjective aspects of life (consciousness), and more properly, without any form at all. The personality effectively resists cursory conversation by clinging to thoughts, feelings, etc. (or even by glamorizing and thereby effectively compromising cursory conversation (by preventing the establishment of intuitive rapport)). But if the personality is sufficiently tempered and qualified by the soul, then the presence of the soul (which is equivalent to the responsiveness of the personality) will evoke the necessary rapport on intuitive levels.

Cursory conversation can be utilized to break through the habits and conditioning of (mundane) (personality) absorption, e.g., as in some forms of Zen monologue, and/or to draw the consciousness on to less personal (more abstract (intuitive) (subjective)) levels. Thus cursory conversation is also a means of achieving freedom, or the sixth level of conversation, which is non-conversation (in contrast with the absence of conversation).

Enjoyment

Pleasure and enjoyment are a natural part of the human experience, and can be either predominately active or predominately passive in nature (or more properly somewhere in between), and can be primarily physical, emotional (sensual), and/or mental (intellectual). Active enjoyment refers to the phenomenon of enjoying something (some experience) where such enjoyment is an objective (i.e., with active involvement of the personality (ego)), while passive enjoyment refers to the phenomenon of enjoying something incidentally, without seeking and without attachment (and without distraction).

Depending on one's evolutionary state, active enjoyment may be appropriate or not. For those whose underlying purpose in incarnation is physical, emotional, and/or mental experience, active enjoyment (the pursuit of pleasure) is quite natural (and karma-inducing). This is true in general for emotionally-polarized people (the vast majority of humanity) who experience as a result of desire and the seeking of desire-fulfillment, however physical, emotional, and/or mental (intellectual) that may be. As one evolves in consciousness, the basis of enjoyment tends to progress, from coarse and self-centered pleasures (i.e., materialistic, sensual, and/or egoistic) to relatively more refined and relatively unselfish pleasures (e.g., through appreciation of art, beauty, others' enjoyment, etc.). With refinement in perspective (and consciousness) there is progressively less absorption, attachment, and distraction (and less experiential karma-inducement).

On the spiritual path, at least in the relatively early stages, the mystic "enjoys" the mystical experience, the sensations of devotion and service, etc., while the occultist "enjoys" the occult experience, working with forces and evocation of results, etc. As the student progresses further he or she becomes less and less concerned with the experience (pleasure) per se and more concerned with results. As the student progresses beyond that stage, even concern with results is transcended in appreciation of the way (path) (quality) itself. One then tends, more and more, to enjoy life incidentally and indirectly rather than directly. Enjoyment is transcended as an object, but allowed as an incidental (superficial)

experience. Joy thus becomes more and more subtle, and less and less an impediment to realization.

While most people seek enjoyment, they suffer the vagaries of experience, feeling both pleasure and pain in various ways and through various (karmic) means. This allows one to evolve, albeit gradually, through the contrast in experience, until (eventually) one transcends the field of experience altogether. The spiritual student, for the most part, achieves a poise such that both pleasure and pain are incidental (and ideally neither are perceived as substantive), and “experience” is more even, more readily progressive as the student is thereby less distracted by physical, emotional, and mental conditions (external or internal).

There is still karma, but at this stage of incidentalness (with one being relatively indifferent to pain and pleasure), karma is essentially dharma and much less personal. One then tends to enjoy being rather than doing or having, though one continues to (do) work conscientiously and one can “have” things without being attached to them. At this stage, enjoyment is not demonstrative nor is it necessarily visibly recognizable. Life is taken seriously but not so seriously. Life is amusing but not frivolously so. Ultimately, one simply and incidentally “enjoys” the oneness of all life, without any sense of separateness (and without any “sensation” of enjoyment).

† Commentary No. 935

Tao Teh Ching

The Tao Teh Ching is one the classical books of eastern (Chinese) philosophy, attributed to the mystic and sage Lao Tzu. The title means, literally, “Classic of the Way and its Virtue” with Tao (the way (path)) and Teh (virtue) being the principal and interdependent elements of a mystical and practical approach to the spiritual path and living in the world consistently with that path.

Tao per se is perceived (or more correctly considered (contemplated)) as that immanent and transcendent essence (God ?) that is beyond (normal) human comprehension. In the mystical tradition, Tao may be approached and considered, but the experience cannot properly be related in terms of language.

However, the philosophy (methods) (principles) of Tao enlivens the spiritual path in its mystical element and evokes practical applications. The mysterious nature of Tao, once realized, provides a certain magnetism to the spiritual path and its practice, drawing the student upward and onward (releasing the bonds of attachment in the lower world (and to the lower nature), providing real freedom and the means of proper expression of that freedom). In other words, accord with Tao implies or conveys freedom from (transcendence of) personality (ego) (intellect).

The consequent Taoism is considered one of the three traditional Chinese religions (along with Buddhism and Confucianism), with much interpretation of the Tao Teh Ching in the form of commentaries, etc., being widely available. But the fundamental philosophy of Taoism has much in common with Buddhism and Confucianism, although the emphasis is somewhat different. Tao provides the mystical element, and through the (human) struggle of life in the lower worlds the Tao is glimpsed, approached, and ultimately embraced in the sense of the student achieving accord with its principles.

Tao may be conceived (perceived ?) in its transcendental sense, but it may also be conceived in its sense of natural flow (the underlying evolutionary harmonious trend of nature (in contrast with the willfulness of the (lower) human nature). In this sense Tao embraces spiritual cultivation (ceaseless preparation for mystic meditation) as well as wu wei (according to Henry Wei, "non-action in the sense of non-interference with the flow of Tao" (spontaneous action)). Spiritual cultivation implies qualification in various ways, e.g., the development of a peaceful mind, equanimity, detachment from worldly things (ideas), etc., development of Teh (virtue) (various appropriate virtues). Wu wei implies the spiritual practice of attention to duty in a conscientious yet effortless manner, without being willful, i.e., allowing the flow of Tao (in fact, Tao flows whether or not we are consistent, yet a person impedes the effects of that flow by virtue of willfulness, etc.). Teh proper includes (1) mystic virtue, (2) the virtue of non-contention, and (3) eternal virtue.

Tao is not a particular or specialized spiritual path. The Tao perspective is simply one way of perceiving the spiritual path that is ultimately common (albeit not necessarily evidently so) to all cultures and all peoples. The mystic meditation associated with Tao is not substantially different than the mystic

meditation of the (proper) traditional Christian approach to the path (or that of any other God-centered religion). Tao (the way) involves both the art of mystic meditation and the art of associated discipline(s). Tao (its practice) (conduct and demeanor) (wisdom) is as applicable to government and leadership of people as it is to self-government (spiritual cultivation) (and to the apparently solitary and reclusive student of the inner path).

† Commentary No. 936

The Esoteric Student

One of the principles of consciousness is that a person can only actually recognize and appreciate comparable or lesser consciousness, i.e., that is reasonably consistent with that person's own experience. Those who are substantively more experienced in spiritual consciousness generally appear somewhat anomalous, at least to those who are able to perceive them as anomalous. Yet (of course) appearing anomalous is not necessarily an indication of higher consciousness. And intellectualized perception is not reliable in any case. In some ways the various "grades" of spiritual student are not particularly important or significant, but there are ways in which understanding these things, in context, can be quite useful.

Distinctions can be made (perceived) between the aspirant, disciple, initiate, and master, in one sense, between the mystic and occultist, in a second sense, and between the spiritual student and the esoteric student in a third sense. These three "senses" overlap in the sense that the aspirant and disciple are progressing generally along either mystical or occult lines (though the occult aspirant is more properly referred to as a probationary student), while those of "higher" degrees are more and more balanced between the heart-nature and the head-nature. The spiritual student is a relatively broad term that includes virtually all grades, yet implies some balance between head and heart. Likewise, the disciple is a relatively broad term that includes spiritual students other than aspirants and includes esoteric students.

The spiritual student is more or less recognizable by his or her spiritual character, temperament, and values. Those who share or who have shared that character, temperament, and values are simply much more able to recognize

comparable spiritual students. The esoteric student, however, is significantly but less noticeably different in the sense that he or she has largely overcome the lower, personality nature, is mentally-or-intuitively-polarized, is relatively impersonal, and lives according to the rules of the path that are not so well understood by others (who have not yet reached that level). The esoteric student is not as demonstrative and so is not as visibly emotional as his (her) successors. The esoteric student sees a broader, deeper picture of life (consciousness) (evolution) and proceeds accordingly, without much regard for cultural conventions and the various notions or expectations of spiritual students, however sincere, who are simply unable to see that broader, deeper context.

Thus, what the esoteric student is, what the esoteric student does, etc., is often and usually inexplicable to the spiritual student (who has different expectations based upon limited understanding). In a very real sense, it is a matter of awakening to a deeper, greater reality, one that cannot be perceived, appreciated, or understood on intellectual levels. Thus the esoteric student is largely misunderstood by the spiritual student (and the world), for he (she) cannot possibly explain the deeper, greater vision in intellectual terms.

In awakening, the esoteric student recognizes the sleep that pervades the waking-consciousness of those who are yet to awaken. The esoteric student remains gentle and considerate, but uncompromising and non-imposing. While generally and essentially superior (greater, deeper, broader, more refined) in consciousness, the esoteric student does not feel or sense or act with any sense of superiority, because the personality of the esoteric student is, for the most part, without ego, without reliance on intellect, etc., and simply does not operate egoistically or separatively in the higher sense.

The Mineral Kingdom 1

In the context of the Earth's planetary evolutionary scheme, the mineral kingdom is an involutory domain (of un-self-conscious evolution) that bridges between the various elemental kingdoms (mental, astral, and physical (successively and respectively)) and the plant kingdom, with the (mineral-stage) lives being characterized by a deep state of relative unconsciousness (very limited awareness, akin to very deep, dreamless sleep). With the exception of the mineral pioneers, mineral lives appear to be quite contented.

The various lifewaves that pass through the mineral kingdom are mineral only during that passage, so a distinction (confusion from association) exists between the kingdom (involuntary or evolutionary domain) and lifewave (the collection of lives that inhabit some kingdom for some apparent period of time (cycle) for some involutory or evolutionary purpose (experience, expression)). A mineral lifewave has necessarily passed beyond the elemental condition but has not yet reached the plant kingdom. The human lifewave has previously passed through the mineral kingdom (many cycles past), as well as the plant and animal kingdoms.

On physical levels, the mineral kingdom is the experiential domain for all of the apparent dense physical and etheric forms either utilized by "higher" lives or which provide the physical and etheric infrastructure (i.e., physical substance, matter (the physical, material world)). Mineral lives (and forms) are composite lives (forms) in the sense that they incorporate atomic and molecular (elemental) lives. While mineral lives (material substance) appear to be relatively static, the underlying (overshadowing) consciousness is active, albeit with limited range and scope of awareness. Matter is alive and exhibits some consciousness, but obviously not to the same extent as lives in the plant and animal (and higher) kingdoms. The relatively more advanced mineral lives are radioactive and in some sense more interactive with their environment. Matter is communicative in the sense of energy exchange and manifestation at various energy levels.

The relationship of the mineral kingdom (and the associated lifewave) to the human kingdom (and the present humanity) is a somewhat synergistic one,

albeit one that currently (apparently) favors humanity as the mineral kingdom is generally contributive to human evolution in the sense that it provides the physical or material context for human experience. Humanity does relatively little for the mineral lives, although, karmically, the relationship is ultimately or eventually balanced. Humanity does, however, qualify the mineral kingdom by virtue of human activities, and can thereby facilitate or impede the involutory process. This will become more so as humanity takes some responsibility for the environment and mineral activities.

Both associated lifewaves (the lifewave (misleadingly named humanity) currently associated with the human kingdom and the lifewave currently inhabiting the mineral kingdom) develop, experience, etc., in the context of the greater evolutionary scheme (which integrates all lives within its evolutionary (holistic) field), although the timescales for experience are vastly different due to the respective nature of consciousness. The mineral lives evolve (involve) very slowly, while humanity evolves relatively quickly by comparison (on the other hand, temporal duration is not an effective measure of evolutionary progress) (this does not imply that the trend continues, with ever-increasing evolutionary rates (to the contrary, some great lives evolve very slowly (of course, man's sense of time is quite misleading))).

† Commentary No. 938

The Mineral Kingdom 2

The polarity of the mineral kingdom is such that direct, occult relationship with humanity is not facilitated. Substantial differences (opposition of forces) exist between the mineral nature and the human nature. In fact, direct (atomic or molecular) contact is rather dangerous and counterproductive, although incidental contact (e.g., through magnetization of crystals, etc.) is relatively harmless. Mineral substance digested or ingested in anything greater than nominal amounts is relatively poisonous to human (and animal) lives. At one extreme in relationship, strong identification with mineral substance is extremely disruptive to human evolution as it implies or conveys a relatively inextractable focus of human consciousness in the most coarse arena imaginable. Yet, properly trained (and relatively detached) occultists are able to

work effectively (psychically) with the mineral kingdom, both magnetically and electrically.

The occultist is one who somewhat intelligently and purposively manipulates material substance and associated energies and forces. The properly trained occultist synergistically utilizes mineral lives in a non-destructive manner (from the perspective of evolution) and in the context of evolutionary intent. The electrical and magnetic forces associated with matter (mineral lives) can be utilized by the occultist in various ways, in support of various planetary (evolutionary) objectives. The present karma of the mineral lifewave is to provide these resources (material or substantial infrastructure) in facilitation of experience in consciousness of other (lower, composite, involutory lives as well as higher, evolutionary) lives.

Unfortunately, mankind in its arrogance assumes that mineral forms are lifeless and therefore without significant consciousness (if any) and “available” for human utilization without adverse consequence. Man then proceeds more or less selfishly and without a sense of responsibility for the (non-perceived) consequences. This is merely presumptuous. In actuality, mankind is accountable for his stewardship (results and manners) and is building a considerable obligation toward the mineral lifewave. The properly trained occultist demonstrates a considerable respect (reverence) for and rapport with the lives (forces and energies) with which he or she works, taking care to work appropriately, in equilibrium with the evolutionary undercurrent.

But this does not imply or convey identification with the mineral lives in any personality sense (which would be counter-evolutionary). While the relatively mature mystic can identify with any or all lives impersonally, there is no implied attachment or absorption. Thus occultists, mystics, and esotericists are all able to work with mineral lives more or less effectively, provided there is proper respect for the distinctness of the various lives. Likewise the devas play a considerable albeit relatively passive role in relationship to the mineral lives (ultimately, the mineral lives are devas). In the final analysis, all relationship between or among the various kingdoms (lifewaves) is a matter of energy conveyance (sharing) (qualification).

On a higher level, the overshadowing mineral consciousness (in contrast with its indwelling life), which is relatively intelligent, is actively and consciously collaborating with the human spiritual hierarchy in fulfillment of the planetary evolutionary plan. This occurs on levels above and beyond that of the human personality (i.e., beyond the concrete mental level) where there is no substantive barrier to rapport-between-species. On logoc levels, there is not even the distinction of species.

† Commentary No. 939

Sadhana Pada 1

While the first book deals with the objective of raja yoga, the second book or section of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras considers raja yoga and its practices (the steps to union) (sadhana pada) (why one should practice yoga and how one should do so) (the instruments of yoga). The second book presents "the basic personality requirements, the hindrances which can then be noted by the earnest disciple, and the eight means of yoga or the eight kinds of activity which will bring about the needed results."

The three basic personality requirements are (1) fiery aspiration, spiritual reading, and (3) devotion to Ishvara. Fiery aspiration implies the overcoming and domination of the physical aspect of the personality, such that aspiration can proceed without (lower) impediment. It also implies overcoming one's basic karmic obligations, i.e, the overcoming of the circumstances of one's life and the reorientation of the personality toward the path. Spiritual reading and devotion to Ishvara imply the overcoming and domination of the emotional or astral aspect of the personality. Spiritual reading is the ability to see or perceive the reality of something, the subject rather than the object. Devotion to Ishvara is the reorientation of the personality from a self-centered perspective to a perspective in which the reality (and equivalence) of God, the soul, and the race as a whole is fully realized. This is achieved as the personality becomes responsive to the God within, lessening the sense (and practice) of separateness and separativeness, seeing God within all lives and all forms.

The object of these three basic personality requirements is "to bring about soul vision and to eliminate obstructions" (hindrances) (distractions) that impede the

student's progress along the Way. Soul vision refers to the "perception" of reality that transcends the senses (and distractions of the senses) of the personality. The impediments are all of one's own making, through karma, and must be dealt with and overcome (resolved). Collectively, the various impediments (self-inflicted conditioning (wrong ideas)) may be grouped as (1) avidya, (2) the sense of personality, (3) desire, (4) hate, and (5) the sense of attachment.

Avidya is ignorance, "the cause of all the other obstructions, whether they be latent, in process of elimination, overcome, or in full operation." That ignorance is man's condition, absorbed as he is in manifested existence. All evil, illusion, selfishness, etc. results from ignorance. Yet that ignorance is consequential (self-imposed) by virtue of man's foray or pilgrimage into matter. And that ignorance must be progressively overcome if "man" is to achieve liberation (union with the God-self (soul)). "Avidya is the condition of confusing" reality with the unreal, of deluding oneself, however naturally, into perceiving the world of matter (transience) (self-centered existence) as real, thereby "suffering" the illusion of separation (exclusive individuality).

The pilgrimage into matter begins and ends in blindness. In the beginning (of self-consciousness in the lower sense) the individuality is blinded by immersion in matter. Though blind and deluded, the student must experience and develop through sense perception and form-attachment, and gradually evolve discrimination and discernment, ultimately overcoming even the processes of perception and achieving freedom from all attachments in the lower worlds. In the end, one is blind in the higher sense of being blinded by the (inner) light. In the beginning one is not even aware of light; in the end there is naught but that light. [Book II, Sutras 1-5]

Sadhana Pada 2

“The sense of personality is due to the identification of the knower with the instruments of knowledge.” Having been wholly immersed in matter through the involutory stage, the human being emerges into (superficial) self-consciousness at the point of individualization, and becomes more and more identified with sense perceptions and their means. The entire personality is consciously or unconsciously identified with as what one is, where in fact, the entire personality and all of its faculties are merely an instrument of the higher self. That that higher self does not (cannot) make its presence felt to the lower self (until substantially later in the evolutionary process) only strengthens the delusion of independence.

This delusion is further compounded by emotional and intellectual attachments and aversions (e.g., through desire, liking and disliking, agreement and disagreement, criticism, judging, materialism, egoism, etc., all of which involve entanglement in the senses and the false identification with personality (the form life)). With sufficient evolution in consciousness, the spiritual student gradually rises above the forces of attraction and aversion and with balance (freedom) embraces the underlying (overshadowing) reality. The personality and its natural activities (proclivities) are inherently separative (as is any sense of personality). The union implied in and conveyed through raja yoga is a higher union of self with God, yet not something to be achieved (which is separative) but something to be realized (which is non-separative).

“Intense desire for sentient existence is attachment. This is inherent in every form, is self-perpetuating, and known even to the very wise.” Manifestation and all of its associated problems (delusion, ignorance, evil, etc.) are part of the evolutionary design. It begins with the urge to manifest, which is inherent in the highest macrocosmic life. That results in endless and progressive manifestation, through cycles within cycles of involution and evolution, through days and nights of activity and pralaya. In manifestation there is a degree of absorption (immersion) (blindness) (preoccupation with apparent (superficial) reality). That absorption is an intended and necessary experience, leading eventually to re-emergence into higher, less constrained existence. Thus

evolution is a process of experience (delusion) leading to realization (emergence). Yet even on the highest levels there is the inherent urge to manifest, however subtle it may be. But with (higher) consciousness in manifestation, the student is aware of this conditioning and effectively able to transcend the limitations of manifested existence (experience and expression).

As one realizes the existence and nature of the five hindrances, one can then begin to deal with them. The first step is cultivation of the mental attitude (determination) to overcome. One then must progressively free oneself from the lower distractions (impediments) by cultivating the mind and properly applying that cultivated mind. Ultimately one must transcend the mind by cultivating its responsiveness to that which is higher-than-mind, but in the meantime one must rely on the mind to some extent. The external and lower internal conditioning of the physical body, the emotions, and ultimately the mind, must be progressively undone and replaced by progressively more subtle (internal) conditioning of self-realization and non-attachment.

Through the meditation process (and spiritual practice), ignorance must be replaced by knowledge. Knowledge must be replaced by understanding. Understanding must be replaced by wisdom. The sense of self which is the not-self must be replaced by the non-sense of the self. [Book II, Sutras 6-II]

† Commentary No. 941

Existence

From one human perspective, human evolution proceeds through five (relative) domains of progressive existence or manifestation. Existence in the context of theosophical philosophy implies the progressive manifestation of life through consciousness and the progressive manifestation of consciousness through form, all in the broader context of purposeful evolution of consciousness. Through experience and expression the human individual acquires knowledge, transforms that knowledge into understanding and ultimately assimilates that understanding into wisdom or conscience. The five domains provide for progressive experience and expression leading eventually to that which is beyond experience and expression.

The first domain is existence, or involution. Involution is evolution in the most passive sense, before the awakening of (superficial) self-consciousness. Involution implies unconscious adaptation to form and experience only in the sense of collective consciousness (unconsciousness) and includes aeons of passage through the elemental, mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms. As self-consciousness (individualization) is achieved, the unit of evolution becomes human and passes on to the second domain.

The second domain is experience, or expression in the lower sense of active unconscious evolution (superficial self-consciousness). The domain of experience includes a wide variety of circumstances and evolution in consciousness as a passive or indirect aspect of the involvement of the incarnated individual in his or her surroundings, in addition to continuing unconscious adaptation to form. This involves physical and etheric experience and expression, emotional entanglement, and (eventually) intellectual attachments (i.e., the development of the elements or aspects of personality). It also implies and conveys the indirect (albeit necessary) development of the ego as an artificial entity (and the associated aspects of selfishness, self-centeredness, and experiential self-indulgence).

The third domain is that of development, or conscious evolution (still unconscious and mechanical relative to the awareness of the esoteric student but conscious in the sense of (delusive) belief in one's own self-consciousness). This takes place when an individual recognizes (however dimly) the purpose of experience and responds by consciously directing his or her own personal development. This includes further development of the ego (and to some extent personality integration) as well as (eventually) all of the aspects of the preliminary discipline. Development includes continued experience but adds a relatively self-conscious and self-directed effort toward specific improvements and adaptations. As the student proceeds there is a gradual lessening of self-centered perspective and the larger context of the spiritual path is recognized and eventually realized.

The fourth domain is service, or higher expression. In the service domain there is continued conscious development but the main emphasis is upon expression of higher energies in service to humanity (and all planetary life and

consciousness). In the service domain the ego is tempered and ultimately overcome as an artificial entity. Indirectly, as a consequence of this, the higher self (soul) begins to express itself through the refined and uplifted non-egoistic personality. This leads to the fifth domain or the esoteric realm of subjective service, in which true self-consciousness is achieved and manifested (and in which the unit of evolution is transferred to another, higher kingdom).

† Commentary No. 942

Aspects of Advancement

It is possible, and eventually necessary, for one to be “advanced” spiritually. One may also be “advanced” intellectually and/or occultly. And one may be “advanced” psychically as well. But these three dimensions need not be simultaneous or coincident. Advancement is largely a matter of perspective, and is not particularly significant.

Psychic development is generally a matter of acquired sensitivity and temperament, without necessarily any regard to intellectual or spiritual maturity. One can be etherically or astrally sensitive in a passive sense, without any real effort. In fact, passive sensitivity usually comes as a consequence of emotional instability or extreme emotional expression (or induced by drug use (abuse) or other artificial means). But such passive sensitivity is atavistic and not progressive or evolutionary in nature. Real (positive) psychic development comes as a consequence of spiritual development (but is not necessary to spiritual development). Thus being “advanced” psychically usually corresponds with being “not-advanced” spiritually.

Similarly, intellectual development is generally a matter of accumulated experience leading to concrete mental development, without necessarily any correlation with spiritual or psychic development. In fact, most people develop intellectually long before they develop psychically or spiritually. If one “develops” psychically before one “develops” intellectually, then there is generally emotional or psychic instability, lack of control, lack of understanding, etc. On the other hand, if one develops intellectually without any balance between the head-centered nature and the heart-centered nature, then one is

generally over-developed intellectually, which leads to untoward (self-centered) occult expression and relatively dire consequences.

Occult development requires intellectual development in order to be evolutionarily effective. Without a relatively strong (and hopefully balanced or tempered) intellect or concrete mental ability, occult development is quite dangerous. The worst kind of occult development is either that which is emotionally-polarized (lacking a moderately strong intellect) or that which is largely self-centered (selfish or self-indulgent) [or both]. The “best” kind of occult development is that which is tempered by spiritual quality (balance). Occult development (and psychic development) is usually also a matter of effort, the ease of advancement depending on previous achievements. Yet real development along any of these lines is ultimately a matter of non-effort and non-seeking, with advancement coming as a consequence of understanding.

Spiritual development requires balance between the head-centered (occult) aspect and the heart-centered (mystical) aspect. It requires a reasonable extent of intellectual development, but is inhibited or precluded by any intellectual over-development. Occult and psychic sensitivities (and associated (developed) abilities) may come with spiritual development, or not, depending on the individual circumstances, karma, opportunities, need, etc. What matters is spiritual development, not intellectual, occult, or psychic development. The real “key” to spiritual advancement is quality of consciousness, not extent of psychic or occult sensitivity. A spiritually-advanced student does not feel “advanced” because he or she has passed beyond any need for ego self-recognition. In the final analysis, one advances and evolves as a consequence of one’s relationship to the spiritual path and in the context of humanity, but advancement per se is not important. What is important, at these levels, is being true to the spiritual path and one’s higher self (soul).

Mental Advancement

Spiritual advancement is not unrelated to mental advancement, as much of human evolutionary experience and expression relates to the illusion of manifested existence, the illusion of self-consciousness, and the overcoming of these and other illusions.

Keys to mental advancement include (1) sufficient (and sufficiently broad) external and internal experience leading to mental development (the development of the concrete mind and its relationships with the lower self and the abstract mind) and a proper balance of the head-centered and heart-centered natures (i.e., quality of mind), (2) the development of suitable (non-egoistic or non-ego-based) character, temperament, and values, and (3) willingness to consider the relativity of manifested existence (i.e., open-mindedness). Only with these accomplishments can the spiritual student begin to deal effectively with the three apparent levels or aspects of maya-glamour-illusion.

Balance of perspective is quite important to the realization of the illusion of manifested existence. Not only must the value of manifested existence be appreciated and dealt with, but the value of non-attachment and non-entanglement must also be realized, before the student can effectively unentangle his or her personality from its absorption in manifested "reality" and become focused much more so on higher realities. Thus the student must effectively live in both worlds without being wholly distracted by either. The lower world yields opportunities for needed experience and expression, while the higher world offers evolutionary encouragement and freedom. Realization of the existence of illusion is a necessary condition to passing above or beyond that illusion. Yet illusion is as progressive as the means of overcoming. In overcoming one (relatively more fundamental) illusion, one discovers another (relatively more subtle illusion).

The mind is key to human advancement in the sense that (1) it is the principal instrument of the personality for experience and expression, (2) it is the principal means of self-deception and self-delusion, and (3) it is the principal means of overcoming the obstructions and impediments to realization (and subsequent

advancement). Preliminary mental advancement refers to the development of the concrete mind and intellect. Real mental advancement refers to the tempering of the concrete mind and intellect and the cultivation of subordination of same to the needs and expression of the higher self. Overcoming maya (glamour) (illusion) by virtue of clarity of consciousness on the next higher (astral) (mental) (buddhic) level leads to recognition of existence of glamour (illusion) (that which is beyond illusion).

In a sense, all of human experience (evolution in consciousness) relates in some way to illusion and its progressive transcendence. Through experience the mind is developed in a highly conditioned manner, yet the mind ultimately becomes aware of its conditioning, and after passing through a stage in which the mind uses its openness to conditioning to deepen and strengthen its own conditioning (as self-protection), the mind begins to discern the true from the false, realizes its own artificiality, and contributes more or less directly (and willingly) to its own demise. In other words, the mind ultimately becomes a noble and self-sacrificing instrument of the higher nature. The key is for the spiritual student to cultivate that nobility rather than merely (passively) extending the intellectual development and continuing the pursuit of the self-interests of ordinary humanity (i.e., overcoming illusions rather than sustaining the illusions in which the conditioned mind is imbedded).

† Commentary No. 944

The Seven Selves

According to Helminski, "in classical Sufism the continuum from the false self to the essential Self has been (is) described in seven stages." This is simply one perspective on the progression of quality of consciousness (and associated character, temperament, and values) from the animal stage through the human stage to the super-human stage. In this context, the self is the waking-consciousness at whatever level it is manifesting while the Self is the soul on its level or the soul manifesting through the self. The seven stages of passage or pilgrimage in Sufism are quite consistent with perspectives engendered by or through other religions. Being a relatively heart-centered religion, Islam (Sufism) emphasizes the heart quality and recognizes the progression of the self

in terms of its mystical character. This perspective masks a comparable (and included) head-centered development.

“The self of compulsion seeks satisfaction primarily in satisfying its selfish, carnal desires and its will to power.” This is the level (stage) of the human animal (and to some extent most of humanity), self-centered and self-indulgent. In ignorance (and inability to discern causal and conditioning factors), people tend to live according to their (personal) desires, pursuing their self-interests without much regard for others. Those who live at this level of compulsion are simply wholly enslaved and dominated by their own lower nature, identifying themselves with their desires rather than realizing their transience. This identification with the lower nature (false self) is the starting point for “human” evolution.

“The self of conscience has begun to discriminate between right and wrong, and can sometimes resist the temptation to evil and selfish actions.” This is the second stage, in which the assimilation of experience has led to the beginning of conscience. Temptations arise from within and beyond (but resonating with) the lower nature. As conscience develops there arises a growing measure of ability to see beyond self-indulgent behavior. This second stage is the whole arena of ordinary human experience and expression leading from the stage of the human animal (unconscious self-indulgence) to the stage of humanity proper (conscious self-indulgence tempered by social constraints and intellectual factors).

“The self of inspiration is inspired with spiritual knowledge and can reliably follow the voice of conscience.” This is the third stage and marks the beginning of the spiritual path (and follows the important transition from tempered self-indulgence to seeking truth and understanding). It implies a measure of understanding the rules of the path (law) such that one’s own interests are seen in a broader context (and law). “The soul of tranquility has reached the level of presence in which a conscious intimacy is possible.” This is the fourth (relatively advanced) stage in which (some measure of) soul contact is achieved. It implies passing beyond personality-centered existence.

“The soul of submission has reached the level where its desires and actions are in harmony with Reality. It accepts each moment as it is and submits itself to

Reality." This is the fifth (advanced) stage, of soul contact resulting in expression of soul quality. "The soul of total submission is even more completely identified with the Universal Will. This is the stage of the great saints whose lives may be a profound and miraculous example of human wholeness. These people are lost in God." This is the sixth stage and beyond the expectations of the bulk of humanity. "The soul of perfection is a theoretical absolute, the perfected or complete human being ...," the seventh stage.

† Commentary No. 945

Light, Love, and Power 3

The three aspects of trinity are also the fundamental and underlying aspects of all of manifestation. The underlying power (being) of God is inherent evolutionary purpose (pressure) which induces love (consciousness) which in turn induces light (form). The presence of light affords the "building" of love. The presence of "love" affords more (proper) (incidental and consequential (non-artificially-induced)) power. From another perspective, light is the basis for experience and expression (manifestation), as it is the underlying medium. In this sense, love is the basis for evolution in consciousness, as it is the underlying conveyance (means). And in this sense power is the basis for causal induction (karma). Each builds upon its precursor in an inclusive manner. The full cycle is a spiral circuit.

The relative presence of light-love-power indicates balance or lack of balance in manifestation. In this (binary) context (and in an over-simplification), (000) denotes the unmanifested but balanced state of no light, no love, and no power (respectively), and (111) denotes fulfillment of manifestation (restoration of balance or equilibrium) [and is occultly equivalent to (000)]. The early intermediate stages are denoted (001), (010), and (100), though not necessarily (or even generally) in that order, while the later intermediate stages are denoted (011), (101), and (110), again not necessarily in that order.

The stage (001) is inherently destructive. Without light and without love, the presence or manifestation of power is destructive. The stage (010) is relatively self-centered (love turned upon itself (along personal lines)), without regard for

light (understanding, broader context) and without regard for power (underlying evolutionary motivation). In principle, the stage (100) is a natural and healthy beginning, though if "light" is overly-manifested (i.e., (200), without being tempered by love, then illusion is extremely difficult to overcome.

The stage (011) is suicide. Love and power, without light, is personal and destructive. The stage (101) is unbalanced and relatively dangerous. Light and power (without love) is untempered occultism. The stage (110) is a relatively healthy development (light and love, without substantial power) (untempered mysticism) that allows power to unfold naturally. Though the human being may develop along any of a number of paths or sequences of light-love-power, the healthy (and safest) path would seem to be (000) to (100) to (110) to (111), or a modest development or exposure of light, followed by tempering love and building (incidental) power. There are dangers inherent in any of the extremes, untempered light, untempered love, and (most of all) untempered power.

In practice, development (evolution in consciousness) is non-binary and occurs cyclically, with some degree of balance achieved at each turn of the (spiral) circuit [e.g., (000) through (100) and (110) to (111) and (111) through (211) and (221) to (222), etc. to (999)]. In this (non-binary) sense, (100), (110), etc. are not balanced stages but they are not extreme stages either. In the non-binary model, an extreme stage would be indicated by development in which the difference between a pair of aspects is greater than one unit (e.g., (211) is okay (natural imbalance), (312) is relatively imbalanced ((213) would be more extreme), and (114) would be quite extreme). Also, in practice, development proceeds through seven rays and not merely through the three primary rays, thus a more effective model would be development from the unmanifested state (0000000) to the state of fulfillment or perfection (9999999).

Oppression

Oppression is defined as unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power and implies a burdening or obstruction (physically, emotionally, and/or mentally). According to occult law it is generally wrong to impose on others. Thus it is also wrong to oppress, to be cruel or unjust, to abuse one's power or position, etc. For anyone of conscience, these things are relatively easy to understand. It is also relatively easy to understand karma, in principle, the matter of cause and effect, of action and consequence, and of justice (restoration of balance in the context of evolution of consciousness) as a consequence of natural (karmic) law. Yet it is not so easy to appreciate that although it is wrong to oppress, there is implied justice in being oppressed (if indeed one is oppressed and not merely self-perceived as being oppressed). Of course "justice" needs to be viewed in terms of opportunity for learning.

Oppression is generally perceived in the context of individual rights and freedom. According to karma, every experience faced, every condition, every circumstance, however appealing or unappealing it may be, is a consequence of our own making and a matter (force) of restoration of balance (and of learning (adaptation, growth)). In the higher sense, there are no individual rights. There are only privileges, and all privileges are earned or merited through karma. Thus freedom is earned. Likewise lack of freedom. To be oppressed is to experience that which has been attracted or created for and by oneself. Usually, one's being oppressed in the present lifetime is a consequence of one's having oppressed others, generally in previous lifetimes. The lack of freedom leads (ultimately, in consciousness) to an appreciation for freedom and respect for others' need for freedom (not merely desire for one's own freedom). In the final analysis, any lack of freedom is superficial.

One does not generally overcome being oppressed until the condition has run its course (and even consciously or unconsciously as the lessons are learned). But one can and should overcome the feeling or perspective of being oppressed. One learns to accept the conditions somehow merited, even if they are not understood consciously. One learns to refuse to be disturbed or bothered by one's being oppressed, all the while recognizing the wrongness of oppressing.

And one learns to work constructively, while only superficially suffering a lack of freedom. In other words one learns to make the best of whatever circumstances there are. That which one can change (for the apparent better) can and should be changed. That which one cannot change can only (effectively) be accepted. Yet one can always change one's attitude, and thus effectively and constructively embrace any and all circumstances.

If one is honest enough, one can judge oneself to some extent, although one cannot generally know any other-life circumstances that may have evoked or contributed to the present conditions. But one should not judge others, for one cannot generally know or understand the factors of consciousness or the factors of karma that are operant. Thus one should not judge one who is oppressed, particularly not as a matter of the fact of oppression. Similarly one should not judge the oppressors, even though one can and should judge (or discern) that one (self) should not oppress.

That oppression should occur is one thing. This in no way justifies any act of oppression. Even as an instrument of karma in addition to being subject to karma, one must live according to the law as one understands it. Which is harmlessness (non-imposition). Which is respect and consideration for others. Which is humility, and compassion, and goodwill.

† Commentary No. 947

The Plant Kingdom 1

In the context of the Earth's planetary evolutionary scheme, the plant kingdom is an involutory domain (of un-self-conscious evolution) that bridges between the mineral kingdom and the animal kingdom, with plant lives being characterized by a state of relative unconsciousness (limited awareness). While mineral lives have a very limited ring-pass-not or field of consciousness, plant lives have a broader ring-pass-not that extends well beyond their physical form. In contrast with lives in the mineral kingdom (except for those that are more-or-less radioactive), plant lives interact with their immediate surroundings and collectively (semi-consciously) collaborate with deva lives.

Like mineral lives, plant lives are collective, not individualized, though each major species corresponds to a group life and relates to a group soul. The principal distinction of lives in the plant kingdom compared with lives in the mineral kingdom is the factor of apparent growth and limited mobility (compared with virtually no apparent growth and very limited mobility if not immobility in the case of mineral lives). Plant lives respond to various stimuli much more so than mineral lives. Plant lives also live at a faster pace than mineral lives. Mineral lives receive energy and release energy and experience some (moderate and limited) internal transformations, while plant lives experience more overt interaction with their environment, receiving energy, transforming it, and releasing it in various (other) forms.

On physical levels, the (karmic) role of the (lives of the) plant kingdom is at least two-fold: (1) to provide sustenance (energy in the form of food) for various higher lives (e.g., animal and human lives) and (2) to contribute to the environmental balance (e.g., in absorbing or releasing atmospheric constituents). Plant lives are an "active" component of the vital (etheric) body of the Earth and respond directly to etheric stimuli (and indirectly to astral or emotional stimuli (but not generally to mental stimuli)). Thus the experience of plant lives is more dynamic and interactive than that of mineral lives, yet less so than that of animal lives (yet the collective impact of the plant kingdom on the whole seems to exceed that of the animal kingdom). In a sense, plant lives are "closer" to the energy (spirit) (consciousness) of the (body of the) planetary logos than either mineral or animal (or even human) lives, since plant lives are interactive on vital etheric and astral levels without being absorbed or distracted on those levels. The underlying consciousness of plant lives is relatively active, albeit with moderately limited range and scope of awareness.

The karmic balance between the plant kingdom and the other kingdoms is more-or-less steady-state, without favoring any of the associated kingdoms (lifewaves). Plant lives contribute directly to the animal and human kingdoms and indirectly (etherically) to the mineral kingdom. Mineral lives contribute indirectly to the plant kingdom, while animal and human lives contribute directly (in the sense of stimulation on etheric and astral levels).

If there is any real obligation (imbalance), it is an obligation on the part of humanity towards the plant kingdom in the sense of needing a more considerate

and respectful appreciation of the role that the plant lives play in human welfare (and the welfare of the planetary body as a whole). Humanity tends to behold the lower kingdoms relatively callously (and unfairly) from a perspective of (false) superiority. Yet, in fact, the (whole) of the lifewave inhabiting the plant kingdom is comparable (equivalent) (albeit not identically-equivalent) to the human kingdom (and no less important to the planetary logos).

† Commentary No. 948

The Plant Kingdom 2

The polarity of the plant kingdom is such that direct, occult relationship (more properly, mystical relationship) with humanity is facilitated to a large extent. Plants are much more compatible with mineral, animal, and human lives than mineral lives are relative to animal and human lives. There are exceptions, e.g., poisonous plants, but in general, plant lives are a relatively obvious expression of the planetary heart-center and exhibit a (passive) service motive. Thus plants are magnetically (but not electrically) compatible with human lives. While plant lives are not individualized, they are relatively more individual (localized in expressive consciousness) than mineral lives. Thus the birth or death of a plant (form) is a more significant transition than the transformation of mineral lives from one form to another. There is much more of an ebb and flow to plant life than mineral life (or even animal life).

While strong identification with another kingdom is generally counter-productive and counter-evolutionary, healthy associations and collaborations with the plant kingdom are generally mutually-evolutionary in nature. Plant lives can and do contribute to the poise and stability of the immediate etheric and astral environment. People do contribute to the relative poise (constructive stimulus) of any associated plant lives (domestic or otherwise). However, (direct or specific) psychic links with plant lives are not generally encouraged, except in some collective and impersonal sense. In a sense, plant lives are more refined (and therefore relatively more sensitive) on their level than mineral, animal, or human lives are on their respective levels. Thus particular care should be taken to think and feel hospitably towards and among plant lives.

Trained occultists generally do not work as much with plant lives as with mineral lives, yet trained mystics and esotericists work more with plant lives than either mineral or animal lives, because of the depth and breadth of impact (synergism) of the collective consciousness of plant lives and because working with plants is inherently safer and more directly constructive than working with deva lives. Working closely and effectively with (conscious and semi-conscious) deva lives requires much more training and ability. Thus, in a sense, the plant kingdom helps to bridge between the human kingdom and the (parallel) deva kingdom. The relationship between humanity and the plant kingdom should be one of mutual respect and appreciation, without any significant imposition of humanity upon the plant lives.

Consuming plant forms as food is a necessary part of the evolutionary scheme, while wasting or abusing plant resources is not. The obligation of the plant kingdom in the sense of food resources is to the whole of humanity and not particular to any segment. Thus all of humanity have a responsibility for equitable distribution and utilization (consumption) of plant resources. And all of humanity have a responsibility for protection of continuity of collective plant lives (e.g., reforestation). In a sense, humanity are the elder brothers and stewards of the lives of the lower kingdoms, even though on a more fundamental level there is no distinction of superior-inferior lives.

Thus respectful collaboration of humanity with the various plant lives is healthy while direct or personal identification with specific plant lives is not generally healthy. While mineral lives play a relatively small role in human health (e.g., trace stimulus), plant lives play a relatively much larger role (e.g., air to breathe, food for consumption, proximity provision of qualified vital energy).

Sadhana Pada 3

“Karma itself has its root in these five hindrances and must come to fruition in this life or in some later life.” The five hindrances (avidya, the sense of personality, desire, hate, and the sense of attachment), the life and circumstances of the incarnated person, and karma are effectively inseparable. The five hindrances provide (karmic) opportunity through entanglement and overcoming. One who is entangled in any one, some, or all of the five impediments creates karma which in turn determines his or her circumstances. As the hindrances are progressively overcome, the karmic balance is progressively restored, and the student is progressively liberated into unimpeded realms (or is able to function unimpeded in hindered realms (though still in accord with the laws of that hindered realm)). In the lower sense, karma is binding, in the higher sense karma is liberating. In either case, karma contributes to the evolution of consciousness.

There are three kinds of karma (latent, active, and new), each of which provides roots or seeds that must eventually be fulfilled or balanced. That activity which is counter-evolutionary evokes a karmic response (negative feedback leading to restoration of balance (flow)). That activity which is evolutionary also evokes a karmic response (positive feedback which increases or sustains the evolutionary momentum). The purpose of “liberation” or “self-realization” is not to be free from karma, but to minimize karmic limitations. The person (personality) that is entangled in the five hindrances is relatively asleep, lacks real awareness, and lacks any real ability for self-determination. The person (not personality) that has overcome the five impediments has awakened to the higher consciousness (and is therefore functioning as more than merely a personality), has subordinated itself to that greater life, and therefore moves freely through the patterns of life and consciousness in the two worlds (lower and higher). Such a person is unimpeded by pleasure or pain and flows with the (broader) evolutionary force.

Yet for those who are entangled, the natural consequences of their contrary (counter-evolutionary) activities involve pain in its various forms. One who achieves balance, i.e., who is without desire or attachments, naturally rises

above pleasure and pain, and the otherwise merited (apparently or potentially painful) karmic consequences are thereby (naturally) muted. Thus “attitude” can effectively compensate for (past) errors, but only in the sense that lessons are actually learned (and adjustments in consciousness are actually achieved). The enlightened simply produce no ill effects. The “actions” of the enlightened are in-the-flow of evolutionary momentum and therefore evoke no hindering consequences.

But evolution is progressive and the field of action and consequence becomes more and more subtle. Once freed from the five hindrances one must still deal with more subtle illusions. As the sense of personality is overcome it is then possible to overcome the illusion “that the perceiver and that which is perceived are one and the same” (which implies that one becomes aware of the process of perception and is no longer deceived through false identification). “That which is perceived has three qualities, sattva (rhythm), rajas (mobility), and tamas (inertia).”

The student must understand (1) the nature of these three gunas or qualities, (2) his or her own nature, and (3) how one’s own nature is related to the three gunas. In this process of self-realization the student progressively awakens to the greater reality. [Book II, Sutras 12-18]

† Commentary No. 950

Sadhana Pada 4

“The divisions of the gunas (or qualities of matter) are fourfold: the specific, the non-specific, the indicated, and the untouchable.” The specific refers to form and manifested elements (five elements, five sense organs, five organs of action, and the mind) (i.e., sixteen means of perception and activity in the phenomenal world); the non-specific refers to force and the senses (i.e., that which is subjective and intangible) (six tanmatras); the indicated refers to primary substance (the cause of the sixteen and the six); and the untouchable refers to the totality of manifested and unmanifested existence (i.e., the cause of the indicated (the cause of the cause of the sixteen and the six)).

“The seer is pure knowledge (gnosis). Though pure, he looks upon the presented idea through the medium of the mind.” The seer is one who stands above (beyond) the lower self and beholds the lower world of illusion. Presented ideas are forms on the various levels. The seer is not deceived by appearances in the lower world, but recognizes the underlying forces (and context). The mind is the instrument for perception in the lower world, yet for the seer, the mind is refined and tempered such that it serves as an unimpeding and non-distorting instrument.

“All that exists for the sake of the soul.” The soul refers to that which is above and beyond the lower self (personality) (ego), i.e., the logos in the context of manifested purpose. That which exists is (predominantly) the objective universe (illusion), created by and for those who are entangled therein, yet it exists only for those who are so entangled; for those who are (relatively) free, there is no such objective (substantial) universe. For those who are free, who have overcome the modifications of the mind, there is only spirit (energy) (higher consciousness). Those who are not yet liberated live in and sustain their own delusion. Those who are liberated are not so easily self-deceived nor do they continue to create the lesser world (instead they live in a world of more subtle delusion).

One of the essential (requisite) keys to liberation is discrimination. One naturally (ignorantly) associates oneself with apparent existence (the phenomenal world) (body, feelings, thoughts), and learns through that process of association and entanglement, yet this must ultimately be overcome. Without humility and honesty and harmlessness (composite egolessness) one cannot discriminate sufficiently to achieve liberation. Progressively, experience leads to knowledge which leads to understanding which leads to wisdom (realization). With increasing effective (proper) discrimination one gradually overcomes the identification of oneself with that which is ephemeral (merely perceived). This occurs as the soul is brought into manifestation through the refined mind, as intuition displaces intellect, as selflessness replaces ego, as realization overcomes perception.

“When ignorance is brought to an end through non-association with the things perceived, this is the great liberation.” Proper discrimination between the real and the unreal leads to liberation. Seven major modifications of the thinking

principle must be progressively experienced and eventually overcome. These are (1) desire for knowledge, (2) desire for freedom, (3) desire for happiness, (4) desire to do one's duty, (5) sorrow [loneliness], (6) fear [subtle attachments of the mind], and (7) doubt [even more subtle attachments of the mind]. From duality the path leads to unity. Through the various endeavors of the lower self and the realization of the higher self, freedom is achieved. [Book II, Sutras 19-27]

† Commentary No. 951

Anthropomorphization

Anthropomorphization is the process or phenomenon of perceiving or interpreting "what is not human or personal in terms of human or personal characteristics." While anthropomorphizing may be convenient, it nonetheless contributes to the self-centeredness of the human perspective and tends to sustain various illusions concerning existence, manifestation, God, etc. The fundamental problem (conflict) of anthropomorphization is its lack of truth. By perceiving something that is not human or personal in human or personal terms, one deceives oneself into believing that perception or interpretation, i.e., of confusing what is real or true with what is not.

A fairly common practice is perceiving God and/or nature in anthropomorphic or anthropopathic terms, i.e., perceiving (imagining) God either in human terms (form and/or attributes) or having human or somewhat human-like feelings (respectively). The problem is that God (at whatever level) is simply not human and therefore does not in general have any human characteristics. God is so far beyond the form and character (temperament) (quality) (consciousness) of the human being that any attempt to anthropomorphize or anthropopathize God tends to inhibit the realization of what God really is. Anthropomorphic religions have served their purpose and were tailored to the conceptual limitations of the humanity of the time. They were (should have been) merely stepping stones to a more universal, less personal realization.

The problem is compounded in the sense that humanity is evolving toward reunion in consciousness with God (more correctly, evolving toward realization that one is God (already) (but not in the sense of one's humanness)). In order to

achieve that reunion or (realization), one needs to become more Godlike. If one has a false perception of God (e.g., untempered power, being above the law), then one is greatly self-hindered. If one perceives God (the soul) (whatever) anthropomorphically, then one can only evolve according to that extremely limited view. On the other hand, if one realizes the non-anthropomorphic nature of God, recognizing the impersonal nature of the soul (and what lies beyond the soul), then one is more easily able to adapt to the current of evolution in consciousness unhindered (or less hindered) by human limitations.

The problem is further compounded by man's tendency to anthropomorphize lesser, greater, or different species. Animals are not human. They do not "think" or even "feel" in the same way that humans think and feel. Their experience is not comparable to some subhuman or less human analog. They "do" things, but not for "reasons" or for "feelings" as if they were human. Likewise the devas are not human, do not "think" or "feel" at all as humans do (in fact, their consciousness is so markedly different than "human" that any such attribution of human characteristics is quite misleading (and potentially dangerous)).

The real problem is man's tendency toward self-centeredness, i.e., interpreting others' behavior, etc., (human or otherwise) in one's own terms, according to one's own nature (character, temperament, values). Man's self-centered perspective is the greatest limitation that he (she) has in this evolutionary context. Man lives four-dimensionally (three spatial dimensions plus a temporal dimension) and has "human" characteristics (thoughts, feelings, etc.). Reality is vastly greater than this. The soul is not constrained to four dimensions and cannot be described (in truth) according to human (personal) attributes and characteristics. In order to reach that truth, one must overcome all of one's self-centered (and anthropomorphic) conditioning.

Aversion

Aversion is defined as a feeling of repugnance or distaste towards something with a desire to avoid or turn from it, a settled dislike or antipathy, and is, in the metaphysical sense, comparatively equivalent to (negative) attachment or (negative) entanglement. Aversions include dislikes, hatreds, and phobias. All aversions must ultimately be overcome. Contrariness is aversive, but non-conformity is not necessarily aversive.

One of the necessary stages of human development is entanglement in liking and disliking. The purpose of passing through this stage is the development of certain senses and abilities, culminating in a proper sense of discrimination (discernment) between what is real and what is unreal (this sense of discernment is absolutely necessary for passage (advancement) (elevation) (evolution in consciousness) into that which is real) (ultimately, in choosing (more correctly accepting the call for) the spiritual path of intelligent choicelessness). In the process, it is natural (and necessary) to develop a sense of personal preferences, conscious and unconscious, that determine likes and dislikes. But, eventually, one must pass beyond this stage of liking and disliking and become aware of a higher order, and to develop that higher awareness one must become disentangled from the whole process of liking and disliking, of having beliefs, opinions, etc.

In beginning that process of disentanglement, one naturally tends to focus on the more obvious attachments, people and experiences and things to or with which one is attached, absorbed, enamored, etc., i.e., where there is attraction (and concomitant distraction). Great care should be taken that the process of disentanglement proceeds in a balanced manner, i.e., avoiding the potential coldness of the head-centered nature. One can be detached from things formerly attached to without being averse to them. This is the first sense of aversion.

A second sense of aversion has to do with negative attachments, i.e., to dislikes and feelings of aversion from people and experiences and things disliked. These attachments (and aversions) must also be disentangled, and the process is potentially much more subtle than is the case of positive attachments and

entanglements (based on likes) because the student is generally less aware of (the more subtle) aversions and because it is inherently more difficult to overcome a negative bias or prejudice than a positive one (a negative bias is relatively more coarse than a comparable positive one) (i.e., separateness is inherently coarse, attractive bonding is inherently (relatively) less coarse).

But both likes and dislikes must be overcome, without aversion, which means that one must be (become) detached and indifferent (in the sense of being unaffected) (in the higher, mature sense) yet still be able to function intelligently and constructively (with compassion and insight). This is not an easy undertaking. There is much in the lower world of human endeavor that tends to attract or repel the human sensibilities, depending on the character, temperament, and values (conditioning) of each person. There is also much that is not so easy to understand, which is hard to not be averse to, such as apparent injustice. One of the dangers in becoming detached and disentangled is passivity. The student who is properly detached and unentangled is neither active (involved) or passive (indifferent), but is simply aware of the balance of nature (karma) and working intuitively (without personal judgment) for the evolution of consciousness in the broadest sense. Thus the non-involved, non-averse student functions intelligently and in collaboration with natural evolutionary forces.

† Commentary No. 953

Becoming and Being

Becoming is defined as the process of coming into existence, of coming to be, of happening, of undergoing change or development. In the context of the fundamental process of manifestation (which is the evolution of consciousness through experience and expression (and service)) and in the human context, becoming in the lower sense is simply the manifestation of the (monadic) higher self as a human being (personality and soul), while becoming in the higher sense is that process of evolution in consciousness in which one becomes that soul (and higher self), in overcoming the delusion of reality (existence) of personality (ego) (mind) and achieving manifestation of the unhindered soul. Throughout the field of evolution there is stimulation of life and consciousness toward fulfillment of evolutionary purpose.

Becoming is also defined as marked by propriety, in the sense that one who is actively and consciously becoming (or progressing toward becoming) in the higher sense is proprietous (manifests propriety). Propriety in the lower sense refers to the quality or state of being proper, while in the higher sense it refers to one's true nature (God) (monadic being). Becoming (in the sense of propriety) leads to being in the higher sense.

Being in the lower sense is defined as the quality or state of having existence, i.e., something that is apparently conscious, living, etc. The human being appears to exist in the lower worlds. But that is a shadow-existence and not a real-existence. Being in this lower sense is illusionary in many respects, as what appears to be is only a very partial (constrained) and distorted reflection of what truly is. Identification with what is not real only compounds the illusion (delusion). Identification with what is real requires truly unhindered awareness of the God-self (being) within. Being is defined in the higher sense as actuality. For the human being, the fundamental aspect of evolution is becoming what we truly are, while being is what we truly are. What we truly are is the fulfillment of the human archetype, in the context of union with divinity. The archetype exists (on its own level). That which is manifested appears to exist (on its level), but that existence is not real compared with the archetype.

There is, in all of this, a paradox or apparent contradiction of effort (becoming) (in (as) the non-real) leading to non-effort (being) (in (as) the real), and the question of purpose in evolution. If one is truly the archetype, then of what value is it to the archetype if its manifestation (reflection) actually evolves toward itself? Is an unfulfilled archetype less real than a fulfilled archetype, on its level? From the lower perspective (of the human being in incarnation, with some degree of soul contact) there is the realization of impelling (eventually compelling) evolution, even if there is not sufficient understanding of such. If the process of evolution in consciousness is necessary yet not real (at least not in itself), then is the fulfillment of evolution in consciousness any more real? One answer is that effort (becoming) is required in order to reach non-effort (being) and that non-effort is required for realization and that realization includes (indeed) greater reality for a fulfilled archetype (and since that final process requires non-effort, one must accept the premise of apparent contradiction).

Thus, in (lower) being (becoming), one is not real. In (higher) being, one is real. In the context of any aspect or totality of manifestation, reality is necessarily relative. In the final analysis, one (who lives at the level of being rather than at the level of becoming) is propriety.

† Commentary No. 954

Biblio-Psychometry 1

Psychometry is defined as the perception of realization of knowledge or understanding concerning some object or subject (and/or its associations) through contact with or proximity to the respective object or subject. Biblio-psychometry refers to the psychometric process (and associated phenomena) potentially involved (1) in reading or studying some written work (e.g., book) and (2) in writing or drafting some such work.

In reading or studying (contemplating) some subject, one is naturally and psychically placed to some extent in touch with the (atmosphere of the) writer's mind and temperament at the time and place of its writing as well as that region of the astral and/or mental planes where such "energy" is found concerning the subject matter. The extent of biblio-psychometric relationship or association depends on the relative sensitivity of the reader, the relative consciousness of the reader, the relative focus of the reader, the relative potency and nature of the writer's personality (mind), and the relative potency of the ideas or concepts involved (in the context of the reader).

The casual reader is not likely to be affected very much. The serious reader of relatively mature temperament is not likely to be adversely affected by anything other than relatively coarse subject matter. However, one who reads something of relatively coarse subject matter (e.g., that which is sexually stimulating, that which includes graphic portrayals of violence, that which vividly describes the lower human nature in coarse terms, etc.) will naturally evoke (and potentially manifest) a similar "character" from within one's lower self, to whatever extent there is an affinity, and even (potentially) induce such a character (the dark side of one's human nature is never entirely eliminated (though hopefully that dark side is increasingly tempered by the higher nature)). Coarse repetition

(frequent, unconsciously sympathetic reading of coarse materials) can be quite detrimental to one's character, temperament, and values (by association (passive (psychometric) assimilation) and through the consequential lessening of self-control).

On the other hand, the serious and responsive reader of meaningful philosophical and spiritual works will naturally (and psychometrically) evoke some degree of comparable upliftment. Where the reader is also discerning, then considerable progress (understanding) can be achieved through such reading and studying, particularly where the "energy" is brought into one's daily life and practice in the form of qualification. But one must become and then remain discerning, for the personality instrument has certain passive (psychometric) and certain aversive (reactive) aspects and tendencies, and much can be entrained (or rejected) unconsciously that may or may not be true or pertinent. At first one must learn to be discriminating (utilizing the rational mind), but eventually one must transcend discrimination through intuitive discernment.

Truth is relative and human perception of truth is necessarily partial. Virtually every serious philosophical and/or spiritual book has something of value to the spiritual student, whether he or she realizes that value or not. Some works have substantial philosophical and spiritual content and/or quality. Some works have very little. Because people (writers) are imperfect, have personality biases (conditioning), etc., a writer may glean something of value one moment and something of no apparent value the next, i.e., if much of a book or article "rings true" it does not mean that all of the book is necessarily true (and conversely if much of a book or article "rings false" it does not mean necessarily that all of it is false).

Biblio-Psychometry 2

From another perspective there is the issue of the reader's focus. What does one (choose to) read (which is a reflection or indication of one's values)? Does one (tend to) read that which is coarse and stimulating to the lower nature? Does one prefer to read that which is merely entertaining (drivel)? Or that which appeals to the worldly nature and the (necessarily (lower) self-centered) ego? Does one choose to read things of educational if not spiritual or philosophical value? Or does one choose to read that which tends to evoke the higher nature and help one upon the way?

This does not mean that simply reading and studying materials of value is a means of salvation. The "answers" to one's (true and inner) quest are invariably not found in written (or spoken) (or visual) materials (nor even in mundane personality experience), but keys or pointers may be found in the philosophical (theosophical) (spiritual) literature. Truth comes necessarily from within (the higher self); but the mind that would embrace that truth must heretofore be prepared and qualified; the mind must have within its relative familiarity some indications or threads of the truth. Or else when the truth is presented to the mind, the mind will have no means of framing or presenting the "truth" to the waking-consciousness. Of course when one can function properly (intuitively), there is less (very little) reliance on the mind; things are simply realized (but without the qualified mind things cannot be "presented" in any less-than-abstractive-subjective manner).

Materials of greatest philosophical and spiritual content and value are those that provide indications of the truth (keys and pointers) and for which the writer's personality is not intrusive. If the writer's personality is involved in the process to any real extent (emotionally and/or intellectually), then the philosophical and spiritual value is substantially weakened or lessened (distorted) thereby. Of even greater import, where the personality is substantially present (either on the part of the writer or on the part of the reader), the psychometric (associative) value is substantially compromised and lessened. Where the personality is tempered, then the reader can (potentially)

embrace the “energy” of the source of the written material, i.e., the ideas as they exist on their own level on the mental plane.

Through proper focus on “better” materials (without evidence of personality intrusion), and through corresponding psychometric association, one can build a bridge in consciousness to the region of associated ideas and begin to work directly (subjectively and contemplatively) on concrete and abstract mental levels. With persistence (and wisdom), that bridge can be strengthened and broadened most effectively. Even if the mind cannot understand the materials being embraced, the “energy” can be embraced on the higher levels and evoked constructively on personality levels.

With the diversity of materials available to the spiritual student, some sense of discrimination (preferably discernment) is needed. Through biblio-psychometry, one can learn to quickly discern the relative quality and value of a book (without judging superficially based upon appearance, style, etc.) and in reading through a book one can discern those elements of relatively higher content, quality, and value from those of relatively lower content, quality, and value. Through focus on higher concepts (and through focus in the higher self) one can substantially enhance one’s progress upon the way and simultaneously increase one’s effectiveness in service to humanity (through the character and quality and temperament expressed).

† Commentary No. 956

The Animal Kingdom 1

In the context of the Earth’s planetary evolutionary scheme, the animal kingdom is an involutory domain (of un-self-conscious evolution) that bridges to a large extent between the plant kingdom and the human kingdom (and to some extent between the human kingdom and the deva kingdom) [the chain of kingdoms (mineral-plant-animal-human) is linear and progressive and involves multiple parallel paths (aligned with the path of evolution), while the link between the parallel kingdoms (deva and human) is non-linear and perpendicular to the path (yet not counter-evolutionary)].

While animal lives are clearly more dynamic than plant lives, all of the kingdoms are complementary (and comparable in value) and there is substantial activity associated with less dynamic lives, however apparent or not. Animal lives have some degree of active awareness of their surroundings, and interact individually with those surroundings, but tend to rely a great deal (unconsciously) on the collective (group) instincts. Animal lives, like mineral and plant lives, are collective in consciousness, not individualized, but approaching individualization. Therefore there is relatively greater (apparent) independence in each animal species (each species (and to some extent each sub-species) has a distinct consciousness). There is considerable diversity between species and sub-species, relatively little diversity between members of a particular group (which have a common group spirit and therefore a common (instinctual) basis for experience and expression). But the group spirit is of a higher (non-human) lifewave than the species engrouped, and therefore (in many cases) substantially more intelligent than indicated by the animal lives themselves.

While the principal (evolutionary) karmic role of the plant kingdom is to express the etheric energy of the planetary logos, the principal (evolutionary) karmic role of the animal lifewave is to express the astral energy of the planetary logos and (secondarily) to acquire experience in preparation for individualization. There is no obligation to provide food for the human kingdom (as there is for the plant kingdom); humanity has (wrongly) appropriated food from the animal kingdom (and must eventually face the consequences of that appropriation). There is an obligation for humanity to cultivate various animal lives in preparation for individualization (e.g., in domestication by association (not appropriation)). Obviously some species are "closer" to humanity in this sense (e.g., dogs and cats) and benefit substantially from that association (proximity) (stimulation).

The ring-pass-not of an animal species or group is limited only by the ability of the group spirit to "cover" the geographical extent of all the members of the group. Animal lives are not directly involved in the vitality of the planetary atmosphere (as are plant lives), but draw vitality from the planetary web to support their activities, while being more involved (in consciousness) with astral energies and the cultivation and expression of various animal instincts (sensitivity, feeling). Animal lives draw more from the astral than do human

lives, yet human lives contribute more to the planetary astral than do animal lives.

Thus both animal and human lives are active participants in the astral life of the planet, while plant and mineral lives are not. The underlying consciousness of the animal lives is more directly active astrally than that of human lives, while the underlying consciousness of human lives is relatively unconscious on astral levels, even though highly interactive on those levels.

† Commentary No. 957

The Animal Kingdom 2

Animal lives function astrally (emotionally) as their highest practical expression, while human lives (in principle) function mentally as their highest practical expression (most people are still emotionally polarized and have limited active mental activity). Animal lives do not have thinking or reasoning capacity. Animals do have brains (which are not in any sense minds) that (unconsciously) relate instinct to experience and expression, but the “thinking” is accomplished by the group spirit which is not of the animal lifewave per se.

The animal experience implies considerable adaptability to (relatively coarse) physical and emotional conditions, culminating in physical humanity. Like most lifewaves, the animal lifewave has experimental aspects (e.g., diversity for cultivation of adaptability and viability, with some lines proceeding through evolution and others terminating (keeping in mind the distinction between the animal form and the life and consciousness that lives through that form)). The apparent competition of animal lives, species, etc. is related to the intended evolutionary diversity (breadth of experience and expression) on the part of the lifewave as a whole (culminating in human diversity but superseded (unified) in the next lifewave beyond the present humanity). Care should be taken not to view the animal experience by appearances, but to appreciate the underlying purposes for such diverse experience and expression (and the qualifying rays of the animal kingdom (third ray of adaptability and fourth ray of harmony through conflict)).

The polarity of the animal kingdom is such that direct, occult relationships can exist between animal and human lives (constructively in the sense of healthy association, destructively in the sense of appropriation, identification, stimulation of human animal tendencies, etc.). The line of demarcation between animal and human lives is not at all as clear as that between the plant and animal lives. In fact, the only substantive differences between animal and human lives are (1) individuality, (2) relative quality, and (3) the spark of mind. Animals are not (yet) individualized; humans are (by definition). Animals have relatively crude (coarse) physical, etheric, and astral bodies, while humans are relatively more refined. Animals are governed by group spirits, while humans are more-or-less self-governed (in practice, most human beings are governed by their own desires and tastes (selfishness) (in the context of astral relationships and the astral atmosphere), while in principle human beings are self-conscious and self-determined).

In practice, the human being inhabits an animal body that has all of the inherited animal instincts of its species (i.e., race). The human being is intended to cultivate his or her self-consciousness and rise above the animal aspects of being (while effectively utilizing the animal body as an effective (and respected) instrument. But the line is not always clear, and reversion to the animal state is possible (temporarily in times of degradation or anger, permanently in the sense of pathological (emotional) degradation).

Animals are not properly the servants (in the lower sense) of humanity (any more than less economically viable people are properly the servants of more economically viable people). But humans are (karmically) the servants (stewards) (custodians) of (for) the animal kingdom. The real relationship between animal and human lives (and the real relationship between people) is one of collaboration, with humanity intended to provide (non-imposing) leadership in consciousness (quality) (refinement) for the animals.

Witchcraft

Witchcraft is defined (in the conventional or popular sense) as the use of sorcery or magic, where sorcery implies “the use of power gained from the assistance or control of evil spirits” and where magic implies “the use of means believed to have supernatural power over natural forces.” Unfortunately, these notions (witchcraft, sorcery, magic) do not effectively characterize (proper) witchcraft and much misunderstanding and superstition has resulted from the conventional fear-of-the-unknown (and popularization of the dark side).

Thus in the popular vernacular, witchcraft is generally associated with occultism, with the feminine practice of magic, and with evil or selfish intent. Yet, in practice, witchcraft is not limited to feminine practice (though women tend to have more affinity for and sensitivity toward the natural forces) nor with the dark side of occultism. That which is occult may be “good” (beneficent) (constructive) (selfless) (based in wisdom) or “evil” (maleficent) (destructive) (selfish or self-centered) (based in ignorance), depending on the motives, methods (practices), and relative understanding of the practitioner. More properly that which is occult is generally somewhere in between. Witchcraft, likewise. If one knows what one is doing (i.e., through proper training, understanding, etc.) and if the motives and practices are relatively pure, then witchcraft is a “positive” experience and expression.

The real basis (relative goodness) depends on the associated morals and ethics. If witchcraft is utilized properly (constructively), without any taint of selfishness or imposition (i.e., with sound moral and ethical consideration), then the whole process is qualified by the (more) noble aspect of human nature. Conversely, if witchcraft is utilized improperly (destructively), with selfish intent or with imposition (i.e., without sound moral and ethical consideration), then the process is tainted by the lower human (animal) nature. This is a very important aspect, for the relative quality of “involved” consciousness determines the quality and nature of the spirits or forces attracted and utilized. The human animal nature (being lower or coarse) will naturally attract relatively coarse spirits (elementals, etc.) and draw the practitioner into or toward the dangers inherent in the lower astral and the left-hand path (of black

magic). Conversely, the higher or more noble human nature will naturally attract relatively refined spirits and generally avoid the pitfalls associated with the lower manifestations.

Even when properly practiced, witchcraft is not without its temptations (e.g., sincere but misguided imposition), for with “power” come to the surface the lesser aspects of the human nature, and so the opportunity to face up to them and transform those weaknesses into strengths. There are, however, two aspects of witchcraft that must be transcended: (1) reliance on external forces (control of the elementals and lesser devas) rather than internal forces (collaboration with the higher devas) and (2) reliance on or focus on the earth-water-air-fire (mother) (nature) (material) elements (form) rather than reliance on the non-material elements (life and consciousness). These two aspects are of course the same, from different perspectives, but the student does need to transform the craft into inner union rather than outer absorption, however natural that outer absorption may be (for the personality nature).

In the final analysis, there is a dark side and a light side to witchcraft, a male side and a female side, a lower (external) aspect (personality-centered) and a higher (internal) aspect (soul-centered). If the light side is embraced, then the lower aspect will eventually be drawn into (unto) the higher.

† Commentary No. 959

Sadhana Pada 5

“When the means to yoga have been steadily practiced and when impurity has been overcome, enlightenment takes place leading up to full illumination.” These (the eight means and self-discipline (self-purification)) (spiritual practice) constitute the dharma of the spiritual student and lead to proper discrimination and discernment and in turn to full self-realization. The eight means of yoga are (1) the commandments, (2) the rules, (3) posture, (4) right control of the life-force, (5) abstraction, (6) attention, (7) meditation, and (8) contemplation. While the five commandments refer primarily to the outer life and the five rules refer primarily to the inner life, each outer (inner) aspect has an inner (outer) correspondence.

(1) The commandments (yama) (right conduct) include the practice of (a) harmlessness, (b) truth, (c) abstention from theft, (d) abstention from incontinence, and (e) abstention from avarice. These are a matter of “self-control or forbearance” and the role and place of the spiritual student in relation to “others and the outside world.” Harmlessness includes physical, emotional, and mental practice. The practice of truth (honesty to (with) all beings and to (with) oneself) is never preempted by harmlessness (nor should it ever be inconsistent with harmlessness). Abstention from theft refers to any wrong appropriation (physical or otherwise). Abstention from incontinence is desirelessness. Abstention from avarice is a higher (astral and concrete mental (covetousness)) counterpart to abstention from theft in the physical sense.

(2) The rules (niyama) (right observance) relate to self-governance and “form the basis of character” and include (a) internal and external purification, (b) contentment, (c) fiery aspiration, (d) spiritual reading, and (e) devotion. Purification includes refinement of the physical, etheric, astral (emotional), and concrete mental bodies (nature). Contentment refers to the poised (non-intrusive) mind, the equilibrated (tempered) (yet non-inertial, non-passive) mind that affords the student the opportunity to participate intelligently in the evolution of consciousness (without impediment of (the separative, independent, self-centered) mind (ego) (personality)).

Fiery aspiration does not refer to a particularly emotional state, but rather to the state of “higher enthusiasm” for the spiritual path, the practices of the path, etc. In other words, the path is embraced seriously and the rest of life in the lower worlds is placed in the context of the path. It implies confidence and commitment and determination to fulfill one’s dharma. Spiritual reading refers to the development and practice of spiritual sensitivity, of awareness of reality, of cause and effect relationships, becoming and remaining awake (free from mundane and/or personal absorption). Devotion refers to the relationship of the waking-consciousness to God, the soul (realization of the divinity within).

“When thoughts which are contrary to yoga are present there should be the cultivation of their opposite.” Thoughts are quite potent, for good or ill. Spiritual advancement requires a progressive qualification and transformation of the thinking process. The first step is positive (honest and constructive)

thinking to help build the student's momentum upon the path (and conversely, the elimination of negative (less than honest and/or destructive) thinking). What a person thinks (and feels) is a reflection of that person's character. The spiritual student needs to become disentangled from thoughts leading to form-entanglement (which (disentanglement) does not preclude intelligent form-building). [Book II, Sutras 28-33]

† Commentary No. 960

Sadhana Pada 6

The first step (in cultivating the higher mind) involves active thinking and includes utilization of the constructive imagination. Many (ordinary, habitual) thoughts are contrary to yoga and should be overcome by cultivation of their opposites. Eventually, one rises above the whole arena of pairs-of-opposites (to non-thinking) but until then the student should proceed with positive thinking (rather than suppression of negative thinking). All of the commandments and rules contribute to the value system of the student. The student's thoughts should reflect and focus upon and express those values. Improper (spiritually impertinent) thoughts are counter-evolutionary. Proper thoughts are evolutionary. Thinking produces effects appropriate to the character, quality, and intention of the thinker (i.e., his or her thoughts).

Along with proper thinking (and feeling), harmlessness and truthfulness constitute a crucial three-dimensional approach to the (practices of the) path. Each (harmless and truthfulness) (and their effect on thinking and feeling and behavior) contributes to improvement of the immediate synergistic atmosphere and affects anyone who enters into or passes through that atmosphere. Only when one is living in harmony and balance (truth) with all of life can the student truly begin to appreciate reality. Until that time, all of the actions (feelings) (thoughts) that are other-than-harmless or other-than-truthful (or contrary to yoga) tend to cloud the student's perception and inhibit realization.

When the student has achieved purity, desirelessness (abstention from theft) (desires and takes nothing for himself (herself)), and continence, the student then participates in the flow of energy such that whatever is needed for the work (dharma) (the path) (service) is readily available (limited only by the karmic

bounds of circumstances) [the enlightened student is always in the right place at the right time with the right demeanor (wisdom) and available energies]. The enlightened (non-egoistic) student is thereby not distracted by attachment to form (his or her own or others), emotional (personal) entanglements, or opinions (concrete mental attachments). The student is then free to work through form (physical, emotional, and concrete mental levels) in contributing to (participating in) the work of the path (evolution in (non-individual) consciousness).

Through purification (and adherence to truth) comes clear perception (knowledge, understanding, and wisdom). "Spiritual reading results in contact with the soul (divinity within)." Spiritual reading (progressively proper sensitivity) is consequential, and follows from the other commandments and rules (spiritual practice) [in fact, while some are prerequisites for others, most contribute synergistically and simultaneously to the whole such that self-realization is achieved only when sufficient "quality" is achieved in all areas].

(3) Posture (asana) (right poise) refers to the physical, emotional, and mental demeanor of the student. This practice does not require specific (literal) physical postures, but requires a certain quality (poise) and attitude on all levels of one's personality expression. "The posture assumed must be steady and easy." "Steadiness and ease of posture is to be achieved through persistent slight effort and through the concentration of the mind upon the infinite (reality)." The student should achieve and maintain spiritual poise (qualified balance of physical, emotional, and mental natures) (balance of one's lower (personality) nature with the higher self, external world, etc.), easily and naturally (almost effortlessly). [Book II, Sutras 34-48]

Biblio-Psychometry 3

Another aspect of biblio-psychometry is the means by which writers acquire information to be included in their written works. At one extreme is that of the author, who (largely unconsciously) relies on his or her own personality (education, training, experience, imagination, etc.) to write either for educational and/or entertainment purposes (the author's or the readers'). Such works are inherently (if even subtly) egoistic and very much limited by (to) the author's own personality atmosphere, and as such, draw heavily on the immediate environment (context) of (lower) consciousness (i.e., from the immediate astral and concrete mental levels (and associations on those levels) of the personality) [and in this sense the "author" is simply drawing from the nearby worldly environment].

At the other extreme are the wholly enlightened and meaningful works that are "gleaned" through psychometric involvement on (concrete and/or abstract) mental and intuitive levels, without (much) recourse to personality intrusion. In such works there is no authorship (as the self-realized "writer" understands that he or she is simply fulfilling a role). The ideas do not belong to the writer, for the writer is simply an instrument of association (with the ideas being embraced). Of course (egoistic) writers will claim "credit" for their apparent accomplishments, and even when the truth is partially realized, will persist in rationalizing attribution-for-sake-of-credibility. Thus, even egoistic writers can psychometrically touch various concrete mental levels and draw upon the wealth and diversity of material available. But only (relatively) non-egoistic (spiritually-realized) writers can "touch" the higher levels and deal effectively (non-intellectually) with philosophical and spiritual concepts.

There is a region of the astral plane in which the stimulating "energy" of coarseness (self-indulgence, violence, etc.) persists. Writers who "tap-into" this region are to a large extent corrupting themselves in the process. Thus writers (and actors) must have something of themselves in what they write (or do). Likewise there is a region of the concrete mental plane in which the "energy" of various practical ideas persists. And there is a region of the abstract mental plane in which the "energy" of philosophical and spiritual ideas persists. Each

of these may be embraced to the extent that the “seeker” has an affinity for the “energy” and to the extent of the seeker’s ability to function (even unconsciously) on those respective levels. Each region is non-uniform and roughly (informally) divided into sub-regions of more particular focus.

Those who “tap-into” the coarser regions may “come back” with demons of their own making. Those who “tap-into” the more refined regions may “come back” with angels of higher encouragement. With persistence these links can be strengthened (for good or ill). With proper discrimination (discernment), psychometric links can be quite useful and constructive. But great care needs to be taken, for the student is already limited by his or her own conditioning, and psychometric associations tend to compound that conditioning.

Because these “ideas” are freely available to those who can “touch” them, they may be embraced simultaneously (and apparently independently). Sometimes cultural, philosophical, religious, or scientific “ideas” are “revealed” to two or more people independently. In some cases, the spread of “ideas” are directly intended as part of the Hierarchical evolutionary plan (otherwise it is a matter of the more underlying (indirect) intention in the sense of consequential (karmic) unfoldment). But in no sense are these “revelations” properly uniquely attributable to the person or people who first appear to embrace them.

† Commentary No. 962

Buffered Consciousness

One of the keys to psychological absorption is provided in the Guirdjeff-Ouspensky system in the concept of buffered consciousness. Humanity is involved and absorbed (psychologically entangled) in manifestation such that awareness is quite limited, by conditioning, by circumstances, even by transient evolutionary necessity.

The principal factor of absorption is ignorance. The human being in general has no realization of his or her true nature, the purpose of his or her existence (incarnation), the nature of the universe (evolution, karma, etc.), the superficiality of material existence, etc. As the human being evolves in

consciousness there is successive realization culminating in self-realization or awakening to the higher self. In the meantime, virtually all of the apparent forces and factors in the objective world conspire to keep humanity in ignorance. This is due almost entirely to the inherent inertia of matter and the submission and emersion of humanity in matter (physically, emotionally, and mentally). But it is also due to the (needed evolutionary) consequences of the experience of struggling with this emersion and rising above and beyond this state of conditioned existence.

Much of this conditioned existence (absorption) (psychological sleep) is built or compounded upon ignorance, based on (unconscious) psychological comfort and the (unconscious) psychological evasion of inner and outer contradictions. Psychological sleep is in a sense a matter of self-deception. In failing to recognize the reality of manifested existence, human (personality) consciousness contrives unconsciously, and collectively creates a model of manifestation consistent with quite limited understanding (assumptive delusion). That model generally includes the delusion of separate existence (as personalities) and the delusion of material reality (denial of that which is spiritual). The human being does not want to believe in the superficial and transient nature of life in the lower world (and the superficial and transient nature of the lower self or personality) so that a belief system is contrived to accommodate psychological comfort (sometimes through religion, sometimes through personal philosophy, always through rationalization (conscious or otherwise)). In any event, the unconscious assumptions that are made about manifested existence, which contradict reality, contribute to the continued enslavement of human beings to unrealistic patterns of sense perception.

In order for a person to awaken from this sleep of deep psychological conditioning (which has been sustained for countless incarnations), a person requires certain shocks (jolts) to the psychological system. Gradual evolution does not provide many major crises or shocks, but there are (merited) occasional shocks (to the unconscious) which spur the individual onward (or back to within the bandwidth of the evolutionary path). Once the evolution of consciousness reaches the point of conscious appreciation of reality, then the series of shocks (intense experience) moves more to the realm of conscious psychological experience and the need for shocks is lessened. But whenever the serious student strays sufficiently from the path (e.g., when the student becomes

absorbed in personality experience or expression), the progressive balance must be restored.

The spiritual student is really one who recognizes the limitations of human (personality-centered) consciousness and who works to overcome the implied conditioning, eventually becoming self-realized (awakened to the conscious presence of the higher self).

† Commentary No. 963

Homosexual Basis

There is an occult basis for the condition called homosexuality, even though it is not, occultly, considered a normal or intended condition in human consciousness (and no basis warrants justification). There are actually at least several different ways in which homosexuality can emerge, as a condition, depending on the particular circumstances.

One way involves successive incarnations in a single sex, followed by a change of sex. The normal pattern of incarnations is alternately male and female (the soul being sexless, the personality being bisexual with one or the other sex predominating). In some cases, obviously due to karma and the inclination and/or need of the individual, successive incarnations in a single sex can occur (e.g., in pursuit of the monastic experience). If it is more than two same-sex incarnations, then the tendency is for the individual (at the personality level) to so identify with that particular sex that if the person then incarnates in the other sex, there will still be very strong feelings and/or conscious and unconscious tendencies toward behavior associated with the previous sex, leading to homosexual behavior or at least homosexual tendencies. In this case, one is actually "born" with these tendencies (i.e., genetic make-up is merely consequential) and it is relatively difficult to overcome (the balance must ultimately be restored).

Another way involves simply coming across someone from a previous incarnation with whom one has a strong affinity (potentially sexual attraction) and that person happens to be of the same sex (if opposite sex, then there is more likelihood of a normal (or enhanced) heterosexual (personal) (not

necessarily romantic or sexual) relationship). This case leads generally to a close friendship (mutual appreciation, working together), but if one or both persons is (are) not particularly strong in his (her) (their) sexual orientation (i.e., if one or both is (are) unbalanced), then there is a tendency toward homosexual relationship.

A third way is a matter of extreme sexual intensity, regardless of particular sexual persona. A person who is unbalanced in the sense of having a very strong sexual basis (obsession) may readily form sexual relationships with people of either sex. This may result from extreme indulgence in sexual activity or from extreme denial of one's sexual nature. This sometimes follows an incarnation in which one's natural sexual demeanor is artificially suppressed. In either case, homosexuality or bisexuality accompanied by sexual activity (emphasis) is considered, occultly, to be an extreme or abnormal (not the normal or intended) condition.

The normal condition is heterosexuality, without great emphasis on sexual activity, where same-sex relationships are healthy (non-sexual) and different-sex relationships are likewise (with or without sexual connotations). Sexual activity is properly and predominantly a procreative activity of the underlying human animal. Yet, for many people, sexuality has been appropriated for personal gratification. If that sexual emphasis is allowed to become prevalent, then it becomes very much distractive and inhibitive of spiritual development and growth in consciousness. The spiritual student, regardless of the sexual orientation of the personality, must rise above the temptations of sense gratification, naturally becoming the refined and tempered bisexual personality expression of the non-sexual soul. The human being in incarnation has both male and female aspects and attributes. But one should not allow any extremes (sexual or otherwise) to throw the personality (incarnation) out of balance.

Latency

Latency refers to that which is present but not visible or active, that which can be drawn upon at will or at need, but which is not active of its own accord. An example of a latent human quality is (true) conscience, which is the result or consequence of assimilation of experience, carried forward from lifetime to lifetime. True conscience does not interfere in the life and consciousness of the personality, of its own accord, yet it is evoked naturally, by the need of circumstances, to the extent that the personality is willing or responsive. Another example is the soul which underlies its own manifestation as a personality. The soul is not active in the lower worlds, yet its underlying (imminent) presence is potentially a considerable qualification of the lower life, to the extent that that lower life is responsive.

Latency is not the same thing as potentiality, for that which is potential has yet to be developed and is therefore not capable of imminent expression, while that which is latent has been developed and cultivated (and qualified or tempered) so that it is imminently available. Neither is latency the same as quiescence. That which is quiescent is merely abated or temporarily inactive yet capable of being evoked of its own accord, while that which is latent is not (properly) capable of being evoked of its own accord. That which is reactive, defensive, obtrusive, independent, self-interested, etc., is ultimately counter-evolutionary and obstructive. Latency is an aspect of actuality, albeit in the sense of manifestation (true latency, or latency in the highest sense, is pralaya).

The real (practical) significance of latency (for the human being in incarnation) lies in the notion of conscious cultivation of latent personality. This may seem to be a contradiction, as the personality is virtually always and for virtually everyone, an active, independent, falsely self-determined entity. Yet, in the scheme of human evolution in consciousness, the development of that active personality is a necessary step, as the implied capabilities are needed. Moreover, freedom (perfection) cannot be attained without the student passing through this personality experience. And yet, that freedom is attained through the overcoming of the active and independent nature of personality. That overcoming implies transformation from an active and independent personality

(mind) (ego) to a latent, qualified, responsive, tempered, and valuable personal (individualized) instrument of higher expression.

Latency implies conformity to the evolutionary flow (i.e., progressive equilibrium). That conformity implies an unimpeding and unhindering responsiveness to the needs of evolution in consciousness, without recourse to (independent) (separative) activity. And yet in latency there is also (potentially) great capability and wisdom. In the higher sense, the logos (monad) (God) (Christ) (the soul) is the latent and underlying aspect of the human being, the character and quality (experience and wisdom) of which is imminently available to the waking-consciousness, provided that waking-consciousness has become intelligently responsive (receptive, but not passive) (but not independent either) rather than remaining self-absorbed.

In a sense, latency implies fulfillment. A mature and refined quality or capacity is available as needed but does not function on its own accord and is therefore unobtrusive. Yet latent quality is apparent in (its qualification of) character and temperament and values. As the personality (mind) (ego) is properly qualified and tempered, it becomes a valuable yet predominantly latent aspect of the human being.

† Commentary No. 965

Personality Modes 1

Personality modes are the various patterns or states of personality consciousness (manners of expression) [more properly, the states that correspond respectively to some patterns or manners of experience and expression]. Personality expression is mainly a matter of extent of absorption in mundane and personal consciousness (i.e., the relative absence of awareness or realization), but people vary considerably in the number, style, frequency, etc. of personality modes.

In the context of evolution in consciousness (and the spiritual path), wrong personality modes are those that inhibit the Way, while right personality modes are those that support or facilitate the Way (of progress in higher consciousness). What is right or wrong, in this sense, depends on the relative

stage in evolution of consciousness, i.e., what is actually needed by the particular student in order to progress in consciousness. Karma provides merited learning opportunities, opportunities for experience and expression, but the evolutionary context of the average (non-committed) student is relatively broad (i.e., the attitude (e.g., open-ness) of the student makes a great deal of difference in any karmic context). The committed student evokes more stringent karmic experience, is expected to be more responsive to evoked opportunities, is expected to embrace the values necessary to progress to whatever the next stage may be (while for the non-committed student there is no such expectation). Wrong personality modes inhibit that opportunity for progress. Right personality modes facilitate that opportunity.

The key to “rightness” in personality modes, for the serious student, is to value (and thereby encourage) the personality modes that facilitate progress in consciousness (service and self-development) (awareness and realization). Thus it becomes largely a matter of personal discipline and commitment to sustaining the most effective demeanor (attitudes, character, temperament, values). The self-indulgent “mode” clearly represents absorption in mundane and personal (even experiential) matters which do not directly contribute to progress, while a non-self-indulgent mode offers more freedom to be responsive to higher qualification, to be more awake, more aware, and more realizable (capable of realization). Anything that contributes to non-absorption in mundane and personal matters is of greater value to the (serious) student (and the Path) than that which sustains absorption (in personality-centeredness).

Any personality mode that involves desire, attachments, beliefs, ego, pride, likes and dislikes, etc., (self-indulgence, sensational experience, etc.) inhibits the Way. Any personality mode that allows or facilitates the personality being more responsive to higher impression (less absorbed in the personality itself) facilitates the Way. Through experience, the spiritual student learns which personality modes are inhibitive and which are facilitative, even though the (naturally self-centered) personality would prefer to indulge the contrary. Of course, the absorbed (personality-centered) student is far less able to discriminate these modes and their relative values or to sustain the “right” modes, but eventually the personality becomes sufficiently qualified that the student can effectively realize which modes are which and actually begin to

consciously temper the personality in the direction of cultivating and sustaining the right modes.

Personality modes tend to be inertial (in the sense that one is absorbed at the personality level (in personality-centeredness) (not necessarily in the sense of lacking dynamic response)).

† Commentary No. 966

Personality Modes 2

Being personality-centered means not being aware that one is (being) personality-centered. Virtually everyone is personality-centered virtually all the time. Freedom can only be achieved as the student realizes the truth of his or her personality-centeredness (absorption in mundane and personal experience and expression). Then it becomes possible to be aware of one's personality-centeredness (and associated personality mode(s)) and gradually to rise above that personality-centeredness into a state of freedom in consciousness (i.e., non-absorption in mundane and personal "life" (conscious awareness of higher consciousness) (being awake rather than being asleep in personality)).

People are normally and naturally (inertially) self-indulgent, without realizing that they are so (and without realizing that that very self-indulgence is inhibitive of self-realization (awareness) (freedom from the state of conditioned (personality-centered) consciousness)). "Man" has an amazing ability to rationalize and sustain his or her own delusions, particularly where the ego (personality) (lower self) is concerned. In "doing" whatever feels good (or whatever is rationalized as appropriate) (entertaining the mundane or personal (personality) interests), one is effectively preventing realization (sustaining the inhibitive personality modes). One must therefore (eventually) (if one is to progress beyond personality-centeredness (conditioned, limited, partial existence)) acknowledge self-indulgence for what it is (and for what it lacks in real value), and make a commitment to rise above the petty interests (and rationalized "importance" of personality endeavors), and in the course of this realization-transformation one encourages the cultivation and momentum (and eventual predominance) of the more appropriate (evolutionary) (facilitative) personality modes.

The inertial aspect of personality is rooted in its material nature. As the personality grows in strength (as it must in the early stages of human evolution in which the personality is actually cultivated) it develops momentum in its delusion of separateness (and self-importance). One is, in this process (at that stage), very much conditioned and lacking in real freedom (i.e., the freedom of the conditioned personality is limited to “operating” within one’s conditioning). The weak personality in the lower sense is passive and very much open to external conditioning (external personality-level influence). The strong personality is relatively insensitive to anything other than what it wants, having momentum as a personality and being inertial relative to progress. The weak personality in the higher sense is tempered by and responsive to higher qualification (the soul), and builds momentum in its commitment to the path.

With knowledge and understanding of these processes (personality conditioning, relative absorption in mundane and personal matters) and realization of one’s personality-centeredness (self-centeredness) (self-indulgence) [however sincere], the spiritual student gradually cultivates freedom from personality-centeredness. The student learns to be aware of his or her personality mode(s), learns to avoid those modes that are inhibitive, and learns to cultivate and sustain those modes that are facilitative of progress in consciousness.

The keys to this process are humility, self-honesty, and growing self-realization. It is not enough for the spiritual student to be absorbed in good works, service in humanitarian endeavors, etc., if that absorption is personality-centered. The student must rise above desire, attachments, mundane and personal absorption, etc., if he or she is to advance human consciousness.

The Practice of the Path

Why is the spiritual student a conscientious vegetarian? Why does the spiritual student not pay much attention to enjoyment of what is normal and pleasurable experience? Why is the spiritual student relatively indifferent to pleasure and pain, desires and their fulfillment, and other forms of self-indulgence? Why does the spiritual student lack ambition and lack aggressiveness? Why does the spiritual student accept responsibility for all that happens in his or her life, even without apparent relationship? Why is the spiritual student devoted to the spiritual practice of concentration, meditation, and contemplation? Why does the spiritual student seek to be completely honest and harmless in all things? Why is the spiritual student not as gregarious and sociable as most people? Why is the spiritual student relatively quiet and peaceful?

Why is the spiritual student so reluctant or reticent to speak, even for a good (apparent) cause? Why is the spiritual student not caught up in trendy humanitarian endeavors? Why does the spiritual student live at peace with himself and with the world? Why is the spiritual student so relatively simple-minded? Why is the spiritual student not concerned so much with material things and status? Why is the spiritual student somewhat tempered in physical, emotional, and mental expression? Why does the spiritual student not generally conform to social and cultural expectations (without actively or particularly expressing that non-conformity)? Why is the spiritual student content to read and study, to learn from experience, and to serve, without personal recognition, without any involved sensations? Why does the spiritual student avoid criticizing or judging others, merely accepting people and their actions (behavior) at face value?

Why is the spiritual student not so wholly devoted to religious practice? Why does the spiritual student embrace egolessness? Why is the spiritual student courteous toward and considerate of others? Why does the spiritual student not think badly of others or act badly toward others, even without reciprocity? Why is the spiritual student more concerned with the quality of consciousness and the process rather than the apparent or presumed results? Why does the spiritual student not rely upon the intellect or rational process? Why does the

spiritual student focus on the how as much as the why? Why is the spiritual student more introspective and contemplative than extroverted and expressive? Why does the spiritual student not impose upon others? Why does the spiritual student value understanding above knowledge, and wisdom above understanding?

Why does the spiritual student not really know anything at all? Why is the spiritual student without substantive beliefs and wholly without opinions on things? Why is the spiritual student not self-indulgent? Why is the spiritual student merely amused by life in the lower worlds, without taking pleasure in that which is pleasurable? Why is the spiritual student concerned with ethical and moral practice, even in the absence of witnesses or anyone who could be affected thereby? Why does the spiritual student not glorify human existence? Why does the spiritual student not glorify the human personality? Why is the spiritual student relatively poised in the face of adversity or difficult circumstances?

Because the spiritual student values and lives according to that which facilitates the evolution of consciousness and not according to that which inhibits the evolution of consciousness.

† Commentary No. 968

Sociality

Sociality is the tendency on the part of human beings (and most animal species) to associate with one another and to form social groups. This is a natural tendency linked to the fact of humanity's single overshadowing qualification (as a differentiated lifewave), i.e., each human being is differentiated within the human lifewave yet remains "part" of a single undifferentiated essence. Human socialization began with the collectiveness of the group spirit within which human beings individualized, and has developed through a succession and diversity of tribal, family, cultural, national, regional, and racial distinctions (all of which are relatively artificial, yet provide opportunity for successive and diverse experience and expression).

The value of socialization lays in the embrace of collective consciousness in the sense that individualization, individual experience and expression, etc., constitute a measure of psychological separateness (and separativeness) and socialization is an opportunity to balance or temper the tendencies toward extremes (dissociation). Humanitarian (human-welfare-based), religious, and spiritual activities are examples of potentially constructive socialization, even if the specific objective is part of the delusion of material existence (e.g., without regard to an appreciation of cause and effect relationships or without regard for appreciation of the evolutionary context, the superficiality of human personality consciousness, etc.).

The danger of socialization, for the spiritual student, is the tendency of the (generic) human being to make socialization an end in itself, i.e., to “enjoy” social contact without it being part of some greater and more noble endeavor. In other words, if the student socializes as an end in itself, he or she is invariably “lost” or absorbed in the process (experience) and loses awareness by virtue of the personality-centeredness of normal social contact. For this reason alone, spiritual students tend to socialize primarily in the context of spiritual work, and do not generally respond to the cultural demands of (self-centered, even sincere and self-centered) people for social contact. For the serious student, socialization is incidental, neither promoted nor avoided. The serious student is simply not interested in superficial socialization, or in experience that is merely pleasurable for the personality. In fact, the serious student is generally indifferent to things that are pleasurable to the personality, since the serious student realizes how easily distracted (absorbed in mundane, personal, social matters) the personality tends to be. Socialization, then, is generally a matter of petty (personality) interest, and not a matter of genuine experience.

The key to success for the serious student is to become and remain unabsorbed in personality-centered experience (the objective of the personality (ego) (lower self) is just the opposite, to create and sustain absorption in personality-centeredness). The serious student perceives socialization as incidental and inherent in normal activity, being friendly, courteous, gracious, etc., yet not an end in itself and not something to be sought and engaged in without an appropriate (hopefully uncontrived but simply realized) constructive context.

It boils down to a matter of values. Most people are absorbed in the personality life (being relatively self-centered and very much personality-centered) and value socialization as a worthy experience (self-indulgence), while the spiritual student is less conforming to cultural expectations, and is merely incidentally (nonetheless meaningfully) sociable.

† Commentary No. 969

Three Factors in Life

From the metaphysical and theosophical perspective, there are three factors in life in the lower worlds of human experience and expression. These are the force of evolution (the primary force in (of) manifestation), the force of karma (the secondary force in (of) manifestation), and free will (the tertiary force in (of) manifestation).

The force of evolution is the underlying and overshadowing factor that conditions everything and every life in manifestation. It is the cause of relative existence and provides the momentum for progress in consciousness from the most elementally (microscopic) conceivable level to the most macrocosmically conceivable level of manifestation. The force of evolution qualifies every aspect of life for every species, with evolutionary purpose (the projection of the evolutionary pattern or archetype for each species and the broader context) and evolutionary pressure (slow, yet inexorably accelerating). But although evolutionary force is ever-present, it is not all-determining. It creates the stage, provides the context (opportunity), provides the broad and underlying conditioning for consciousness, and relentlessly pushes all lives onward and upward (or comparably, depending on their place in the scheme of manifestation).

The force of evolution is a generalized force. It is not tailored or customized to any specific lifeform, although it conveys the various patterns (archetypes) lifewave by lifewave or component by component, but not individually. How individuals respond to the force of evolution of course varies greatly by species (potential), place in the evolutionary scheme, and the relative ability of the particular and collective consciousness to respond. The force of karma is also a somewhat generalized force, subsidiary to the force of evolution

(consequentially), that provides the rules or interpretation of evolutionary experience. While “evolution” provides the purpose and goal and overall conditioning for manifestation, “karma” provides the means (rules) and opportunities for experience and expression in support of evolution in consciousness. Yet karma is also part of the conditioning. Evolutionary pressure gradually accelerates through the course of manifestation, likewise karmic pressure, until the “person” realizes the greater context and makes a commitment to conscious, deliberate evolution. Then the rules change (are advanced), the pressure increases, and the person becomes part of the leading edge of the lifewave instead of remaining in the bulk consciousness.

Free will is the third dimension and only really begins to be operant as self-consciousness in the higher sense is achieved. Until then, individuals simply respond rather mechanically to their conditioning and according to their (passive) abilities (condition) (potential). So-called self-consciousness is really just the delusion of self-consciousness, without appreciation for the mechanicalness of existence in the conditioned (personality-centered) state. Real self-consciousness comes about as the consciousness is raised beyond that of the personality. Then and only then does free will truly come into play.

The key is responsiveness to the three factors. Those who are more responsive to evolutionary pressure naturally progress faster than those who are relatively unresponsive. Those who consciously embrace their own karma and seek to learn from their experience and adapt according to the rules of the path naturally progress faster and more fully than those who remain relatively self-centered (and personality-centered (self-indulgent) (unresponsive)). Those who truly exercise free will do so in accord with the factor of evolution and in accord with the factor of karma (in the broader, non-personal sense).

Sadhana Pada 7

(4) Right-control of the life-force (pranayama) implies proper qualification of the breathing process (physical, emotional, and concrete mental levels). It implies equilibrium in the context of the karmic flow, i.e., in responding intelligently (non-actively and non-passively) to karmic consequences (circumstances, external and internal forces). It implies conservation of forces and their proper utilization and application (internally and externally) (and taking responsibility for same (effects)). Breathing is as much or more an etheric process than a dense physical process. Even on astral levels, that-which-corresponds-to-prana is inspired and expired through the astral (emotional) body as the student relates to conditions in the astral environment (however consciously or otherwise).

One's astral state can affect others (thus one should be properly cultivated emotionally) and others' emotional activities can affect oneself if the astral body is allowed to function more or less passively (or if the astral body is sufficiently coarse) (thus one should keep the entire astral nature in balance (cultivated, purified, non-passive)). And to some extent there is a concrete mental analog to prana and that-which-corresponds-to-prana on the astral plane. The energy relationship(s) of the student is, after all, what the student really is.

"Quiescence, or the attitude of positive receptivity to the higher inspiration and downflow" of the life and energy of the higher self is a necessary prerequisite for self-realization (which is, in some sense, merely the removal of that which obscures). Absorption in the emotional (mundane) (personal) life (of sense impressions) simply obscures the mind and inhibits or prevents it from perceiving that-which-is-real.

(5) Abstraction (pratyahara) (right withdrawal) implies withdrawal from the state of entanglement in sense perception (personality-centeredness), particularly in the etheric and astral (emotional) sense. This is dealt with throughout the Sutras and in a number of different ways (perspectives), all of which contribute to liberation (service). One must understand that one is entangled; one must then understand the phenomenon of entanglement; only then can one proceed to become disentangled. The process of disentanglement

is facilitated as a result of progress in all other areas (harmlessness, truthfulness, etc.).

(6) Attention (dharana) (concentration) relates to the training and proper focusing of the mind. This concerns the phenomenon of entanglement on the more subtle (than sense perception per se), concrete mental levels. It is related to abstraction in the sense that it involves the entanglement of the mind with the senses, but as some progress is achieved in abstraction (emotional disentanglement) one must also deal with the mind's entanglement. Of course the mind is utilized in emotional abstraction, but the mind cannot abstract itself. Mental abstraction requires the (spiritual) intuition (buddhi). Attention is the beginning (and prelude to) meditation, but neither dharana nor dhyana can be achieved effectively without considerable preliminary progress (personality refinement, right conduct, proper attitude, etc.).

(7) Meditation (dhyana) relates to the linking of the higher and lower minds, the evocation of higher energies (qualification) onto lower levels (and is dealt with more properly in Book III). (8) Contemplation (samadhi) relates to the linking of the refined mind with the soul resulting in self-realization (full illumination) (and is likewise dealt with more properly in Book III). [Book II, Sutras 49-55]

† Commentary No. 971

Spirituality

Spirituality is defined as the quality or state of being spiritual, of embracing and manifesting spiritual character, quality, temperament, and values. This really means embracing and manifesting the higher aspects and attributes of the human nature, being responsive to one's higher nature and allowing that higher nature to condition and qualify the entire lower nature or personality. In short, the extent of spirituality is the extent of absence of ego, as the ego is sublimated by the soul or higher self (that aspect of human nature that is above and beyond physical, emotional, and concrete mental levels).

Merely embracing religious discipline and values does not convey spirituality. One must actually refine the personality, subordinate that personality to the

higher self, and eliminate the ego as an independent and intrusive entity. Spirituality requires a great deal of preparatory work, for it is the culmination of evolution in consciousness for humanity at this level (of successive incarnated existence (experience and expression)). Spirituality does not imply any supernatural-ness, although it is relatively rare to encounter a truly spiritual (selfless and consciously aware) person.

The achievement of spirituality implies understanding that transcends knowledge, and wisdom that transcends understanding. The achievement of spirituality conveys a very great freedom when compared with the bulk of humanity (who are virtually all living mechanical lives (being absorbed in mundane and personal matters, with mundane and personal consciousness (i.e., living merely as human (egoistic) personalities))). But that freedom also implies that the spiritual person has subordinated all self-will to that of the higher self. And while that higher self is not concerned with the particulars of life at the personality level, it is concerned with character, quality, and temperament, and so (accordingly) influences the lower life.

While spirituality does not necessarily imply perfection, it can be described or elucidated in terms of the preponderance of presence of various (higher) "spiritual" qualities and the absence of various (lower) (more common) human attributes. These include (but are not limited to) the relative absence of ego, maya, glamour, and illusion, and the relative presence of altruism, charity, cheerfulness, compassion, discretion, dispassion, gentleness, harmlessness, honesty, humility, inclusiveness, moderation, moderate non-conformity, peacefulness, poise, prudence, quietness, respect, responsibility, reverence, and simplicity. There is also in the truly spiritual person the marked absence of any impositional tendencies. Above all there is simply a sense of spiritual values. For the spiritual person, action is a matter of appropriateness (inspired without contrivance, by that sense of spiritual values), not a matter of decisiveness or judgment.

That which is spiritual literally implies that which is not physical (i.e., that which is etheric, astral, mental, intuitional, etc.) or that which is above and beyond the normal human realm of physical awareness and (unenlightened) emotional and concrete mental expression. But the sense of spirituality, in the context of the esoteric philosophy, is a matter of character and quality, not a

matter merely of level of consciousness, and certainly not a matter of psychic abilities. The truly spiritual person relies on conscience and intuition, without recourse to lower (animal) instincts or emotional urges or rationalization of any kind. In the final analysis, spirituality is the presence of the soul or higher self through induced character and quality and temperament and values.

† Commentary No. 972

Psychic Phenomena 1

Psychic phenomena are those phenomena involving human (personality) experience (consciousness) which are presently beyond the ability of modern science to adequately explain. Not included in this category of psychic phenomena are such "normal" processes as feeling (in the emotional (not tactile) sense) and thinking, even though feeling and thinking may be related to psychic phenomena (and even though modern science explains these normal processes in physical and biochemical terms rather than more correctly viewing them as non-physical processes that induce measurable physical (side) effects).

Psychic phenomena may be sub-categorized in a number of different ways, including by plane and sub-plane of consciousness. In this sense, psychic phenomena occur on and through non-dense-physical means, yet may have dense-physical consequences. Thus psychic phenomena may be categorized as occurring on or through etheric levels of the physical plane, astral or emotional levels (astral plane), and/or concrete mental levels (lower mental plane). Phenomena which occur above and beyond the concrete mental plane are not principally a matter of the human personality (except as effects may be induced on lower, personality levels). Thus the spiritual intuition (which involves the soul or higher self on abstract mental and buddhic levels) is not properly considered a psychic phenomena, while receipt of emotional impressions (wrongly but commonly referred to as intuition) is considered (somewhat) a psychic process.

The most basic of the so-called psychic phenomena are those processes involving perception of non-dense-physical levels of consciousness, e.g., any of the four etheric levels of the physical plane, any of the seven levels of the astral

or emotional plane, and the four lower levels of the mental plane. For most of humanity, sense impression is limited to semi-conscious perception of dense-physical-plane phenomena and unconscious perception of emotional and lower mental phenomena (i.e., most people are affected (effected) by etheric, astral (emotional), and lower (concrete) mental phenomena, but do not consciously recognize the cause and effect relationships). But for those who have consciously or unconsciously developed (or regressed to) "psychic" sensitivities, there is some (generally quite limited) perception of these non-dense-physical levels (of lifeforms and/or processes occurring therein or thereupon).

On etheric levels (the four highest sub-planes of the physical plane) there are a number of species of non-human lifeforms (each relating to one or another of the elemental, mineral, plant, or animal kingdoms) (as well as decomposing discarded etheric (human) bodies). The etheric realm is the "place" of vitality and where most of the forces manifest that have effects on lower (dense) physical levels (e.g., prana from the sun, "deva" healing energy).

On astral (emotional) levels there are likewise a number of species of non-human lifeforms (including angels or devas) (as well as (a) disincarnated human beings who are trapped for the time being on one or another of the (lower) astral levels and (b) astral bodies of incarnated human beings (which bodies may or may not be directly associated with their respective physical bodies (e.g., during sleep a separation occurs between the astral and the dense physical)). And on concrete mental levels, likewise, there are a number of species of non-human (subhuman, comparable-to-human, and superhuman) lifeforms (mostly various orders of devas) as well as human minds (incarnate and disincarnate). Those with psychic sensitivities may be able to consciously or unconsciously contact some of these levels and some of these lives (or forces).

Psychic Phenomena 2

Psychic phenomena include perception processes associated with senses analogous to hearing (clairaudience) and seeing (vision) (clairvoyance), as well as various aspects of “enhanced” empathy (collaborative feeling, on astral or emotional levels), channeling, and telepathy (transference of mental impressions in the sense of thought-forms). There is also a matter of psychometry (perceiving something of the history and character of something based on pranic or akashic linkage). And there are more dramatic phenomena such as mediumship, materialization, telekinetics, automatic writing, etc. However, there is a very considerable variability in sensitivity, consistency, level of involved consciousness, and quality of involved consciousness among various people who have “psychic” abilities (and a great deal of imagined psychic impression).

There are fundamentally two “kinds” of psychics, those who are voluntary, who have consciously developed, with some extent of preparation and training, and those who are involuntary, who have simply regressed to the abilities that were extant at an earlier evolutionary stage in which the bulk of humanity were involuntarily and passively clairvoyant and clairaudient. As humanity evolved, these passive abilities were sublimated and other abilities (e.g., mind) were developed and brought into manifestation. As humanity evolves further, the human being will become more sensitive (and will have proper development and training) and will become more perceptive (and be able to discriminate effectively between the various impressions and properly evaluate their usefulness) and the various abilities will be more active (under self-control), but these (new) abilities will not necessarily be comparable to those of earlier cycles (i.e., one may be intelligently sensitive without necessarily being “psychic” in the modern sense).

Even for the voluntary psychic, there is substantial variability in talent and training. Untrained (involuntary) psychics are generally very naive about what they see and hear and feel (i.e., having no real ability to control their sensitivities nor any real ability to discern the truth of what they are perceiving). Self-trained or unsanctioned psychics are also generally rather naive but much

more potent (and therefore relatively dangerous). While much less naive and much more reliable, properly trained psychics are very few and are not generally discernable among humanity.

There are very real and potent vulnerabilities and dangers associated with psychic development and associated with consorting (unnaturally) with various non-dense-physical entities and forces. Where psychic development proceeds in advance of spiritual development, there generally results a considerable developmental (evolutionary) backlash that seriously constrains and hinders any real progress in consciousness. Many such "psychics" have been forced (by karma) to live lifetimes in the "undeveloped" state in order to compensate for the damage done in the course of unsanctioned development (i.e., to allow healing to take place).

But even without apparent serious difficulties, in the case of the vast majority of people who are somewhat psychic, their psychic perception is generally unreliable and the psychic is generally unable to discriminate and is therefore unable to make any real sense of whatever impressions there may be. The two fundamental and inter-related problems are (1) the relative quality of consciousness of the perceiver and (2) confusion that results from attempting to perceive things through one's own (uncleared) aura [and through the means of one's own uncleared mind].

† Commentary No. 974

Psychic Phenomena 3

The problem of relative quality of consciousness relates both to ability and the relative safety of the psychic. Without any real spiritual development (and spiritual consciousness, understanding, wisdom, etc.), a psychic is not much different in quality of consciousness than average humanity. Psychic ability does not necessarily nor even generally imply or indicate in any sense spiritual development or evolutionary achievement. A person of some psychic ability (generally involuntary (passive) and untrained but generally true for voluntary and self-trained psychics as well) is generally relatively coarse physically, emotionally, and mentally.

Therefore, where there is no real purification or integration of the personality, the person is, because of his or her psychic sensitivities, relatively open (passive) to entities and forces on the lower (coarse) levels of whatever plane of consciousness is being perceived (generally the lower astral or emotional plane).

The lower astral region in particular is filled with relatively unsavory creatures and coarse forces. Some of those unsavory creatures, human and otherwise, are quite intelligent yet are generally lacking any sense of ethics or propriety. Some simply draw upon the personal energy of the psychic and any witnesses, rapidly depleting them of their vitality. Others like to masquerade as human (and some disincarnated humans tend to masquerade as someone more glamorous, ostensibly sincerely in attempts to enlighten those whom they are contacting (but of course being disincarnate in no way conveys enlightenment (when one dies one is not suddenly more knowledgeable, insightful, or intelligent) (and enlightenment can never be conveyed from one to another)) (the truly enlightened entities are simply not found on any of the levels of consciousness to which the ordinary psychic has access). Some are playfully deceptive, while others are much more sinister. There are also many forces on etheric and astral (and even mental) levels that are substantially incompatible with the human nature and therefore relatively dangerous (if not fatal).

Thus the relative coarseness of the ordinary psychic's physical, emotional, and mental makeup serves as a discriminant (preventing higher-order contact) and greatly inhibits any real (meaningful) perception. This is further compounded by the confusion that results from attempting to perceive things through one's own (uncleared) aura [and through the means of one's own uncleared mind]. Everyone normally perceives sense-impressions, consciously or unconsciously, through his or her own aura. Therefore, one's own feelings, disposition, habits, expectations, tendencies, etc., directly affect the perception process. In the case of clairaudience or (particularly) clairvoyance, the psychic impressions are distorted by the character and composition of the aura such that no such impressions are really reliable. No doubt there is some truth or validity to impressions, but the bulk of an impression is generally distorted or exaggerated. Even in non-psychic feeling and thinking, one sees and hears what one wants, to some considerable extent, but with psychic impressions this problem is compounded substantially.

The solution to these difficulties is relatively simple and straight-forward, yet not generally appealing to those who are attracted to psychic phenomena. One should more properly focus on qualifying the personality for spiritual development, rather than psychic development, and allow psychic abilities to emerge naturally according to (real) need rather than unnaturally in response to (lower) personal interests.

† Commentary No. 975

Psychism and Spirituality

For the most part, the spiritual student is not interested in psychic phenomena per se and does not focus on any psychic development. The path involves spiritual development and training, and a focus on discipleship and service, without recourse to psychic development. In some cases there is deliberate and sanctioned training in psychic matters, but mainly psychic development is ancillary (incidental) to spiritual development and spiritual work. Emphasis is placed on the ability to perceive truth (discriminating between the real and the unreal) and to work without the distraction implied or conveyed by personal energies.

Properly trained (sanctioned) psychics operate entirely within the framework of the spiritual path but are not properly recognizable by anyone outside of that framework. They do not lead public lives nor do they demonstrate their abilities to anyone. Like other aspirants, disciples, and initiates, they serve quietly and (properly) anonymously, subjectively working with whatever energies and forces they are called upon to address. They also work intelligently within the karmic framework (i.e., while they are generally helpful and constructive people, they do not interfere in the karmic patterns of people (i.e., they recognize the futility of any superficial treatment (i.e., without a change in consciousness (learning) (adjustment) (realization), no healing or psychic adjustment is anything other than superficial))).

What emerges naturally, in the course of spiritual development, is the spiritual intuition (which is very substantially different in quality from the emotional or astral counterpart that is so common) which provides insight into the nature of things (the path, the work (dharma)). What also emerges is a growing

telepathic rapport with coworkers (of comparable ability and quality of consciousness) that facilitates the work. Neither of these (proper) talents (and others) can be turned toward personal interests. And neither of these talents (and others) are consistent with the presence of ego (i.e., where the ego or self-interest (personality-centeredness) emerges, spiritual "talent" recedes). Thus the (proper) spiritual student rises above personal interests (and the ego) and is devoted to the path and its work. Therefore the spiritual student is generally able to discern between that which is real (true) and that which is false (unreal) (imagined or otherwise).

Yet many psychics do masquerade as spiritual people, some even sincerely so, yet without any appreciable insight into either their own talents or the processes involved. Most lack even rudimentary discrimination and insight, and are powerless in the face of forces they cannot control or comprehend (even though self-deception often leads them to believe otherwise). Thus one should be quite skeptical of any impressions obtained psychically. One should always judge for oneself the validity of any impression, one's own or otherwise, and defer judgment where there is not the ring of truth.

Thus psychism should not be confused with spirituality (though there is some inter-relationship). A psychic is not generally spiritual and a spiritual person is not generally (particularly) psychic (although the serious spiritual students tend to be intuitive and perceptive). In the final analysis, the spiritual student is not distracted by psychic phenomena or his or her own psychic talents (or lack thereof). And the spiritual student is not generally deceived by his or her own imagination (which is in itself a very potent force in perception). With common sense one proceeds to do what is before one to do, in adherence to truth as it is understood.

Ethics and Psychism

Like any form of human activity and expression, the expression of psychic abilities carries with it some considerable degree of responsibility for the consequences (tempered naturally by karma and the extent of one's knowledge, understanding, and wisdom). The fundamental "rules" of the path apply directly to psychic expression. One should not impose upon anyone nor cause anyone any harm (including deception), physically, emotionally, or mentally, psychically or otherwise.

The problem lies generally (more so) with lack of knowledge and understanding of the effects of various psychic practices rather than with deliberate attempts to impose or harm others, though in many cases imposition occurs sincerely (albeit wrongly) and more or less consciously and deliberately (e.g., (1) in hypnotism there is a relatively dangerous implied imposition, where, even with the patient's consent, a psychic dependency is introduced that weakens the patient's will, even if there are apparent psychological adjustments or benefits achieved and (2) in "preaching" forcefully there is an imposition of the preacher's (teacher's) psychic energy upon the listeners such that the listener's relative freedom in thinking and feeling is compromised (and it hardly matters whether or not the preacher is consciously aware of this practice of manipulation)). In a coarse environment, there is generally much more psychic energy of an impositional nature than otherwise. In a more refined environment, that psychic energy tends to be more a matter of encouragement.

In short, any form of mind control is unethical, even if the victim is willing, and even if the controller is sincere (attempting to be helpful). A far better practice is the non-impositional sharing of ideas (or energies), where respect for people's need to think and feel for themselves is paramount. The "controller" may think he (she) is helping someone, but, in fact, no real progress is achieved except to the extent that it is learned by the student (and not imposed by the teacher). One cannot force another to learn. Learning requires some degree of experience and assimilation of that experience. To embrace values that are imposed by others (even culturally or legally) does not convey any learning. One must learn for oneself.

Where psychic pressure is brought to bear, these ethical considerations are compounded by the relative ignorance of most psychics and most victims. Every forceful personality interaction (and in many cases even subtle personality interaction) conveys psychic pressure. For every suggestion, there is psychic pressure. And since most people are relatively passive (impressionable), that pressure may have substantial consequences. Of course, karmically, one is responsible for and accountable for those consequences, in the active sense (role) as well as in the passive sense (role). In realization that psychic energy follows every thought and every feeling comes a tempering of one's thoughts and feelings, resulting in better human relationships (more respect and consideration for others).

In the case of the relatively more potent psychic, the consequences of psychic expression (evocation of psychic pressure) are considerable. And since (public, untrained) psychics tend to attract relatively weak and passive people, these problems (imposition, psychic pressure) are compounded. Yet, with spiritual strength, and wisdom in relationships with people, proper ethical values can be embraced and one's psychic (and non-psychic) talents can be utilized more subjectively, to encourage learning, responsibility, etc., rather than attempting to impose same.

† Commentary No. 977

Psychic Healing

Various psychic abilities may be applied to the healing process, with results commensurate with the extent of the ability, the relative knowledge and understanding (and perception) of the practitioner, the responsiveness of the patient, and, above all, the karma of both parties in the context of the circumstances and situation.

Healing is inherently a psychic phenomena, involving the adjustment on physical, emotional, and/or concrete mental levels of some balance of forces consistent with some growth or realization (lesson learned and adjustment made) in consciousness. Thus a distinction is made between superficial healing and true healing. Superficial healing occurs where the effects are treated

without there being any growth or adjustment in consciousness, i.e., where the intended lesson is not properly learned. Superficial healing is transient, although in some cases it can endure for the remainder of a lifetime. True healing occurs where the intended growth or adjustment in consciousness is actually achieved, and is therefore permanent (with regard to those particular circumstances (cause and effect relationships)).

Those healers, psychic or otherwise (directly or indirectly psychic), who lack sufficient insight into the cause and effect relationships, do little real good in treating the effects, unless there is an accompanying encouragement for the patient to deal consciously, deliberately, and intelligently with the causes (i.e., to face up to the intended lesson). The true healer is not really a healer, per se, but a facilitator, who encourages the patient to heal himself (herself) in the process of learning or growing in consciousness. But psychic energy (healing force) can be brought to bear, with knowledge, understanding, and wisdom (or otherwise) to accomplish (facilitate) healing (superficially or otherwise).

Disease or injury on any level results from a lack of balance (e.g., from attitudes (or behavior) that are (is) inconsistent with one's conscience or which is not in harmony with (higher) nature). Healing consists of restoration of balance. This generally means provision and application of prana or vitality, directed at or toward the affected disease or injury. With sufficient psychic force (and proper application), a healing will occur. But that healing will always be superficial and transient if it is not accompanied by the intended adjustment in consciousness. And unless the patient participates more or less directly in the healing process, the healing will not endure much beyond the healer's presence and attention.

Psychic healing can "cure" virtually any disease or injury, but unless there is the intended growth or realization (assimilation) in consciousness, the cause will not be affected and the forces associated with the cause will continue to be applied to the patient's incarnation (personality) (e.g., if one is "cured" of a particular disease, without the requisite adjustment in consciousness, one will eventually contract another, often somewhat more serious malady). In this context, the psychic healer is simply one who consciously or unconsciously shares or directs healing energy toward some objective (patient). A number of the various orders of devas (angels) serve as psychic healers on etheric, astral

(emotional) and manasic (concrete mental) levels, being attracted naturally to those who are ill or injured, but with unconscious appreciation for the involved karma (i.e., they are not attracted to people who are unresponsive to the intended lessons). The wise psychic healer proceeds likewise, in appreciation of karma, encouraging and facilitating the healing process without imposition.

† Commentary No. 978

Types of Thinking

One of the notions provided in the Guirdjeff-Ouspensky system is the concept of types of thinking (based in theosophical terms on relative polarization of consciousness). Four types are suggested, which correlate, relatively and respectively, with (1) physical, (2) emotional, (3) mental, and (4) intuitional polarization.

For Ouspensky, ordinary people are categorized as being in one or another of the first three groups (sans progression) with each leading to the fourth if mechanicalness can be overcome. In theosophy, however, there is recognized a progression from the physical polarization through emotional and mental stages, to intuitional levels. For Ouspensky, "Old thinking is No. 1, being chiefly imitation. No. 2 is emotional, based on likes and dislikes. No. 3 is logical thinking which cannot be applied to bigger things. Thinking No. 4 is the beginning of thinking which, little by little, disposes of all contradictions."

Most people function with some combination of the first three levels or aspects of thinking, depending on habits and circumstances (and with some preponderance based on polarization of consciousness). Most people really do not think for themselves, but appropriate notions and concepts (and words) based upon (predominantly unconscious) imitation, i.e., repeating whatever they have heard or read (or simply picked up based on passive mentality) (i.e., the astral and mental planes are filled with "trendy" thought-forms to which most people are simply (passively) vulnerable (susceptible)). In this sense, non-conformity is an indication (not necessarily conclusively so) of some extent of achievement of freedom in thinking. And most people "think" to some extent according to their likes and dislikes, generally without any conscious realization

of their biases (or the fact of their influence) (i.e., having likes and dislikes means being biased). Few people actually use logical principles in thinking, although many presume themselves to be logical while applying their trendiness (and bias based on likes and dislikes). But those who are reasonably logical are limited thereby.

For the spiritual student, these are all keys to progress in consciousness. The student must undo the passive (hereditary and environmental (cultural)) conditioning of the personality, tempering the entire personality in such a way as to reduce or eliminate the intrusion of (external and internal) mundane thought-forms. In order to achieve this, the student must reject trendiness in thinking (feeling) (values), rise above having likes and dislikes, and focus on understanding (truth) rather than "having" beliefs and opinions. Ultimately, the student must pass beyond even logical thinking to the realm of no-thinking. Yet, at each stage, these processes are necessary and useful. Having (strong personal) likes and dislikes is a means of overcoming (the limitations implied in) trendiness or mechanicalness at the lowest (physical) level. Logical thinking is a way of overcoming (rising above) (the limitations implied in having) likes and dislikes (mechanicalness at the emotional level). And having no beliefs or opinions (at all) (no-thinking) is a means of overcoming the limitations of logical thinking (mechanicalness at the concrete mental level).

The intuitional plane is the level above and beyond the mental plane. In order to function effectively on intuitional levels, the impediment of the mind as an independent (mechanical, self-serving) entity must be overcome. Truth can only be revealed to the extent that the mind is free from likes and dislikes, free from beliefs and opinions, and free from mechanicalness (thinking per se). Apparent contradictions disappear with intuition. One simply sees beyond.

Vibhuti Pada 1

The third book or section of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* considers raja yoga and its powers (union achieved and its results) (vibhuti pada) (internal practice) (the attainments of yoga). This concerns the self-control of one's mind, by un-doing the mind's conditioning, by intelligently inhibiting (not suppressing) the mind's independent nature, and by unfolding and qualifying the mind through higher perspective.

Concentration (dharana) is (the cultivation of) the ability to hold the mind steadily upon some object (subject). This is the first step in the training of the mind and bringing the mind into the disciplined (poised) (non-reactive), externally and internally unconditioned state. None of the steps are easy, but the first step is relatively more difficult due to the entanglement of the mind in the sense-perception process. The mind tends to be absorbed in the senses and the mind tends to be attached to various objects of the senses. Through concentration one becomes less attached (more detached) and less reactive (and ultimately more responsive to higher qualification). "Objects upon which to concentrate are of four kinds, progressively --external objects, internal objects, qualities, and underlying mental concepts." Through progressive stages of concentration one gradually turns the attention from the external world (where the mind is entangled in sense-perception) to the internal world, without being self-absorbed in the lower sense. The mind that is poised, undistracted by the senses and the desire nature, is a mind that is responsive to higher direction.

Meditation (dhyana) is not merely the extension in time of concentration but the evocation of some higher quality that gradually transforms the concentrated state into a state of spiritual poise or repose. This begins with "seed" meditation (which is really just a higher form of concentration) and leads to "seedless" meditation or meditation proper. In meditation proper there is an almost complete transformation of the sense-perception process in which one is not at all distracted by the senses yet one remains able to sense what needs to be sensed. But that "sense" is secondary and peripheral (where in the normal waking-conscious that sense is primary, central to the waking-consciousness, and almost overwhelming).

Contemplation (in the sense of concentration-meditation-contemplation) (samadhi) is a state in which one "is unaware of separateness or of the personal self." This is not an intellectual appreciation or understanding of the reality of non-separateness but a true realization in which one is no longer aware of separation. When one returns to a lower state (waking-consciousness, concentration, or meditation) one carries the sense of that higher reality (until one becomes re-absorbed in the senses (personality consciousness)). But in true contemplation there is no sense of separate individuality (there is yet a sense of non-separate individuality, but it is secondary and peripheral). In contemplation there is "no awareness of brain consciousness (physical plane apprehensions as to time and space), no awareness of emotional experience or expression, and no awareness of mental activities or modifications of the mind." In effect, in true contemplation the physical, emotional, and mental nature is wholly qualified or conditioned (in repose) by the contemplative self (soul).

In higher meditation (contemplation) the lower self (false independence) is wholly subdued and responsive to the higher or real self, and the awareness is focused on that higher (non-physical, non-emotional, non-mental) reality (oneness). [Book III, Sutras 1-3]

† Commentary No. 980

Vibhuti Pada 2

"When concentration, meditation, and contemplation form one sequential act, then is sanyama achieved." This implies "that one is absorbed in the higher (soul) consciousness, that one is liberated from the three worlds of sense perception [physical, emotional, and mental], that one has realized oneness, and that one is illumined by that higher rapport." Sanyama implies a mental self-control that transcends the ego or lower self and (in a sense) everything associated with personality-centeredness.

One may think of it as the result of development or evolution in consciousness brought about through progressive concentration-meditation-contemplation, but it also implies and requires a complete transformation of the personality self (physical, emotional, and mental nature) such that one is viewed as being

“reborn” or “born-again” (in the higher sense of actually achieving spiritual consciousness) (and not (merely) the common superficial and emotional (religious) experience).

“As a result of sanyama comes the shining forth of the light.” Sanyama evokes realization (or vice versa). Sanyama evokes the spiritual intuition or higher senses. Sanyama evokes or conveys the ability to discern (discriminate) between the unreal and the real (between superficial and real values). The nature of the higher self is light-love-power. All three dimensions are conveyed through sanyama, but the more obvious of the three is light (enlightenment) [love is more of an overall qualification and power in this sense is rather subtle]. The power of light leads to “illumination of perception, lucidity of consciousness, the shining forth of insight, and the illumining of the intellect.” Here the intellect refers to that intellect so qualified by higher energy that it does not function independently but functions wholly responsively to the higher self (the normal intellect (of even the mentally-polarized) tends to be separative and independent (egoistic and self-defensive)).

“This illumination is gradual; it is developed stage by stage.” This is the evolution of consciousness. There are no short cuts or easy paths to self-mastery or self-realization. Many lifetimes may be required. The whole of yoga (properly) leads the aspirant through various preparatory stages to various intermediate stages. The “advanced” stage cannot be achieved; it can only be realized in the activity of non-activity (the feeling of non-feeling) (and the thinking of non-thinking). In the early stages one must realize the differences between things and be able to discriminate between higher and lower aspects of things. Eventually “unity is known and even duality is seen to be limitation.”

“The sequence of mental states is as follows: the mind reacts to that which is seen; then follows the moment of mind control. Then ensues a moment wherein the chitta (mind stuff) responds to both these factors. Finally these pass away, and the perceiving consciousness has full sway.” Or ... “Out of the ascending degrees is the development of control. First there is the overcoming of the mind-impress of excitation. Then comes the manifestation of the mind-impress of control. Then the perceiving consciousness follows after the moment of control. This is the development of control.” Initially one naturally struggles with the inherent (conditioned) tendencies of the mind. Gradually one exercises more

and more control (one becomes less and less reactive), without suppressing the mind but by undoing its lower conditioning and “training” the mind to be naturally poised (and thereby to be responsive to higher impression). [Book III, Sutras 4-9]

† Commentary No. 981

God, Life, and Power

While “God” means different things to different people, in the context of the esoteric (theosophical) philosophy, “God” refers (1) to the absolute, unmanifested life that underlies all of existence (manifestation) and (2) to any particular (relative) logoi (cosmic, solar, planetary) in the context of evolution in consciousness at that level (cosmos, solar system, planetary scheme, respectively).

God is the first principle and from God issue life (the second principle) and inherent power (the third principle). Thus power is derived from life and life (and power) is (are) derived from God. Everything ultimately derives from God and is a part of God manifest. God is both God manifest and God unmanifest. The God unmanifest (transcendent) is the absolute, underlying, unmanifested essence. God manifest (immanent) is the relative, underlying, manifested existence in the form of life and power and their derivatives (love and light are derived from life, while energy and force are derived from power). All of the aspects of God (life-love-light) convey purpose and provide for evolutionary force (the parameters (forces) of manifestation which “encourage” all lives to evolve in consciousness more or less according to the plan of evolution).

God is not in any (real) sense anthropomorphic. That “man” should be the reflection or induced manifestation of God does not imply that God resembles “man” in any anthropomorphic sense. That essential essence of God which is reflected or induced within manifested life is the trinity of life, love, and light (which convey purpose, consciousness, and form, respectively). Thus “man” (and all lives) has (have) an essential divinity (within) (God immanent) and in “his” (their) higher sense exhibit(s) attributes of that divinity. In the lower sense, the human being is simply a composite form which is associated with the far (material) reaches of the essence of God. While God is beyond and within

manifestation, God in this sense is not conscious of the details of manifestation (any more than "man" is aware of the "experience" of each of the cells within "his" body).

God conveys life. All things are alive in some sense or another. While forms (composite or otherwise) are not in themselves "alive" they are composed of lifeforms which are alive, therefore everything is alive. Every atom and every molecule of substance is alive, has some consciousness, and some evolutionary potential. All lives are necessarily interrelated (significantly or otherwise), essentially by virtue of each being "one" with the underlying God immanent and each being a differentiated reflection of that oneness. All lives are also interrelated by virtue of the underlying and overshadowing condition or qualification of manifestation. God has purpose. That purpose (evolution in consciousness) is implied in manifestation, by virtue of the various qualifying forces (e.g., law of karma). Life therefore conveys purpose and all lives contribute to the fulfillment of that purpose, however consciously or unconsciously that process may be realized. God (life) conveys power. In all of manifestation there is underlying power (matter (space and time), of consciousness, of spirit, etc.) derived from and a consequence of God (higher purpose).

In the higher sense, God (purpose) is equivalent to life and power. God, life, and power all convey the highest, most underlying (fundamental) aspect of manifestation (purpose). God is the source and the destination, the beginning, the duration, and the end of manifestation. But ultimately, God is that which is above and beyond manifestation.

Manifestation

God (purpose) is the source of manifestation. The manifestation of the universe proceeds in a more or less orderly manner, according to the purpose (evolutionary intention) of God: universal manifestation proceeds according to the plan embodied in the emergence (reflection) of life in the highest sense, and successive cosmic (solar) (planetary) manifestation proceeds according to the plan as understood and conditioned at that level. And the human being on its level proceeds according to that part of the plan that is embodied in the higher self (soul) and humanity as a lifewave.

Manifestation thus proceeds as a consequence of and in accordance with underlying purpose. First the fabric of the universe is evoked. Then various (cosmic, solar, planetary) logoi emerge from the Godhead as manifestation is induced within the fabric of the universe. Various lifewaves are successively differentiated within the one life in order to evolve in consciousness and contribute to the (higher) evolution of the one life. Similarly, various lives are successively differentiated within each lifewave. Most (all) lives are composite.

Manifestation can be viewed in two principal ways, (1) in the sense of life and purpose and (2) in the sense of the order and details of material manifestation (form) as a basis for the evolution of consciousness. The second is the natural reflection of the first. The form aspect of manifestation is governed or conditioned by the third ray (of three) or the seventh ray (of seven), while the life (purpose) aspect of manifestation is governed or conditioned by the first ray. The life aspect is concerned with purpose (the underlying force of manifestation) (that purpose being the evolution of consciousness of all implied (induced) lives) and the process of evolution (through the seven rays) (cosmogogenesis), while the form aspect is concerned with the fabric of (material) manifestation in consciousness (e.g., cosmic fire, the seven planes).

Manifestation proceeds with underlying purpose and underlying (consequential) order. The "force" emerging from the Godhead conveys some order to manifestation. That order is the result of the qualification of matter (and consciousness) (and life) by that purpose as conveyed through the various laws

or conditioning factors. More-or-less-orderly implies an underlying order but with considerable freedom or flexibility in the details or working out (fulfillment) of the evolutionary impulse. "God" has purpose and methods (and means), but sends forth the conditioned and qualified evolutionary impulse in the form of intention-without-all-the-details-worked-out. Under cosmic law, the experience of manifestation leads to fulfillment of the objectives of manifestation. But those objectives are subjective and qualitative, rather than concrete and detailed. This flexibility is necessary to the fulfillment of the implied objectives.

Manifestation is an impulse. It is a sending forth on the part of "God" of a force that evokes all of the details of manifestation. That impulse (force) (energy) is eventually expended (fulfilled) and returns to the Godhead enriched by virtue of its passage (experience). On each level, manifestation is actually a succession of impulses, each of which has some implied or perceived duration (from the lower perspective). Everything that is induced within the field of manifestation (including the field itself) is contained within that impulse. Thus, everything returns to the Godhead, in some form or essence or another (albeit each in its enriched but unmanifested condition).

† Commentary No. 983

Anthropogenesis

Anthropogenesis is the study of the origin and development of the (generic) (male-female) human being. The subject of anthropogenesis is dealt with in considerable detail in Helena Blavatsky's The Secret Doctrine, in Max Heindel's Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception, and in C. Jinarajadasa's First Principles of Theosophy.

Anthropogenesis is best viewed in the context of the manifestation of the universe and the underlying purpose of life (the evolution of consciousness). The (stage of the) human being is the fourth stage of a series of involutory and evolutionary fora (the first being the mineral stage, the second being the plant stage, and the third being the animal stage). Thus the lives that constitute humanity have already passed through involutory stages

comparable or analogous to the present mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms. Being human is simply a stage in the evolutionary process. A background of (almost endless) cycles within cycles of "higher" manifestation on cosmic, solar, and planetary levels (e.g., planetary schemes, rounds and globes, etc.) provides for successively "developed" circumstances (conditions) for successive experience and evolution.

Humanity began its existence (as humanity) in the transition between the passive and collective consciousness (unconsciousness) of the animal stage and the primitive but individualized (differentiated) human consciousness. As human beings were individualized (in the context of an overshadowing divine presence (cosmic law, conditions of manifestation) that evoked that process of individualization), they became (relatively) self-conscious (indeed, self-consciousness in the normal (human) sense is what makes a lifeform "human" (but this is not self-consciousness in the higher, spiritual sense, but is a rather mechanical form of conscious awareness)). Under the law of underlying evolution and the law of karma (cause and effect), each human being evolves as a consequence of experience gained as a consequence of action (thinking, feeling, doing).

The human stage implies substantial experience in the delusion of separate (self-conscious) existence. That experience over a succession of progressive incarnations through the various races and cultures leads (progressively) to some degree of knowledge and understanding and wisdom. As that experience (knowledge, understanding, wisdom) is assimilated, the higher life (the soul or higher self in the context of humanity) evolves in consciousness. Thus the evolution in consciousness of the composite life that is a human being contributes to the evolution in consciousness of the greater life (successively humanity, the planetary logos, solar logos, etc.).

A distinction is made between the evolution in consciousness of the human "life" and the development, appropriation, and utilization of the human "form." The human form is merely an instrument that has been developed for the purpose of facilitating the "human" experience and evolution in consciousness. That form consists of a dense physical body, etheric or energy double (body), an astral or emotional body, and a concrete mind. That form is progressively developed by each individual (soul) and eventually becomes an integrated

personality. In a higher sense, even the human "life" is simply an instrument that is progressively "developed" for higher purpose. All of this, the development of the form and the evolution of the indwelling consciousness, in all of its historical detail and in all of its patterns for future development and evolution, constitutes anthropogenesis.

† Commentary No. 984

The Fourth Way

The Fourth Way is the title of a book by P.D. Ouspensky which provides "a lucid explanation of the practical side of G.I. Gurdjieff's teachings concerned with a new way of living, a way of inner development to be followed under the ordinary conditions of life." The fourth way is contrasted with Ouspensky's impressions of (and assumptions regarding) "the three traditional ways that call for retirement from the world, those of the fakir, the monk, and the yogi."

Ouspensky was exposed to Gurdjieff's teachings first-hand, as well as to theosophy and other approaches. He relied almost entirely on the concrete mind, rationalization, and his own first-hand experience, in reaching conclusions and developing the fourth way. And yet, even intellectually, Ouspensky has contributed substantially to the "field" of theosophical philosophy and psychology, by focusing on issues that really matter and ignoring much that is merely trendy, and introducing some quite valuable notions (as well as a few not-so-valuable (not substantiated) notions). In practice, the fourth way refers in general to the entire Gurdjieff-Ouspensky philosophical system, and in particular to those aspects of that system having significance for the evolution of consciousness and in the context of the spiritual path.

The scope (of particular value) of the fourth way includes the notions of the incompleteness of the human being, multiple personalities, false personality, eventual integration of the personality, four states of (lower, personality) consciousness ((1) the sleeping state, (2) the waking state, (3) the state of self-remembering, and (4) the objective state), seven types of "man" (the lower four of which correlate to physical, emotional, mental, and intuitional polarization in consciousness) (and associated schools), self-observation, self-remembering (a

method of awakening), the importance and nature of honesty and the psychology of lying, the role of the emotions, attitudes, and imagination, the problem of identification (attachment), the problem of mechanicalness and will, psychological buffers (impediments to development of conscience), psychological conditioning, the principles of relativity and scale, the illusion of "doing" and the role of will, the role of psychological shock, and personality sleep.

Another element of Ouspensky's tradition involves multi-dimensional reality, higher dimensions, and ordering. Of particular value is the attempt of the student to conceptually embrace notions that defy the conditioning of the human personality, e.g., the conventional notions (delusions) of physical reality (as the only reality), the relative illusions of self-consciousness, self-will, cause-and-effect relationships, etc. Ouspensky's approach to the fourth and fifth dimensions is particularly useful in this regard, even though it is essentially a conceptual extension of conventional reality rather than a realization of higher dimensions. Even though much of the Gurdjieff-Ouspensky system has a largely rational (rationalized) basis and rejects much that is true, there is still a great deal of value, both in many of the notions presented as well as in the psychological methods suggested [being rational and being true are not necessarily mutually consistent (one can be rational and true, rational and not true, non-rational and true, as well as non-rational and not true)].

In the final analysis, the value of any philosophical or spiritual system lies in its ability to facilitate the evolution of consciousness, i.e., does it help or hinder? The Gurdjieff-Ouspensky system does facilitate the evolution of consciousness, as it focuses substantially on the process of awakening.

Justification

One of the problems of the human condition is the tendency of the mind (ego) toward justification (and self-justification). This is a consequence both of the delusion of separateness (within and from the oneness of God) and the self-serving aspect of the human condition.

The tendency is for a person or persons to (individually or collectively) rationalize (justify through rationalization) any action, behavior, feeling, thinking, etc., that occurs or which is desired in some sense by the separated self (personality) (mind) (ego) or group. The problem of this tendency is that it sustains the power of the separated self to pursue its delusion of independent existence, thus undermining the intentions of the higher self toward evolving more directly in consciousness. In the deluded state, one still evolves, albeit much more slowly by virtue of the person (individual) being absorbed on personal (mundane) levels and thereby not being responsive to higher guidance (conscience) (higher self). In the non-deluded state one is much more responsive to higher qualification and learning (growth) (service) is greatly facilitated thereby.

The most primitive of people simply do whatever is instinctive at the animal (survival) level. More developed people tend to do whatever they want to (that they are able to), subject only to whatever boundaries exist, e.g., cultural boundaries enforced by peers, with a manifested philosophy (rationalization) of if-it-feels-good-and-doesn't-hurt-anyone-it's-okay. That rationalization (and the unconscious or conscious assumption that "life" is only one lifetime and karma is non-functional) is indeed okay, at that level of maturity (and in fact is substantially better than if-it-feels-good-it-doesn't-matter-if-someone-else-suffers). The problem of this rationalization is that the individual embracing this (self-indulgent) philosophy is continuing (actually complicating) the delusion. And self-indulgence in this sense is the single most spiritually-inhibiting factor.

Most people who have passed beyond this particular stage of self-indulgence and self-justification (who are relatively few) simply take self-indulgence and

self-justification to progressively more subtle levels. As one evolves, one becomes less and less self-centered, but one remains personality-centered for almost the entire human evolutionary passage. It is only in the relatively final stages of human evolution (i.e., the spiritual path) that one actually passes beyond personality-centeredness. But therein (that passage) lays the key to fulfillment. One must eventually rise above even the subtle and lower-self-sustaining justifications of the personality in order to reach (achieve) union (in consciousness) with the higher self.

Rationalization is an important and necessary step, and is certainly better (albeit more complicated) than self-indulgence without any rationalization. But even the logic of rationalization is actually non-conclusive (not valid) in the higher sense. The inherent fallibility of logic (reasoning) (rationalization) allows one to twist and distort things however one wishes. As one progresses, one rationalizes humanitarian budgets (allocations of one's resources (time, money)) and/or spiritual efforts (likewise) [thus inhibiting "real" progress and sustaining the power of the lower self]. Eventually one realizes the inherent limitations of rational process. And eventually one learns to do what needs to be done without any justification or rationalization (i.e., one's motive is simply to do what needs to be done, rather than to have specific (or even general) but personal objectives).

† Commentary No. 986

Levels of Reality

One of the relatively important notions associated with the esoteric philosophy is that of reality and illusion. In order to overcome the delusion implied in physical-plane existence, one must learn to make a distinction between that which is real or of a higher (spiritual) nature and that which is unreal or of a lower (material) nature. One must necessarily consciously realize the distinction between the soul and its personality (and understand their relationship) before one can realistically hope to achieve any real sense of union with that higher self. And one must necessarily consciously realize the distinction between the apparent reality of the lower worlds (objective (?) reality) (physical, emotional, and mental planes of consciousness) and the higher reality of atma-buddhi-manas (subjective (?) reality).

And yet, ultimately, one must realize that the higher reality includes the lower reality. The higher reality simply places the lower in a more proper perspective. When one says that there is no space, what one really means is that space exists at a lower level of reality than not-space. The reason for using terminology or expressions such as “illusion” and “the human personality is not real” (respectively) is that the human mind tends necessarily to interpret everything literally and unconsciously (mindlessly) and to “think” in a binary, linear, exclusive (separative) manner. Merely intellectual (superficial) understanding of something does not suffice (does not endure and is not sufficient). By “thinking” of the lower world as illusionary (which it is), the student is assisted in refocusing the attention of the mind (and consciousness) on higher things. By making strong statements such as “this is not real” one may be able to convey a sufficient shock to the habits (and assumptions (conditioning)) of the lower self (mind) (ego) (personality) such that the underlying conditioning is weakened and eventually overcome.

A more accurate but less effective notion is that physical reality is a legitimate reality. But things are not generally what they appear to be. Physical reality is not what it seems, not what the mind is conditioned into thinking it is. The mind that embraces physical reality as the only legitimate reality (i.e., materialistic thinking common to most human cultures) is thereby inhibited from understanding any higher or deeper reality. It does not (should not) matter (to the spiritual student) that the vast majority of humanity are deluded with regard to physical reality (there are lessons to be learned in that delusion). But the student should not be intimidated by that majority thinking. In the context of evolution in consciousness, it is crucial for the spiritual student to overcome his or her conditioning, to be able to progressively embrace higher realities.

Reality is actually a plenum of differentiated realities, from one perspective a whole, from most perspectives discrete aspects of a continuum. Physical reality is simply the (apparently) furthest (furthestmost) from absolute reality (which may actually be only conceptually absolute). Much of the spiritual practice is given to overcoming the delusions of the senses with regard to the lower (physical, emotional, and intellectual) realities.

As these delusions are overcome (as the consciousness of the student is refined and the conditioning of the student is transcended), higher realities can be embraced, and, more importantly, the energy or qualification of those higher realities can be brought “down” into the everyday life of the spiritual student. Thus, self-realization implies contact with and evocation of the energy of the higher reality of the (higher) (God) self.

† Commentary No. 987

Psychic Reading 1

Psychic reading refers to the process of obtaining information about someone (or something) by psychic means, generally through reading a person’s aura, directly or indirectly, reading the memory of nature pertaining to that person, and/or reading the karmic flow.

Ability, methods, accuracy, and sensibility vary a great deal, primarily due to the (quality of consciousness and training of the) reader, but also on the circumstances (there may be “blocks” or other intended impediments to some aspects (or all) of a reading). Psychic ability may be active (rare) or passive (common and atavistic), voluntary (relatively rare) or involuntary (common and atavistic), intuitive (rare) or personality-centered (common) (subject to the bias of the reader), properly cultivated (rare) or otherwise (common). Methods include direct and indirect approaches. Direct approaches rely on the intuition (in the higher sense) or on clairvoyance (in the lower sense). Indirect approaches rely on some point of concentration or focus in order to facilitate impressions (e.g., crystal ball, palmistry, tarot cards). Indirect approaches are only valid to the extent that the personality is overcome and the intuition or psychic impressions are evoked. Where indirect methods fail, the (less than noble) reader may be tempted to rely on the intellect or the imagination (and may not even be able to discern the difference). Where direct methods fail it is generally due to personal involvement (interest) on the part of the reader.

Accuracy in psychic reading is rare, even for the active, voluntary, properly trained, and noble reader (having some wisdom and discretion). But at least the noble reader will know that the reading is not accurate and make no claims for its validity or significance. The problem of effective discernment, effective

discrimination, and proper evaluation of impressions is not so easy to resolve. Some readers are sensible (reasonable) (noble) and honest (with or without talent and/or training); others are sincere but inherently dishonest (or worse). Caveat emptor. The client should always be wary of accepting any results of psychic reading at face value.

Some (many) readers simply read and interpret what is found in the aura. That interpretation may or may not be valid, depending on the actual talent and sensibility of the reader. And most readers "read" a person's aura through their own, and thus suffer distortion of the impressions (without even realizing that their own aura serves as bias). Some (most) readers cannot discern the difference between the desires and expectations found in the aura with the karmic flow of the subject, and thus generally (even sincerely) tell the respective client or subject what he or she wants to hear. Some can read the karmic flow but lack the wisdom and training to interpret the impressions in a reasonable (accurate) manner (with caveats). Some can even read the memory of nature (akashic records), but most lack the ability to properly interpret the impressions.

In the final analysis, psychic reading is, in virtually all cases, a personality-centered activity, with the client motivated by (personal) desire and the reader lacking any alignment with the higher self (and therefore being subject to the limitations of the relatively coarse personality (lower self)). While specific "results" may be encouraging to the client or subject, the client should nonetheless view all such results with caution. Some results are indeed useful and properly encouraging, but many results are simply of no real value (having either no or poor validity or the client being unable to relate to the process in a mature fashion).

Psychic Reading 2

There are two aspects of conventional (popular) psychic reading that provide a distinction for the relatively mature spiritual student. The first distinction is the realization of the inherent limitations of any psychic process and the second distinction is the transcendence of reliance upon others and turning within for guidance. More fundamentally, does the serious spiritual student have a need to obtain psychic readings, to have his or her aura read? Should the serious spiritual student be concerned about such things? Should the attention of the spiritual student be upon personality interests or upon relatively impersonal aspects?

Lack of realization of the inherent limitations of the psychic process leads to gullibility and naiveté, which are passive qualities which undermine real evolution in consciousness. Taking the word or experience of a psychic reader at face value is rather dangerous (potentially delusory). One should rather evaluate the character and quality of the reader and the reading. One should consider the "results" obtained from a reader to be possibilities rather than certainties. Only where the results "ring true" should they be accepted (this assumes that one can discern between what is true and what one wants to be true (which very, very few people can do)). One should rather not personalize the process of insight by relying on any outside source, except (impersonal philosophical material) as catalyst. The mature spiritual student necessarily lives with possibilities, tentativeness, and relativity. Where there is passionate conviction there is very much self-deception.

On the other hand, one should not rely on strictly rational process either. The rational mind can be just as misleading if not more so than the typical (sincere) psychic reader. The problem is, should one rely upon any external source at all? As the spiritual student progresses in spiritual maturity, there is less vulnerability to the ordinary glammers and illusions of spiritual and psychic experience. There is less reliance on external sources. There is less concern about personal and personality interests. Therefore, there is no real need for the spiritual student to seek the services of any psychic or to ponder the results thereby attained. Instead, the spiritual student ponders his or her own

perceptions, gradually realizing the inherent limitations and gradually learning to discern the real (impersonal truth) from the unreal (personal) (egoistic) (imagination) (self-deception).

Unless this “work” is done oneself, there is no real gain or progress. Psychics and external teachers may offer guidance and/or encouragement, but unless the student actually realizes for himself or herself the “value” of something and takes responsibility for discernment, appropriate action, and consequences, then there is no real gain. The real teacher is the soul or higher self on its level. Through conscience and growing responsiveness to that higher self, the spiritual student learns to rely on the spiritual intuition and associated (validated, impersonal) impressions. Along the way are many painful lessons, as the waking-consciousness gradually learns to distinguish the impersonal voice of the silence from the masquerading ego (mind) (personality-centered consciousness) that is intelligent enough to be plausible in its deception (after all, the ego is sincere, but misguided by personal (self) interest).

In the final analysis, the spiritual student becomes his or her own psychic reader, not providing readings for others, but providing (evoking) insight for oneself, and providing more mature (non-glamour-filled) encouragement to others.

† Commentary No. 989

Vibhuti Pada 3

“Through the cultivation of this habit of mind there will eventuate a steadiness of spiritual perception.” The stabilization of the mind is crucial to effective spiritual perception. Unless the mind is quiet (non-passively quiescent (clear and responsive)), any (spiritual) perception will be distorted or impeded. Through spiritual discipline, the state of the quiet mind is achieved and one has therefore achieved “mind control” or self-control of the mind. This quiet mind is a necessary (but not sufficient) precursor to soul infusion, or the down-flow of the consciousness (qualification) of the soul or higher self.

“The establishing of this habit, and the restraining of the mind from its thought-form-making tendency, results eventually in the constant power to

contemplate." Restraint cannot effectively be imposed. It must be achieved through qualification such that the independent tendencies of the mind (e.g., thought-form-making) are naturally inhibited. Since this generally occurs coincidentally with the evocation of spiritual quality in consciousness, the resulting consciousness facilitates contemplation. The properly realized spiritual student is in a more-or-less-constant state of meditation (non-thinking contemplation), even though he or she is also able to interact consciously and intelligently with internal and external opportunities (experience). In other words, while participating (incidentally) in worldly activities, the student remains contemplative and therefore does not become absorbed in mundane, personal, or worldly matters, and in principle does not lose the higher continuity and quality of consciousness.

Thus there are (at least) two levels or activities implied by the quiet mind: the one-pointedness of spiritual focus in inner activity ((proper) meditation) and the one-pointedness of spiritual focus in outer activity (i.e., living the spiritual life). In neither case is this the one-pointedness of absorption in concentrated (exclusive) consciousness (which is a much more preliminary stage). In both levels, spiritual perception is clear and revealing, although the spiritual focus in outer activity is naturally more difficult to achieve and sustain.

But what is meant by spiritual perception? It is seeing "things" as they are, not as the mind or personality supposes they are. It is a conscious (intuitive, non-thinking) realization of the character and (acquired, manifesting, and/or latent) characteristics of any spiritually perceived object or subject. It is a realization of the substance and significance of what is perceived. It is a realization of the symbolic nature of which the outer form or notion is merely representative. In the delusion of the senses, one perceives external objects as reality. With higher consciousness, one perceives the higher, symbolic reality of external objects. With yet higher consciousness, one perceives beyond the symbolic nature to the actuality. "A symbol is an embodied idea, the working out in objective existence of some life." The reality is that life, not the symbol itself, and not the external appearance of the symbol.

The process of realization in consciousness, subsequent to the quiet mind and properly qualified consciousness, is a matter of soul-assisted unveiling (of itself and of all that falls within the realm of manifestation on whatever level of

consciousness is embraced). "In time and space all characteristics have relative values." Reality is embraced as the whole is realized and the delusion of time and space is overcome. [Book III, Sutras 10-14]

† Commentary No. 990

Vibhuti Pada 4

True meditation is only possible when the various factors which inhibit meditation have been overcome. As one achieves sufficient refinement of the physical, emotional, and mental nature, as one embraces more spiritual quality, and as one tempers the ego (mind) (personality), then true meditation becomes possible. Once true meditation has been achieved, then "results" (knowledge, understanding, wisdom (realization)) are evoked through meditation.

Through true meditation, the intuition reveals the character, sound (tone), characteristics, and underlying nature of the object and its context (relationships). The key to realization is recognition of the underlying sound (soul aspect), for it is this sound (soul) that is the common or unifying aspect of all of manifested life. "Normal" psychic faculties rely on the third aspect (matter), while true meditation (spiritual intuition) evokes the second aspect (consciousness).

"Knowledge of previous incarnations becomes available when the power to see thought-images is acquired." True meditation conveys insight regarding thought-forms and various causal chains, including the nature and quality of previous lives. Details are generally not significant, although they can be evoked as needed. For the most part, it is the consciousness (quality) (causal (karmic) factors) of previous experience (and its significance to the current life (work)) that is (are) relevant and therefore of interest. At this level of consciousness (true meditation) (intuitive realization) there is no curiosity and no personal (intrusive) energy. There is simply insight. And that insight comes unbidden by deliberation (desire) [in fact, deliberation (desire) inhibits true realization]. With other-than-true-meditative realization, images and impressions from previous lives are generally distorted and of little value as one cannot (at that level) properly discern truth from imagination.

The properly trained and qualified seer can accurately and effectively read and interpret the akashic (historical) records (memory of nature) of all that has (ever) transpired, but the less-than-properly trained (and unqualified) seer can only glimpse (partially) the akashic records and has no substantive basis for interpretation or understanding. The properly trained and qualified spiritual (esoteric) student will intuitively recognize anyone with whom he or she is historically or karmically linked (the untrained and unqualified may also experience some similar "impressions" but without understanding the context). In other words, the properly trained and qualified student sees clearly, while the untrained and unqualified become englamoured and tend to distort whatever impressions are realized.

"Through concentrated meditation, the thought images in the minds of other people become apparent." This does not mean that the trained and qualified seer invades the mental and emotional privacy of others. It is (properly) a matter of intuitive (and telepathic) realization, and not a matter of intrusion or imposition. It may occur through an act of will (attention) in the context of understanding causal factors (quality of consciousness) and the dharma of the observer. It may (more generally) occur unbidden through an act of sympathetic telepathy. It does not (generally) involve specific (verbalized) thoughts or feelings, but it does (generally) involve the character, quality, and intention of the respective thoughts and feelings. In the basic sense, the thoughts and feelings are realized. In the advanced sense, the object(s) of thoughts and feelings is (are) also realized, as that is more relevant. It is the context (character and intention) that truly matters. [Book III, Sutras 15-20]

God and Gods

Monotheism is the doctrine or belief that there is but one God. Pantheism is, in the higher sense, a doctrine that equates God with the forces and laws of the universe. In the lower sense, pantheism tends to encourage people to embrace those forces and laws as consequences of the various (presumably anthropomorphic) gods.

In the ancient wisdom (esoteric philosophy), both monotheism and pantheism (in its higher sense) are embraced. There is but one God in the absolute, ultimate sense of an unmanifested and therefore indescribable (non-anthropomorphic) being, who simply induces manifestation for the purpose of encouraging the evolution of consciousness. Within manifestation there are a succession of manifested (non-anthropomorphic) beings, at various levels, called logoi, who embody the purpose and process of evolution. Each of these logoi, on its level, can be perceived (and reasonably considered) as the one God, in some relative sense, as all life and consciousness and form within its field of manifestation is indeed inseparable from that logos.

Thus from one valid perspective (that of internal (vertical) consistency), there is one God within one greater God within one even greater God until the absolute, unmanifested being is realized (?). From another, equally valid, perspective (that of horizontal equivalence), there are many logoi at each of the various levels, all of which individually can be considered gods. All of these beings work within a broad evolutionary framework and interact with each other on some level(s) and in some ways, each contributing to the fulfillment of the evolutionary plan which is itself internally (vertically and horizontally) consistent.

In some sense, the energy of a logos is expressed (expended) both in the form of various lifewaves within its field of manifestation (ring-pass-not) and in the sense of various qualifying forces and laws of manifestation. Since every expression of logoiic energy involves life (consciousness) (and form), the various laws of the universe (solar system) (planetary scheme) are embodied lives in some sense or another. Thus a basis exists for viewing these forces and laws in

a supernatural (natural) sense. However, none of these beings within beings (laws, forces, etc.) are anthropomorphic or resemble the human (personality) nature in any sense. Yet, in various religions and philosophies these laws and forces have been symbolically represented in anthropomorphic terms, by way of analogously explaining their functions and purposes. But many people have mistaken the symbols for what they represent (reality) in their various belief systems, and as the people of various religions gradually and naturally lose touch with the underlying wisdom (as the underlying evolutionary impulse of the religion is expended), the essential teachings are naturally distorted (by ignorance and presumption).

There is, however, an underlying intelligence in each of the various laws and forces of the universe (manifestation), albeit not in the same sense of self-conscious human beings (but generally in the sense of not-self-conscious-but-higher-than-human intelligence) (human beings err in presuming that superhuman means (merely) an extension or expansion of the human sense of self-consciousness). Laws and forces are embodiments of purpose and therefore carry qualification and intention. The beings who embody these laws and (associated) forces act with inherent intelligence (and some degree of conscious awareness) in their working out of that purpose and intention. Though one may view them as gods, they are, more accurately, simply aspects of the one God.

† Commentary No. 992

Logoi

From the point of view of internal consistency (lives within lives and cycles within cycles), the human being exists within the field of manifestation of (and is one in higher consciousness with) a planetary logos (who is, for all practical purposes, God). That planetary logos embodies a planetary evolutionary scheme through a succession of globes (planets) and rounds (cycles of evolutionary experience and expression) [and kingdoms and lifewaves].

Yet, the planetary logos is, on its level, simply one aspect of a greater being (solar logos), and with the “other” planetary logoi actually comprise the body of that solar logos and embody the purpose and intention of that solar logos. Each

of the various planetary logoi within a solar logos is analogous to a lifewave (mineral, plant, animal, human, deva) within the planetary evolutionary scheme, only on a higher level and broader scale. Each planetary logos embodies one aspect of the solar logos, and in that sense contributes qualitatively to all of the various (six (?) other) planetary logoi as well as to the solar logos as a whole. Thus each planetary logos (planet (a planetary logos and its planet are loosely equivalent in the same sense that a lifewave and its kingdom are loosely equivalent)) radiates a qualified and distinctive energy according to its essential quality (character, quality of consciousness, temperament (on its level, not in the human sense)) and according to its cyclic activity (rhythm). Thus each of the other planets conveys some continual (periodic) qualification or encouragement in the context of the evolutionary intention of the solar logos.

In the same sense, the solar logos is simply one aspect of an even greater being (cosmic logos), and with the other solar logoi comprise the body of manifestation of that cosmic logos, embodying its purpose and intention. Beyond the level of a cosmic logos there are successively greater beings (logoi), but "they" are beyond the firsthand experience of (the most refined) human consciousness. By observation and experience, the various characteristics of the various logoi (planetary, solar, and cosmic) can be discerned or inferred. By viewing a group of logoi collectively one can even discern or infer to some extent how they relate to each other and collectively to the next higher level. However, what is known (perceived) about logoi is necessarily only a partial understanding, as logoi are well beyond human consciousness and human "interpretation" may be misleading.

Of course one should distinguish between the form or body of manifestation and the indwelling and underlying consciousness (and between that consciousness and its underlying spirit (monadic existence)). Thus the planet (globe) is simply a "body" through which a planetary logos manifests (expresses itself, albeit in a limited and partial sense). And the solar system is simply a body or field of manifestation through which the solar logos is manifested and expressed (likewise a cosmic consortium (collection of solar logoi)). The actual consciousness expressed through the planetary and solar "vehicles" is analogous only to the human personality consciousness (even though very, very different in character and quality and nature from the actual human personality

(anthropomorphic) consciousness), which leaves the “soul” or higher self of the respective logos at some higher (deeper) (more subtle) level.

Each logos is itself a trinity and a septenate, having three aspects and seven functional energies. The correspondence of the logos (macrocosm) with the human being (microcosm) is profound, but only in the deeper sense of what the human being really is, not what the human being merely appears to be.

† Commentary No. 993

The Scientific Method

The scientific method includes the “principles and procedures for the systematic pursuit of knowledge involving the recognition and formulation of a problem, the collection of data through observation and experiment, and the formulation and testing of hypotheses.” The scientific method is not limited to the traditional physical sciences, but can be applied (successfully or otherwise) to psychology and the social sciences and to virtually every arena of human experience, including to some extent even the non-physical (super-physical) realms.

The obvious strength of the scientific method is the implied human objectivity, with associated rational, logical thinking processes (a weakness of the process being the extent of lack of objectivity in human nature and a compromising of the scientific method thereby). The principal benefit of scientific training (in the scientific method) is in the concentration (discipline) (focus) (strengthening) of the mind, concrete mental development, and potential overcoming of the distractions of emotional polarization (personal, non-objective entanglements) thereby facilitating the transition from emotional polarization to mental polarization.

Among the weaknesses or difficulties of the scientific method are unconscious assumptions, bias (seeking to prove something biases the process and potentially biases the outcome, while seeking to understand something does not necessarily bias the process or results), and ego. The limitations of the conventional scientific method are attachment to the concrete mind and reliance on the concrete mental process (reasoning) (logic) which inhibit the unfoldment

of the intuition (i.e., the responsiveness of the lower self to the intuitional insight of the higher self) (yet developing the mind is a necessary precursor to further evolution).

The biggest problem of “science” lies in the usual assumption that physical reality is all that there is (i.e., viewing everything (physics, biology, psychology, as explainable in physical terms, without recognition of the non-physical factors (forces) and the fact that physical effects (e.g., biological processes) are merely induced consequences of non-physical causes). In the context of the esoteric philosophy, therefore, scientific “results” are not considered particularly meaningful in themselves, although research into the nature of energy, force, and matter, and research into the nature of time and space (and other subjects), in the context of the esoteric philosophy, helps to clarify understanding of deeper (less orthodox) (intuitively realized) principles.

There is also the problem of egoistic presumption, of presuming that the scientific method is an effective means of reaching understanding of things. It is potentially effective, except that any conscious or unconscious assumption of physical preeminence distorts or invalidates some or all of the conclusions or results. Interpretation (misinterpretation) of “evidence” is another problem in the scientific method. This is where logic is dangerous, in the sense that scientists often use logic unreasonably (making conscious or unconscious assumptions) to reach invalid conclusions. Without an investigator’s intuitive appreciation of cause and effect relationships, the scientific method may (and will often) fail (though it will not generally be realized to fail). Ultimately, with growing and deepening intuition, the scientific method leads to transcending the concrete mind. Realization rather than logic then guides the scientific process.

Heredity

Heredity is “the sum of the qualities and potentialities genetically derived from one’s [physical plane] ancestors” and “the transmission of qualities from ancestor to descendant through a mechanism lying primarily in the genes.” Heredity is thus a major conditioning factor that (karmically) affects the personality life and its ability to express itself while in incarnation.

In modern science, however, there is considerable and largely unrealized confusion in (lack of) understanding the cause and effect relationships concerning the role of genes. Scientists and the general public tend to think of genes as causes, rather than as effects. In learning that, statistically, a particular gene is associated with particular “effects” leads the unwary observer to conclude that one (the gene) causes the other (manifested characteristics). Whereas, in fact, genes are simply (primary) effects of karmic forces and do not, in general, cause the associated secondary effects (manifested characteristics).

When the soul or higher self approaches incarnation, all of the karmically warranted genetic effects are taken into consideration (not rationally or objectively, but subjectively). Host parents and (cultural and genetic) conditioning factors are selected based on qualifications and needs (and karmic relationships). Thus the incarnated individual “inherits” the genetic factors (real and potential) that are karmically warranted. Genes are thus effects or consequences. Moreover, many genes are not deterministic, but, rather, they are merely potential, being opportunities for manifestation (evocation) rather than necessarily manifested. Thus the individual in incarnation, based on his or her activities on physical, etheric, astral (emotional), and mental (intellectual) levels (i.e., attitudes and behavior), evokes genetic manifestations or not, depending on the circumstances. Thus genes are still effects, not causes. The real “cause” of genetic manifestation (evocation of genetic “effects”) is the karmic condition of consciousness.

In practice two people with essentially the same genetic makeup may easily manifest different “consequences” of that genetic composition depending on their respective circumstances in consciousness. For example, one person may

succumb to a genetically “induced” disease, while another person with the same genetic makeup but different “consciousness” may not. The deciding factor is always karma, and karma is not so simple and straightforward that the “rules” are easily discerned. Thus while a “good” attitude may prevail, one may also succumb to genetically induced effects, because of some overriding karmic factor. While attitude is important, the needs of karma always prevail. Thus one may not be able to consciously determine the karmic effects, but one can, definitely (in principle), consciously determine how one responds to those effects (opportunities) [assuming one is conscious].

Genetic selection in the first place is made based upon anticipated “life” parameters. Some of those parameters are relatively fixed; others are flexible and can be changed (evoked or not) according to the dynamic needs and circumstances. Over the course of a lifetime, a person (hopefully) experiences, grows, and changes in consciousness. That growth is not easily predicted, at least not in its details. Thus each person needs a relatively broad range of opportunities, genetic (hereditarily) and environmental. Genes (genetic factors) are mostly convenient potentialities. The soul in incarnation can selectively activate genetic factors, evoking some, not evoking others, according to the circumstances in consciousness.

† Commentary No. 995

Life

God conveys life. All things are alive in some sense or another. But what is life and what is its inherent purpose? Life is the reflection or induction of God transcendent into (as) the field of manifestation (and all its content). Life is the manifestation of divine intention and the thread that ties the manifested lifeform back to the underlying source (God). Life is therefore God immanent and underlies all of manifestation (as God transcendent overshadows all of manifestation).

The inherent purpose of life (as life) is the fulfillment of the evolutionary plan (with whatever general and specific objectives there may be contained therein) for which manifestation was invoked. Life thus conveys that purpose (the purpose of life is to convey purpose, while the purpose of consciousness (induced

by life) is to facilitate the “accomplishment” of that purpose (thus consciousness is more “active” than life)). Life (spirit) (power), consciousness, and matter are all aspects of the one God, in manifestation. Life conveys consciousness. Life induces matter within itself. Consciousness is the link between spirit and matter, but life underlies all of spirit, consciousness, and matter. Thus life is more fundamental than either consciousness or matter.

In the spiritual sense, all life is immortal and there is no real death. The withdrawal of consciousness from some field or sub-field of manifestation simply implies that “life” is inactive on those (lower) levels. In the more conventional (secular) sense, life is “the quality that distinguishes a vital and functional being from a dead body or purely chemical matter.” Yet a dead body is only “dead” as a body, while its constituents continue to live at their own respective levels. And even purely chemical matter is alive in the spiritual sense of having an indwelling divine essence and associated evolutionary intention. Life is the breath of the logos, manifested and sustained for as long as that breath lasts, and even beyond that breath as the life is withdrawn from manifestation. Thus life is breath and non-breath, in the logic sense.

Life is the fundamental basis of oneness or unity (universal life (and analogous universal consciousness)). At the highest level of manifestation, there is only one life (and no consciousness) (as consciousness is secondary and artificial in this context). All else is differentiated within that one life. Thus at any succeeding (internal) level, manifested life is one with the underlying life and simply induced within that oneness. Any differentiated sense (of individual or separate existence) is merely artificial (that does not invalidate the actuality of the sense of separate consciousness, but does place it in context (artificial or differentiated life is less “real” than undifferentiated life)).

Life also conveys sentience, which is a fundamental and essential aspect of consciousness. Through sentience, each “life” contributes to the one life, as each monadic life exhibits consciousness and utilizes form to obtain wisdom through understanding derived from the assimilation of knowledge and experience. Thus sentience is the underlying double flow of life, outwardly in the sense of conveying purpose to consciousness (experience and expression), inwardly in the sense of assimilation of that experience and expression. The omniscience of God is exhibited through sentience, but the associated

awareness is comparable to that of the human being exhibiting consciousness through the cells of his or her physical body.

† Commentary No. 996

Power

Power is defined as the underlying source of energy (influence) (inherent, underlying (primary) qualification (in contrast with secondary qualification)) that provides for the animation (expression) (manifestation) of life and consciousness. The source of power is God (the logos, on some level), and everything within the ring-pass-not or field of manifestation of that logos is empowered by the logos.

Power equates to life, spirit, and purpose, and is more fundamental than love (consciousness) (energy) and light (matter) (force). Power from cosmic levels flows through the solar lens and into the solar field of manifestation. Power from solar levels flows similarly through each respective planetary logos. And there is an element of underlying power associated with each lifewave within each planetary scheme (and within each monad within each respective lifewave) (note that in this sense it is the human monad that is the power element, while the soul or higher self derives its apparent power from the monad (and as the personality derives its apparent power from the soul or higher self)). But from a higher perspective, power is not really conveyed through any single chain of being, but is rather conveyed through the collective being of the lifewave (e.g., humanity as a whole). All lives are interrelated through this principle.

Power (life) is the first ray aspect of manifestation, while love is the second ray aspect and light is the third ray aspect (the medium). Power at any level can be invoked (and subsequently evoked) according to the ability of the worker and the appropriateness of the circumstances. There is no effective limit to power, per se, but there are effective limits in the sense of karmic bounds. At any level of manifestation, power is the most "powerful" aspect of manifestation, by virtue of its direct link with the highest levels of manifestation. There is a cascading effect common to the evocation of power. No evocation of power is ever inconsistent with karma (does God have karma?). However, karma may permit the evocation of power in such a manner that the invoking lifeform is

overwhelmed or destroyed thereby (as a lifeform, not in any fundamental sense). Thus one should exercise great care (discretion) in working with the first ray element (power).

Power is the source of the creative aspect of manifestation as well as the source of the destructive aspect of manifestation. The creative-destructive force is a single force with two aspects, acting creatively or destructively according to the needs of manifestation. That which conveys life (love) (light) is that which withdraws life (love) (light). The greatest element of power is its most subtle working. For in subtlety (discretion) (wisdom) there is creative, intelligent, sensible influence for good. Without subtlety, power is largely unmanageable. Karma is considered a subtle aspect of manifestation, by virtue of its reliance on the subtle forcefulness of the power element. If one persists in going against the flow of karma, one encounters increasingly greater resistance and increasingly more forceful (more compelling) opportunities to proceed with the flow.

Power is essentially latent, evoked as needed. Energy is the means of power. Force (influence) is the exercise or manifestation of energy (power). But all power is within the auspices or dominion of the logos or corollary (e.g., the human monad) and cannot be appropriated contrarily to karma (the will of the monad or logos) or beyond the dominion of that entity (i.e., beyond its ring-pass-not).

Maya

In a sense maya, glamour, and illusion are a single phenomenon, with maya being maya-glamour-illusion on physical and etheric levels, glamour being maya-glamour-illusion on emotional or astral levels, and illusion being maya-glamour-illusion on mental or intellectual levels. More properly, maya is the Sanskrit term that embraces maya-glamour-illusion and indicates the cosmic illusion of duality, or appearance in contrast with underlying reality, of that which covers or hides reality and encourages (compels) the deception of external focus. Maya is the fundamental basis of limitation, and includes the common notions of matter, individuality, and ego.

Maya is both the power which makes phenomenal existence and perception thereof possible, and the power which englamours consciousness and leads to comprehension (illusion) of external reality as reality. That which is changeless in the abstract sense is considered reality, while that which is transient and subject to change in the practical sense is considered illusory, not in the sense of non-existence, but in the sense that what appears to be is not, generally, what it appears to be. The external world exists, but the human perception and understanding of that world is illusory. By virtue of absorption on mundane levels, "man" has fabricated ideas based upon external impressions which constitute serious and substantial, albeit temporarily necessary, illusion. This fabrication results from man's need to interpret and understand his existence in these lower worlds (without any realization of subjective reality). Through evolution in consciousness, clarity of perception and realization of the illusory nature of external existence is gradually developed. Through gradual and progressive realization, the various pairs of opposites (contrasts) (duality) (illusion of separation) are resolved and a more unitary consciousness is unfolded.

In a deeper sense, maya implies and conveys comprehensive knowledge, understanding, even wisdom. In this sense maya is formative consciousness, that which facilitates experience and expression in the lower, relatively objective worlds of human endeavor. Formative consciousness embraces the external universe, observing, measuring, judging, etc., and therefore is a

distraction in consciousness from that which is real (inner reality). The experience and expression of formative consciousness is necessary to the human passage through externalization (lower worlds), yet, ultimately, having fulfilled the needed external experience, one must transcend formative consciousness and associated limitations and overcome all of maya, glamour, and illusion.

In the practical sense, maya refers to being absorbed in the illusion (illusory aspects) of physical-etheric existence (while glamour refers to being absorbed on emotional levels and illusion refers to being absorbed on mental levels). Maya contributes veils upon (within) veils in (of) consciousness, contriving walls and barriers to realization which, having served their defensive and protective purposes (i.e., having provided temporary (wrong but acceptable) understanding of external existence), must be faced and overcome (as consciousness is better able to comprehend greater and deeper truth).

In the final analysis, maya is that which facilitates the illusion that self-fulfillment occurs externally rather than internally, that external reality is more real than internal reality, when in fact, internal reality (God) (the soul) is more real than the external (more properly the internal and the external are one and the same reality, with the external not being what it appears to be).

† Commentary No. 998

Actualization

Actualization is the process of becoming what one truly is. The context of actualization is found in the distinction between the ideal human being (which is what the human being really is in the higher sense) and the human being in practice (which is what the human being is in the lower sense). The ideal human being is the individualized evolutionary archetype or personality matrix that is the intended outcome of human evolution. That outcome exists in potential form, generalized in the sense that it reflects the overall goals for human evolution, individualized in the sense that it reflects particular (personal) experience and the particular evolutionary path of the individual, in the context of humanity. Thus actualization has general goals but relies upon diversity of

individual experience and expression. The outcome is assured only in general terms.

The humanistic psychologist Abraham H. Maslow popularized the notion of actualization by defining a hierarchy of needs and suggesting that once the relatively more basic human needs are fulfilled, then the human being would naturally approach or work toward the actualized state. According to Maslow "actualized persons are (1) realistically oriented, (2) accept themselves, others, and the world as they are, (3) spontaneous, and (4) problem-centered rather than self-centered. (5) They have an air of emotional detachment and a need for privacy, (6) are autonomous and independent, (7) appreciative of people and the world in a fresh, rather than stereotyped way. (8) Most have had profound mystical or spiritual experience, though not necessarily religious in nature. (9) They identify with mankind (10) and their relationships with a few people are profound, deeply emotional, and not superficial. They (11) have a democratic personality structure, for them all people are equal, (12) do not confuse means with ends, (13) resist conformity to culture, and (16) transcend, rather than merely cope with, the environment." By independent one should mean "relatively unconditioned by mass consciousness." By identification with mankind one should mean "rather than oneself and not to the exclusion of more general life." By deeply emotional one should mean "meaningfully emotional" rather than emotionally-polarized.

The humanistic approach is to some extent helpful to the evolution of human consciousness in the intermediate (non-passive) sense. In the intermediate stages of human evolution, the "student" must be motivated, take constructive action, learn directly from experience, etc. In short, one must consciously and deliberately become more actualized. Yet transcending the egoism implied in the humanistic approach is eventually necessary. But the more subtle aspects (quality of consciousness, purity, overcoming egoism, etc.) may come later.

From the humanistic perspective, "man" is in control and consciously evolving according to rational objectives. From the spiritual (teleological) (more reverent) point of view, "man" is evolving in accordance with the divine plan, consciously or unconsciously. In either case, one is progressing in consciousness and the "spiritual" perspective eventually dominates as the humanistic approach to actualization ultimately reveals the limitations of human-centeredness.

One of the keys to actualization (besides motivation and fulfillment) is taking responsibility for one's own actions and the consequences thereof. This is a matter of maturity and affords greater (meaningful) depth to experience. But the ultimate key to actualization is responsiveness to the higher self (the soul which "holds" the matrix of archetypal existence (causal body)).

† Commentary No. 999

Vibhuti Pada 5

"By concentrated meditation upon the distinction between form and body, those properties of the body which make it visible to the human eye are negated (or withdrawn) and the yogi can render himself invisible." The significance of this notion is essentially that visibility is conveyed by the delusion of the senses [thus invisibility can be evoked by overcoming the delusory properties of matter as they affect perception]. It does not imply that one should seek the ability to render oneself invisible (nor does it imply any great significance to the state of invisibility). The "talent" comes naturally from spiritual development (higher realization) and is not sought by the enlightened or self-realized student. Those who seek such powers are operating at a much lower level, and even if one is successful in achieving some imitation of these powers (through occult techniques), there is no implied spirituality.

A much more practical result of true meditation is the conscious realization of karmic factors. Every act on physical, emotional, and mental levels evokes karmic consequences, either immediately or subsequently (previously). The enlightened yogi (spiritual student who has achieved self-realization) is able to "read" much of his or her own karmic factors and is thereby better able to work effectively in the lower worlds (fulfilling karma, fulfilling dharma). Thus the yogi perceives experience and expression in terms of actions and consequences, causes and effects, and is able to place much if not all of experience and expression in the proper evolutionary (and broad, impersonal) context. The yogi is thus balanced (in equilibrium with karma and the evolutionary force).

“Union with others is to be gained through one-pointed meditation upon the three states of feeling --compassion, tenderness, and dispassion.” The self-realized person is en rapport with the soul of all. The self-realized person has passed beyond selfishness, self-centeredness, self-indulgence, self-absorption, etc., and lives for the sake of others. Thus the self-realized person enjoys a sympathetic relationship with all lives. Having achieved union with the overshadowing and underlying soul or higher self, the self-realized person has also (necessarily) achieved such union with the soul of all. The truly self-realized person lives, simultaneously, through all lives.

The self-realized person has whatever power is needed in the lower worlds and is tempered only by the (necessary) sense of propriety (law) (dharma). The self-realized person is not limited by physical, emotional, or concrete mental factors. “Perfectly concentrated meditation upon the awakened light will produce the consciousness of that which is subtle, hidden, or remote.” The yogi works from the central point of light (which is produced “through the subjugation of the lower nature, through the practice of love (service to humanity), through an understanding of meditation, and through perfectly concentrated meditation in the head.” The development and unfoldment of the “head” nature builds upon the essential (necessary) (pre-requisitional) heart development. One may develop the head-centered nature to some extent without the heart, and vice versa, but the higher stages of the path are only available to those who have achieved substantial balance between the head-centered and heart-centered natures. Then, and only then, can the “higher” head-centered nature unfold.

Through concentrated meditation on the sun and moon, will come a conscious realization of the world of manifestation of the soul (consciousness) and the world of matter (form), respectively. [Book III, Sutras 21-27]

Vibhuti Pada 6

Through concentrated meditation on the heavens will come a conscious realization of astrological factors in manifestation. With intuitive realization comes understanding of the various qualifying forces and the opportunities that they represent. While the self-realized person has transcended mundane astrological factors, humanity as a whole has not, and therefore consideration is given to the factors which condition and qualify humanity as a whole, through the various cycles of manifestation.

Through concentrated meditation on the various centers within the human form will come a conscious understanding of the physical, emotional, and mental (personality) (form) nature, particularly with regard to intermediate causal forces. Through that understanding comes (earned) freedom from the limitations of the personality. The lower nature is overcome, the ego is tempered, and equilibrium is achieved.

“Those who have attained self-mastery can be seen and contacted through focusing the light in the head. This power is developed in one-pointed meditation.” The light can be focused externally or internally, at will. As it is turned within, one is placed in contact, qualitatively, with all who have achieved self-mastery. Since one must have achieved a high degree of qualification oneself, there is no intrusion or distraction involved in such contact. Only one who is approaching their level can even perceive the masters as they are. There is simply a sharing of “energy” involved when one is working at those (soul) levels. The significance in this process is not that the masters can be contacted, but that the light (love-wisdom) of the soul can be evoked and then shared through the life of the esoteric student.

“All things can be known in the vivid light of the intuition.” The enlightened are not curious. They are simply self-realized. Whatever is needed (knowledge, understanding, wisdom) is simply evoked. The light of the (spiritual) intuition conveys discrimination and discernment. The dispassion of illumination allows knowledge, understanding, and wisdom to be evoked and applied non-willfully (non-actively) and non-passively. The enlightened do not “do” anything, nor

are they encumbered by the belief that they are “doing” anything. The enlightened simply fulfill their dharma. They have passed beyond the having and doing stages to the being stage. And yet they continue to serve, even more effectively, through being. But the keys are always quality of consciousness and the stability (equilibrium) (quiescence) of the mind.

“Understanding of the mind-consciousness comes from one-pointed meditation upon the heart center.” The love-wisdom aspect arises from the heart, not from the head. The great potency of the heart can (must) be evoked in the process of tempering the ego and stabilizing the mind. As one understands the mind, one neutralizes its power of independence. Then one can begin to overcome the various illusions, glammers, and maya associated with manifestation and life in the lower worlds (realm of pairs of opposites). As one transcends the various pairs of opposites, one realizes one’s spiritual nature (where previously it is a belief, subsequently it is a realization). In realization of one’s spiritual nature are evoked the various higher senses and powers of the soul or higher self (natural, uncontrived, intuitive knowledge, understanding, and wisdom). “These powers are obstacles to the highest spiritual realization, but serve as magical powers in the objective worlds.” One must not only transcend the delusion of the lower senses but also, eventually, even the higher senses. [Book III, Sutras 28-37]



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