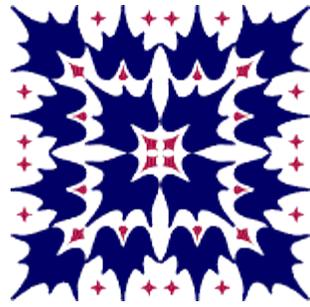


The Upper Triad Material

Topical Issue 3.5

Metaphysics

Beyond Objective Experience



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Metaphysics

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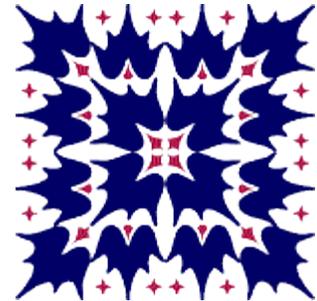
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Chapter 3.5

Metaphysics



Beyond Objective Experience

- Metaphysics is the study of that which is not necessarily apparent to the senses, namely the study of the underlying non-physical reality. At one extreme is the formal, academic study of metaphysics as a branch of philosophy. At the other extreme is the whole domain of new age (popular) metaphysics. In between these two extremes lies metaphysical reality.
- In the lower sense metaphysics is a popular and trendy practical reality. In the higher sense there is an underlying metaphysical reality that can be gradually perceived and embraced by those who develop the higher (spiritual, non-psychic, non-ego-based) faculties.

Metaphysics 1

Formal (academic) metaphysics is the branch of philosophy which deals with the nature of reality, the nature of being (ontology), the nature of God and the interpretation of religious faith (theology) (the nature of divine and human relationships), and the philosophy of nature. Where physics (in the most general sense) (science) is the study of the visible (apparent) universe, metaphysics (beyond physics) is the study of the invisible universe. Where physics deals with visible forms and effects, metaphysics deals with the underlying principles and (invisible) causes.

In the formal sense, metaphysics includes religion; in the informal (popular) sense, religion includes metaphysics. Metaphysical religion is the frontier of religion, religion that is (in its reasonably pure form) relatively free from the crystallized structure and limitations of the orthodox churches. The popular metaphysical movement is a very broad and loose synthesis of metaphysical philosophy, metaphysical religion, and metaphysical science, embracing many degrees and levels of maturity and perspective. Where the individual approach is not self-centered (and is on mental levels), there is metaphysics in its higher (spiritual) form.

Formal metaphysics is somewhat impractical (being abstract and abstruse), though it is the foundation and the frontier of academic (orthodox) philosophy and does provide considerable insight into reality. Informal metaphysics tends toward the practical application of philosophy in daily living. In this sense, it is a translation, interpretation, and reduction of the higher philosophy into a form that can be readily and easily understood and assimilated. Popular metaphysics is the bridge or link between philosophy, religion, and science. The intention or goal of metaphysics is for man to understand the universe and the place of humanity therein, to give mankind some (enlightened) purpose or motivation for living (and growing), to free mankind from the bondage of materialism (and glamour), and to provide a bridge between the orthodox world of appearances and the esoteric (superphysical) world of realities.

The higher metaphysics (beyond the popular or informal metaphysics) consists of two branches. The first is theosophy (and its link with the esoteric philosophy) and the second is classical (academic) philosophy. The two paths naturally overlap somewhat, as many of the great philosophers lived consciously in both worlds (the esoteric and the exoteric). It is within these two paths of higher philosophy that is found the key or clue to the mysteries of life. That key is simply the difference between (and the relationships of) life (reality), quality (consciousness), and appearance. In this respect, metaphysics considers the supersensible world, beyond that which is apparent to the senses. To most people, sense impressions (appearances) determine reality, but to the metaphysical student there is (or should be) a great deal of "reality" beyond appearance. Thus metaphysics attempts to answer the question of what is reality.

The "reality" of the observable (material) world is fairly well-known by orthodox science. But the world of causes is known only to the few, who through the evolution of consciousness and the cultivation of wisdom have attained first-hand self-knowledge of that greater reality. There are many who have received distorted impressions (and conclusions) (based on a lack of understanding) concerning metaphysical realms, but so few who truly understand. Perception without proper training (preparation) and understanding is of little value. The wise remain relatively silent.

† Commentary No. 1171

Metaphysics 2

Metaphysics is the study of that which is not necessarily apparent to the senses, namely the study of the underlying non-physical reality. At one extreme is the formal, academic study of metaphysics as a branch of philosophy. At the other extreme is the whole domain of new age (popular) metaphysics. In between these two extremes lies metaphysical reality.

The value of metaphysics rests with its contribution of understanding the realm of energy and forces which provides a basis for understanding, at least in principle, the whole domain of cause and effect relationships, of the laws and

rules which govern underlying reality. The practical value of metaphysics is conveyed through this understanding and leads to further awakening, to the reality of oneself and to reality of the (real) metaphysical world. Metaphysics is, in this sense, the bridge between the exoteric and conventional and ordinary world of appearances (delusion) (matter) and the esoteric and unconventional and extra-ordinary (yet more natural) world of energy and forces. While theosophy provides a basis of broad metaphysical knowledge, it is the realm of metaphysics that provides evolutionary encouragement to vastly greater numbers of people, by virtue of the more practical nature of metaphysics.

In this sense, metaphysics is the more meaningful part of the new age domain and provides the actual basis for all of the various new age notions (which of course are not at all new). It is theosophy made practical at the level of those who approach the spiritual path and at the level of the emotionally polarized aspirant, without the artificial constraints of the untempered and unbalanced head-centered nature. It is more powerful than conventional psychology, in the sense that it is based on less superficial observation and experience (and upon underlying principles) rather than being based on rational assessment of observations that are not really understood. But it is less powerful in the sense that metaphysical people, people who attempt to embrace metaphysical principles, tend to emotionalize the experience without appreciating the overall and underlying context.

There is a hierarchy or progression within the various paths of approach to and through the spiritual path. It begins with the conventional experience and expression, and through new age notions gradually embraced there is a progression toward open-mindedness, toward gradual appreciation of deeper, more meaningful considerations (e.g., reincarnation, evolution in consciousness, karma). From metaphysics and the new age experience one generally progresses to theosophy (or something comparable) which tends to be more intellectual and head-centered. Yet neither is really mature. For while metaphysical experience (the experience of the typical emotionally-polarized metaphysically-minded person) is generally conditioned or constrained by the relatively untempered emotional nature, theosophical experience (the experience of the typical intellectual theosophist) is comparably conditioned or constrained by the relatively untempered head-centeredness. Even metaphysics embraced emotionally rather than intellectually tends to be head-centered, but not to the

extreme of theosophy. Even so, the metaphysical experience tends to carry the student substantially forward through a number of lifetimes, as does (usually) subsequently the theosophical experience.

But beyond theosophy there is the real depth and breadth of truly spiritual experience, the inner realization. Where metaphysics and theosophy have provided a basis, the inner journey (self-mastery and self-realization) places both in a higher, broader perspective.

† Commentary No. 1125

Metaphysics and Psychology

There are two great perspectives regarding the human experience, one being the metaphysical perspective (conventional and psychological) and the other being the perspective of psychology (conventional and metaphysical). The relationship of the two perspectives is largely complementary in focus and emphasis, but in the broader sense metaphysics includes psychology while (conventional) psychology generally does not include metaphysics.

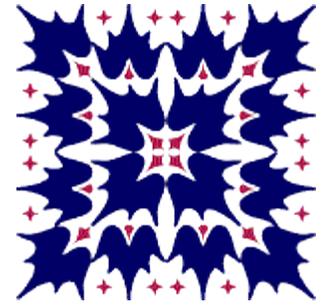
The metaphysical perspective properly focuses on the framework for human evolution in consciousness, with consideration of the underlying principles and the metaphysical reality (the human being in the context of various planes of consciousness). The metaphysical perspective is properly based on direct realization (observation, participation, experience, understanding) without recourse to theories or statistics. Unfortunately, most people lack the experience and training that allows direct realization (clear perception and understanding of underlying reality) and therefore most people experience indirectly, on the basis of appearances (the objective world) and without benefit of understanding the (metaphysical) principles upon which life in these (lower) worlds is based. Conventional metaphysics is a matter of underlying principles (not theory) and direct perception, while psychological metaphysics is a matter of perceiving human nature within a metaphysical framework (in principle, through observation, without recourse to theories or interpretation). Yet few are able to perceive clearly, metaphysically or otherwise, due to inherent biases and personal consciousness.

Psychology is a conceptual framework and means of attempting to understand human behavior on the basis of observed experience. Unfortunately, observed experience is necessarily superficial. And the processes by which superficial experience is considered lead to generalizations based on limited experience and understanding. While many of these generalizations (theories) have a basis in actuality, they are rarely (if ever) generally applicable, even if they appear to be for most people in a given cultural context (the context in which the assumptions were made and conclusions drawn). Thus conventional psychology is fundamentally speculative, as behavioral observations are interpreted in the context of theories and possibilities.

Conventional psychology is an arena with considerable limitations, yet helpful in many ways (particularly if those limitations are appreciated and taken into consideration), while metaphysical psychology is a much more potent arena by virtue of its appreciation for the underlying principles and its lack of generalization (application of theory). Being based on underlying reality (cause and effect relationships, the seven planes of consciousness, the evolutionary framework, etc.) rather than upon superficial experience and interpretations, metaphysical psychology offers the strength (validity) of both metaphysics and psychology, without the various (more substantial) limitations of conventional psychology.

The fundamental limitation of metaphysical psychology (and metaphysics) remains that of human perception and the attendant biases, while the fundamental limitation of conventional psychology is the recourse to speculation and interpretation (compounded wherever assumptions are made (further compounded wherever one is not consciously aware that assumptions have even been made)). And yet, as one deepens in consciousness, and these human limitations are gradually overcome, it becomes possible to understand more and more of human nature, in the context of metaphysical reality.

Section 3.51



New Age Metaphysics

- The new age refers to the popularization of metaphysical ideas. It is a bridge between the secular world of experience and expression and the inner world of conscious evolution. It is the adaptation and appropriation of metaphysical ideas and concepts in ways that most people can understand them and appreciate them. As such, the new age is a very progressive element of society as a whole. There is, of course, nothing "new" about the new age or the ideas embraced, except that these ideas are generally "new" to those "discovering" or embracing them.

The New Age 1

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

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

While most all of what is generally called “new age” has been available to (qualified) humanity for centuries (aeons) in one form or another, there seems to be occasional popularization of and interest in the metaphysical and supernatural. This increased (periodic) interest is often inaccurately interpreted by sincere (yet emotionally polarized) aspirants as indicative of masses of humanity standing on the threshold of some major evolutionary leap forward. The spiritual student should not make such superficial appraisals. It is the quality of consciousness that determines whether or not humanity (as

individuals and as a whole) is indeed nearing certain evolutionary goals. Increased interest in various metaphysical phenomenon may indicate little or nothing about suitability for treading or even approaching the spiritual path.

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

There are many sincere and talented people in the “new age movement,” but there are also many more charlatans who prey on others’ naiveté. And there are many more who are sincere but wholly unconscious with regard to the higher truths (i.e., which leads often enough to the blind leading the blind). The serious enquirer would well be advised to proceed cautiously, even suspiciously, and be wary of claims and demonstrations. The higher truths are not phenomenal, nor are they associated with self-proclaimed leaders or masters. Dominating or egoistic leaders are not indicative of quality of consciousness or spirituality (nor are large numbers of followers (members) (students) so indicative).

† Commentary No. 754

The New Age 2

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

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

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

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

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

† Commentary No. 1062

The New Age Movement

There are two distinct themes that have emerged from the so-called new age movement, one being an extension and expansion of orthodox religious principles to embrace metaphysical and symbolic interpretations of scripture, the other being a focus on improving self-esteem, strengthening the personality life, creative thinking, prosperity, etc. There is also a tendency toward blending Eastern and Western religious traditions in meaningful ways.

In both cases there is a liberalization effect as well as a more holistic view of life. The liberalization arises from moving beyond the more traditional doctrines and dogma, an open-mindedness that allows broader interpretations of experience, history, scripture, etc. The holistic view arises from a somewhat closer connection to occult (metaphysical) principles, whether recognized as such or not. There is an underlying “esoteric” philosophy which students of the new age and theosophical movements are able to sense to some extent, interpreting according to their abilities and conditioning, but resulting in a popularization of these “new” principles. In this sense, the new age movement fills what would otherwise be a considerable gap between metaphysical principles and conventional (religious and worldly) philosophy.

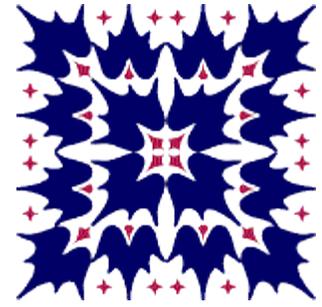
The new age movement is, in general, not an intellectual movement but an emotional movement with a nominally heart-centered basis (in parallel with the new age movement is the “theosophical” movement which tends more toward intellectual pursuit and a head-centered basis). Both new age and theosophical movements are predominantly personality-centered, as people are

predominantly personality-centered. Both movements are predominantly emotionally-polarized, likewise, but in theosophy there is a more intellectual, head-centered focus. While theosophy tends to promote “new” ideas, the new age movement tends to embrace those ideas in practical and meaningful ways. The role of the new age movement is primarily to facilitate the strengthening and liberalization (progressiveness) of personality, and as such is a very meaningful stepping stone in the direction of the (formal) spiritual path.

New age “notions” tend to be over-simplifications of metaphysical principles, but effective nonetheless because they can be relatively easily and unconditionally embraced. Since new age “notions” tend to be so appealing, they eventually find their way into the mainstream. Thus what is “new age” is continually advancing. The new age personality-strengthening process is generally quite positive, as it is generally in the context of “new age” spirituality and it is therefore not entirely self-centered. Since meditation is also a new age technique (more properly a pre-new-age technique embraced by the new age movement), there is the opportunity for deepening and passing beyond the personality-centered phase into more mystical (more humble) activities (e.g., eventually transcending the personality).

The “problem” of the new age movement is relatively modest and two-fold: (1) there is a considerable glamour associated with the new age “atmosphere” and the inability of new age “people” to recognize that glamour for what it is [absorption in egoism, personality-centeredness, spiritual materialism] and (2) there is a not inconsiderable emphasis on sense-indulgence (i.e., spirituality viewed through sense experience) and egoism which tend to inhibit the emergence of the higher Self. These problems notwithstanding, the new age movement plays a vital role in the progression of (mainstream) consciousness and facilitates the reorientation of many people from more conventional perspectives (and attachments) to new perspectives in which personal growth is facilitated.

Section 3.511



New Age Notions 1

- While theosophy follows largely from the ancient (eternal) wisdom, and while metaphysics (properly) draws from philosophy, psychology, religion, and theosophy, new age notions are adaptations of metaphysical and theosophical principles based to a large extent on what is appealing. There is generally an underlying truth to each notion, but because of the ways in which these ideas are grasped and popularized, there are also substantial distortions and misunderstandings. The fundamental problem of "new age" notions is the widespread lack of discrimination, i.e., the inability of most people to discern what is true. And yet in addition to their appeal, most new age notions also have considerable value. Some of the most valuable new age (borrowed) ideas are keeping an open mind, building self-esteem, positive thinking, acceptance of people and circumstances, heart-centeredness, embracing the light, unconditional love, the unity of all life, etc. In short, many new age notions are practical and meaningful adaptations of metaphysical principles.

New Age Notions 1

New age notions are those ideas and concepts that tend to be embraced and promulgated in the new age movement (the fringes of conventional thinking) by those of humanity who are relatively less conventional, who are relatively less constrained by conventional thinking.

While theosophy follows largely from the ancient (eternal) wisdom, and while metaphysics (properly) draws from philosophy, psychology, religion, and theosophy, new age notions are adaptations of metaphysical and theosophical principles based to a large extent on what is appealing. There is generally an underlying truth to each notion, but because of the ways in which these ideas are grasped and popularized, there are also substantial distortions and misunderstandings. The fundamental problem of new age notions is the widespread lack of discrimination, i.e., the inability of most people to discern what is true. And yet in addition to their appeal, most new age notions also have considerable value. Some of the most valuable new age (borrowed) ideas are keeping an open mind, building self-esteem, positive thinking, acceptance of people and circumstances, heart-centeredness, embracing the light, unconditional love, the unity of all life, etc. In short, many new age notions are practical and meaningful adaptations of metaphysical principles.

All of these new age notions are properly based on higher principles and the actuality of metaphysical energies and forces, i.e., the energies and forces on etheric, astral, and concrete mental levels that are evoked through thinking and feeling and behavior (action) [in this sense, energy refers to something available and existent, while force refers to the application, appropriation, attraction, evocation, or movement of energy].

The open mind is something that new-agers tend to do rather well (compared to most people who are more absorbed), even (often) to the point of embracing trendy but unfounded notions. Yet the open mind is absolutely essential to progress, for there is much that the conventional (secular) (materialistic) world has yet to realize, that the open mind facilitates (progressive realization). The open mind is even more essential at the theosophical "level" where beliefs and

opinions (mental attachments) form effective barriers to realization. Positive thinking is another rather prevalent and powerful new age notion. Thinking (and feeling) is very creative (energy follows thought), and therefore positive thinking can do wonders for changing attitudes and even circumstances. But positive thinking needs to also be embraced in the context of some degree of realism, for unrealistic positive thinking is inherently self-deceptive. Another notion that new-agers advance very nicely is encouraging self-esteem. This is important at the pre-integration stage of evolution in consciousness, where the personality needs to be cultivated and developed into an effective instrument of experience and expression, but eventually needs to be tempered, as the ego must ultimately be transcended in order to reach the higher, deeper levels of consciousness.

Another very potent new age idea is that of unity, of there being an underlying unity in consciousness, at the soul level, that embraces all. This idea, embraced (relatively and partially) by so many, has contributed substantially to (encouraging) overcoming much bias and prejudice and (unwarranted) discrimination. Eventually, the spiritual student experiences unity (rather than merely embracing the idea emotionally and/or intellectually) and that higher experience leads the student well beyond the metaphysical (theosophical) domain.

† Commentary No. 1173

New Age Notions 2

One of the problems of the new age movement is perceived (and actual) flakiness. The consequence of this is that new age principles tend to be rejected, or at least viewed with suspicion, by more conventional people. Of course it is not reasonable to assume that "flakiness" invalidates the beliefs or notions embraced. But that's okay. The unconventional "presence" is nonetheless a strong encouragement to balance the more typical complacency of the masses.

For the most part it is unconventional people who serve more so as points of light, who by virtue of their presence (attitudes, beliefs, behaviors) in the world offer encouragement to those who are more deeply conditioned by material forces and the forces of the ego. New age folks (and metaphysicians and

theosophists and spiritually-minded people of all faiths) are the pioneers within humanity, who lead by virtue of their experience and expression, from the conventional (exoteric) realm to the less conventional (esoteric) realm. Of course, as this occurs, that which was deemed unconventional (metaphysical) becomes considered conventional, and more esoteric ideas become merely metaphysical, so there is a never-ending progression of thinking (quality) along these (evolutionary) lines.

Virtually all of human experience and expression is head-centered and personality-centered, even the preponderantly emotional experience and expression is generally head-centered and almost entirely personality-centered. One of the contributions of the new age is the increasing emphasis on tempering the head-centered nature and unfolding the heart. Much in the new age movement encourages this at the practical (experiential) level. Unfortunately, the new age has not yet grasped the distinction between the soul and the personality (even though there is much talk of this, it is generally a matter of making a distinction between the superficial aspect of the personality and its deeper aspect (but without appreciation of what the soul really is (i.e., in new age terminology the soul does not refer to the soul (atma-buddhi-manas) but to deeper feelings at the personality level, to the heart at the personality level))). That's okay. It just means that the spiritual student needs to discern the actual distinctions and not be misled by semantics or how people use words. Similarly there is much talk of intuition and heart-centeredness without realizing that the real intuition (buddhi) is something much beyond the emotional or astral senses, and that heart-centeredness does not equate to being emotionally-polarized and having feelings. In any event, the encouragement toward heart-centeredness is very important, as so much of life in the objective world (e.g., materialism, egoism) pushes people toward head-centeredness.

Another new age notion that attracts many more conventional people is the idea of prosperity, or of creating prosperity by virtue of one's faith, beliefs, attitude, etc. This is an introduction to metaphysical forces, i.e., creative engagement of causal factors, even though the emphasis of prosperity is inherently selfish and personality-centered. But the idea that one deserves to be rich is something else. That goes well beyond the underlying principles. But the new age bridges between materialism and egoism on the one hand, and the spiritual path on the other. So there is some confusion in the process.

One of the most practical new age notions is that of unconditional love, of accepting people as they are, without judging them and without expecting them to conform to one's own values. Coupled with creative expression (prayer, meditation, goodwill), embracing unconditional love is extremely potent.

† Commentary No. 127

The Open Mind

As the spiritual student proceeds along the ever-deepening and expanding lines of consciousness, it becomes increasingly important for the student to maintain an active, open mind free from attachments and broad enough to recognize the inclusiveness of truth. The degree of passivity (the extent to which something is active or passive) and the degree of closure (the extent to which something is open or closed) of the mind together indicate the possibilities for discernment and realization.

The open mind is subject to both external and internal impressions. If the mind is also passive, then the external impressions will normally dominate without discernment or any concern for relevance or validity. If the open mind is active rather than passive, then the individual will normally think for himself, giving consideration to conscious impressions consciously. A passive mind tends to accept as valid whatever external thoughts or impressions are offered, consciously or subconsciously. A passive mind also implies weakness and vulnerability to the glamour and illusion of the worldly atmosphere. It is the active and open mind that offers the best combination for the evolving student. The active mind gives (suggests) strength and the opportunity for self-control, plus the open mind gives flexibility and opportunity for growth.

The degree of closure takes precedence over the degree of passivity. A closed mind, for example, offers very little flexibility, while an open mind is far more workable and easier to develop and improve. A closed mind is usually the result or consequence of fear or inertia. Both fear and inertia are difficult obstacles to overcome. But as fear and inertia are slowly overcome, the closed mind becomes more active (along narrow lines, at first), which in turn encourages more

progress toward the gradual opening up (broadening) of the mental character. Though a closed mind is rather limiting as far as consciousness is concerned, the open mind is not without its problems.

One of the more serious problems of living in the objective world is the influence of the world's emotional and mental atmosphere upon the emotional and mental activity (or passivity) of humanity. That atmosphere is qualified mostly by human thought and feeling, glamour and illusion. That mixture of thought and feeling is impressed upon passive minds and emotions, which further complicates the problem. The problem is rather delicate, for the spiritual student needs to be open and actively responsive to both the external and internal worlds while maintaining self-control and thinking matters through to determine an individual set of values and beliefs. External and internal impressions need to be discerned and evaluated, that the individual might grow (deepen) and expand in perspective. Values and impressions received visibly, verbally, emotionally, or mentally should not be accepted passively as valid or true, but should be accepted, deferred, or rejected based upon recognized merit or realization. And it should be remembered that there exists no real authority for truth.

The student must be free to observe, evaluate, and respond appropriately to every experience in life, including every possible exposure to spiritual insight, internally through meditation and contemplation (and intuition), and externally through art, science, religion, and philosophy. With an active and open mind there is freedom for self-determination (and voluntary cooperation with the evolutionary pattern), and there is freedom to grow and expand. May closed and passive minds be transformed into minds of disciplined mental activity and openness (humility); and may unconscious and passive acceptance be replaced with conscious and voluntary discernment and self-realization.

Positive Thinking

The concept of positive thinking forms one of the foundations of metaphysical philosophy. The basic idea is that energy follows thought, that (generic) man is a creator, and as a person thinks so is energy projected which tends to bring about the manifestation of the thought in more objective terms. Positive thinking can be causal in the case of an overall (pleasant) disposition, or more deliberate in terms of affirmation, visualization, or projection of mental (astral) (etheric) energy. The processes of positive thinking are similar to those of negative thinking, except that positive thinking is inherently constructive (but potentially selfish) while negative thinking is inherently destructive.

Positive (negative) thinking (the projection of positive (negative) energy) can be conscious or unconscious (generalized (disposition) or careless (or habitual)), potent and coherent or relatively impotent and incoherent. Considerable momentum can be achieved in positive or negative thinking, regardless of deliberation. In the more deliberate sense, positive thinking involves the projecting ahead (in time) of energy in the form of a visualization or mental construct (which may be an intricately conditioned formula). The novice will normally intensify the projection (with desire) (which complicates the process) and may actually project a looking back in time from the projected reality (i.e., placing the manifestation of the desire reality in the past tense in order to evoke subconscious processes indirectly). The properly trained student will project without desire (and without any personal considerations) and will condition the projection as well as the subconscious mind.

The advantages and merit of positive thinking are considerable. Positive thinking (as a process) is an integrating force for the personality; it strengthens the mind and its hold upon the personality, via concentration, affirmation, visualization, and projection. Positive thinking can be a creative force to bring about desired (appropriate) effects, both in terms of the development of the personality and in terms of external conditions. However, there are inherent problems and potential dangers in positive thinking, particularly where it is carried to an extreme. Unless the mind is properly subordinated to the soul, the

mind is likely to grow too strong (independent) (separative) and actually inhibit spiritual responsiveness while encouraging personality-centeredness.

Another problem of positive thinking (and of prosperity-consciousness) is proper motive. Desire involves personal energy and generally reflects a degree of self-centeredness which is enhanced by positive thinking along personal lines. Carried to an extreme, positive thinking fosters illusion and concretion leading to a serious denial of reality and a preponderance of extreme (binary) thinking. Highly specific positive projection is generally less effective. A substantial potential problem associated with positive thinking is interacting naively (arrogantly) with intended destiny (attempting to change or improve (circumvent) conditions intended via karma to afford certain learning opportunities (karmic fulfillment)). However, such circumvention (if effected) only constitutes temporary evasion (postponement) and a denial of opportunity.

The student is encouraged to incorporate positive thinking as a general disposition and (positive) energy projection in properly qualified (impersonal) ways, in harmony and cooperation with karmic forces. In working with consciousness (and realization) rather than specific events, conditions, or circumstances, the student actually encourages effective karmic fulfillment.

† Commentary No. 532

Self-Esteem

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

† Commentary No. 606

Unity

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

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

The process of unification (integration) (concordance) is actually a meaningful imitation or reflection of the underlying unity. All things (lives) (forms) are one; yet the act of conscious unification strengthens the qualification of the human being by that underlying reality and brings the human being closer in consciousness to that higher life and improves the rapport with collateral

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

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

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

Points of Light

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

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

In the case of prisons and jails, for example, prisoners, prison guards, and visitors would do well to realize that the fact of karmic consequences (i.e., that a person is where he or she is for reasons of consequence) in no way excuses the spiritual student from extending respect and consideration. Those who can embrace the light and serve (occasionally or persistently) within these (relatively

darker) places are particularly effective in encouraging growth of consciousness. And those, further afield, who can meditate effectively, linking up with those who are within some place of relative darkness and who are responsive to the light, perform a worthy service to humanity.

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

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

† Commentary No. 1054

The Head and Heart-Centeredness

One of the principal objectives of the spiritual student is the achievement of balance between the head and the heart, between the head-centered aspects of human nature (along the lines of the first, third, fifth, and seventh rays) and the heart-centered aspects of human nature (along the lines of the second, fourth, and sixth rays).

Most people develop in a moderately unbalanced manner and subsequently need to achieve balance by developing and blending in the hitherto missing qualities. Thus those who have developed largely along emotional, intuitive, and heart-centered lines need to develop along intellectual lines as well, and those who have developed largely intellectually, need to develop and integrate

the higher emotional and intuitive features of heart quality (e.g., kindness, compassion, consideration, unselfishness) (and in doing so tempering various head-centered tendencies (e.g. the critical, judging nature)) (whereas characteristics like selfishness, self-centeredness, egoism, defensiveness, reactiveness can be manifested through either the head-centered or heart-centered nature (while overcoming these limitations requires somewhat different techniques depending on the extent of head-centered or heart-centered development)).

The principal objective then of the heart-centered person is the development of intellectual abilities without losing the heart-centered focus. If the person is emotionally-polarized (rather than mentally-polarized) it is primarily a matter of purifying and tempering the emotions and allowing the mind to develop into prominence while retaining the essential heart-centered nature. If the person is mentally-polarized (yet heart-centered) it is simply a matter of balance between the two aspects so that neither really dominates. At that level it is also a matter of transcending whatever elements of egoism remain within the personality.

A distinction is made between being intellectual and being mentally-polarized; one can be intellectual without being mentally-polarized and one can be mentally-polarized without being intellectual. Being intellectual is seen as a necessary and precursory stage that must eventually be transcended. Being predominantly intellectual is seen as a condition which inhibits the needed balance. The heart-centered person is rather unlikely to over-develop the intellectual nature (unless the heart-centered nature is suppressed or abandoned (which is not healthy)), but the transcendence of ego can be quite difficult in the emotionally-polarized and/or unrefined heart-centered student. With refinement comes humility, and so the refined and heart-centered person is generally rather well-placed with regard to the needed development.

The three keys to balance for the heart-centered person are refinement, temperance, and humility. Through these three keys the heart-centered person is able to develop mentally without losing the heart quality and without being lost in the head-centered nature. What follows (beyond balance) is the cultivation of the intuitional nature which lies beyond mental polarization. The heart-centered person who achieves the proper balance is better placed to unfold

the intuitional nature than the head-centered person, resulting in strength of understanding in the sense of feeling or realization, while the head-centered person who achieves the proper balance is better placed to understand things more conceptually. In the best of both worlds, the esoteric student, perfectly balanced between head and heart, enjoys the breadth and depth of full realization, unimpeded by intellect (intellectual distortion) and unimpeded by emotional distortion.

† Commentary No. 1055

The Heart and Head-Centeredness

The problem for the head-centered nature is often a matter of lack of heart quality, of relying so much upon the intellect that the various qualities of the heart are understood merely intellectually, i.e., that one's heart is in the intellect and is therefore merely conceptual and not real.

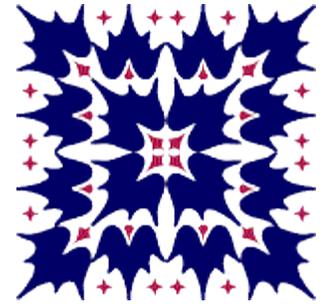
Many head-centered people, whether they are emotionally or mentally-polarized, do not pay much attention to the qualities of the heart. And many of those who do pay attention do so with the delusion that their understanding of heart quality is sufficient to manifest that quality, when in fact, an intellectual understanding of a quality and a (mental) commitment to embrace that quality does not suffice to actually embrace and express the quality. One must necessarily and actually feel the quality of the heart, in the higher, inner, deeper (but not merely intellectual) sense, in order to evoke the quality. But the mind, given its self-delusional nature (self-protective, egoistic posture), tends to interpret experience and expression in a self-biased (self-centered) manner, thus serving as an impediment to actual evocation of heart quality.

The three keys to balance for the head-centered person are the same as for the heart-centered person, namely refinement, temperance, and humility. Through these three keys the head-centered person is able to develop and unfold the heart nature without losing the abilities of the head-nature and without being overly absorbed in the heart. This leads ultimately to moderation of the head nature and a sensible (reasonable) (but not intellectual) approach to the evocation of heart quality. What then follows (beyond balance) is the cultivation of the intuitional nature which lies beyond mental polarization.

While glimpses of (true) intuition are available to the heart-centered person, by virtue and to the extent of his or her heart quality, the ability to correctly understand the products of intuition is generally lacking or limited by the reaction of the emotional nature. But when the heart nature is balanced by the not overly-developed head nature, then the products of intuition are recognized and understood much more sensibly. But for one who is head-centered, the intuition emerges generally only in rather subtle ways and generally without conscious realization or recognition of same. Thus, the head-centered person cannot generally distinguish between intuition and intellect (comparably, the heart-centered person cannot generally distinguish between intuition and instinct (what is generally (popularly) but incorrectly called intuition but which is really emotional (astral) impression rather than buddhi)).

The real key is humility. For humility eventually and successfully undermines (overcomes) (transcends) the pervasive (and sometimes subtle) hold of egoism that generally accompanies the developed personality. Without humility people are generally self-deceived in many ways (whereas with humility people are generally less self-deceived and only in relatively subtle ways). Thus the principal impediment is the ego and its tendency toward self-delusion (defensiveness, reactivity, insecurity, taking things personally, separateness, etc.). Humility is the most synthetic and most fundamental of the heart qualities, ultimately enfolding and engendering all of the heart quality (qualities), and is absolutely essential for the heart-centered student in order to achieve balance and transcendence, and for the head-centered student likewise. And for those who are properly balanced, humility is the means of passing beyond the distinction between head-centeredness and heart-centeredness, beyond ego and intellect, to the truly quiet realm of God-ness.

Section 3.512



New Age Notions 2

- The real problem of new age metaphysics is the emphasis on the lower self, and its wants, while suffering the delusion that one is centered at some higher level. Even so, there is considerable potential for learning and growing, especially in the sense of relationships with other people and consideration for animals and the environment.

Prosperity

Prosperity is defined as the condition of being successful or thriving, especially in the sense of economic or financial well-being. For those who are not prosperous, or who think they are not prosperous, there may be a considerable concern or desire for prosperity. One of the more prevalent new age notions is that one can become prosperous or allow prosperity to happen. There are several aspects to this notion.

One aspect is a matter of creative thinking. Indeed, through feeling and thinking “prosperity” one can evoke forces that will encourage and facilitate prosperity. Of course this is all subject to one’s karma, but within the limits of karma, one can choose to be prosperous and simply become as prosperous as one can under those (karmic) circumstances. Another aspect is ethics, in the sense of becoming prosperous at the expense of others. If one approaches prosperity properly, then it is a matter of tapping into the unlimited (universal) creative potential, so that one’s own prosperity does not in any way diminish that of others. On a more subtle level, there are ethical considerations for the spiritual student in the sense that any self-centered creative activity is (can be) deemed unethical. But at the “new age” level those subtle ethics do not apply. It is only as one embraces the spiritual path in the more formal sense that the rules change (and the path narrows) (the path narrows in some sense and broadens in others).

Another aspect is the distinction between creative activity and allowance. The relatively more coarse approach is creative activity leading to prosperity. The strength of the personality (mind) (ego) is involved in this (lower) creative process and prosperity generally comes not fully in accordance with one’s expectations, because the practitioner is simply not wise enough to provide safeguards or caveats. The relatively less coarse approach is to focus on allowing prosperity to emerge. Prosperity is real; it is simply a matter of allowing it to manifest, with confidence that it comes in accordance with need.

Yet, for the (proper) spiritual student, for those who are truly prosperous, there is never any seeking of prosperity. Those (spiritual students or otherwise) who

seek prosperity (and those who thereby “find” prosperity) are not truly prosperous. They are simply encumbered by prosperity. The truly prosperous are those who seek merely to be themselves, to serve humanity in accordance with their various opportunities and talents, without any thought of self. In this sense, such people are truly prosperous because they unconsciously evoke whatever is needed and are never really lacking in energy, health, material needs, etc. In short, they are living in accordance with higher law rather than working actively (creatively) in manipulating forces for their own purposes. There is nothing wrong with such creative work, per se, and all spiritual students have passed through such a stage (training the mind to work creatively as a stepping stone to selfless and unconscious evocation).

Thus, in the final analysis, prosperity is a state of mind. For those who are not prosperous or who perceive themselves as not being prosperous, the very perception of not being prosperous is an impediment to prosperity. For those who are conscious of prosperity, who are selfish, and/or who are self-centered, prosperity is an encumbrance. And for those who are unconscious of prosperity or who are merely (genuinely) appreciative of their prosperity, there is no encumbrance. For those who are truly prosperous, prosperity is a responsibility for utilizing one’s relative wealth in the most constructive and selfless manner. For wealth is not an individual aspect; it is universal.

† Commentary No. 1153

Acceptance and Evolution

In embracing some well-founded spiritual notion (e.g., acceptance) there are often accompanying some not so well-founded generalizations and associations (e.g., the false notion that in embracing acceptance one does not need to embrace growth or improvement or deepening in consciousness). This is a variation of the (fallacious) “short-cut to heaven” doctrine.

Of course there are no short cuts to self-realization or spiritual enlightenment. No teacher or intermediary can compromise the integrity of the spiritual path (which involves work and progress and merit with the guiding boundaries and

encouragement of the (purposive) law of karma). The fundamental nature of life (experience) in this world is (gradual) growth of consciousness (evolution). But people (egos) naturally look for easy paths (and easy techniques) (simple (superficial) solutions). Acceptance is a very powerful concept and practice. It helps to resolve difficulties. One should indeed embrace acceptance, accepting whatever circumstances are evoked by one's own condition in consciousness, accepting other people as they are, accepting the nature of things, working within the evolutionary flow. But acceptance is only one of a number of needed practices.

Some people suggest that embracing conscious evolution (growth) (levels of consciousness) is separative, that the whole notion of progress leads to the false sense that some people are better or more advanced than others. That may be so (false), but that does not mean that there are not differences in experience and differences in quality of consciousness and differences in levels. What it means, really, is that those who are more advanced than others are, merely, more advanced than others (at least in some regard). It does not mean that anyone is (thereby) any better or worse than another, or that some people have greater or lesser value than others. People progress at different rates, according to their nature and circumstances, but everyone progresses. And everyone, at every level, contributes (equally) to the whole. Furthermore, most people are not developed equally in all respects, so that one may be more "advanced" in some respects and less so in other respects, which means that one should not be comparing "advancements" anyway (most indications are necessarily superficial).

A related notion is that of the inherent perfection of the soul or higher Self (as an argument for not needing to apply any effort toward personal growth or transformation). The soul is indeed already perfect, in the sense that it does not exhibit personal or worldly limitations, and in touching the soul one can readily appreciate its quality (perfection) as such, but it remains incomplete. The purpose of life in this world is experience and expression leading to growth in consciousness (through assimilation of experience) that brings the soul from being perfect and undeveloped (spark) to being perfect and fully developed (flame).

The real issue is work or effort. One cannot advance substantively without investing time and effort. One's place upon the path is a direct result of that investment (in experience and assimilation of experience). There are short paths and there are long paths, temporally, but every path ultimately requires the same measure of (integrated) effort (investment). It is not unlike climbing a mountain. Some take the long and winding road, proceeding leisurely. Others make a more direct ascent, scaling the heights relatively quickly, but with greater intensity (focused effort). But in both cases the change in potential energy (work expended or integrated effort) is measurably the same.

† Commentary No. 1186

Unconditional Love

One of the most potent and most practical new age notions is that of unconditional love, of accepting people as they are, without judging them and without expecting them to conform to one's own values. Coupled with creative expression (prayer, meditation, goodwill), embracing unconditional love is extremely potent.

The basis of the idea of unconditional love is that love itself (God) is (actually) unconditional; it is only love in the more human, more personal sense (which is not actually love), that gets conditioned by human expectations. Unconditional love is not a theory. It is not merely a new age notion. If one actually embraces love (energy) there are no conditions. It does not depend on expectation or qualifications. It merely depends on allowance. One must allow love to be what it is (in order to experience it or to participate in it). Of course love is what it is. It is only human nature that prevents love from being experienced unconditionally, as it is. Love is the quality (character) of the Christ or God within every human being and within every lifeform. Thus unconditional love is that (real) love that is the love from within oneself touching and recognizing the love within every other creature. In this way the heart unfolds and the love energy is evoked and experienced in actuality, not merely emotionally or intellectually.

Unconditional love is accepting people as they are (in fact) and as they appear to be at the personality level. Unconditional love is non-judging. Even the slightest hint of criticism, defensiveness, egoism, judgment, separateness, etc., i.e., anything that is not an expression of unconditional love, masks the expression of unconditional love. With unconditional love, it does not matter that a person is not perfect at the personality level, the whole sense of perfect-imperfect is based on conditioned thinking (while the sense that everything is in motion (deepening, evolving, growing) is quite consistent with unconditioned thinking). Any act (thought, feeling) of judging another human being is an act that is inherently separative and undermining of the heart expression (reality) of the God within.

Conditional love is not (real) love but is merely the shadow of love based on ego. Unconditional love has no magnitude. Unconditional love is not inconsistent with conditional relationship. One can love unconditionally while basing relationship on (constructive, reasonable, mutual) agreement. Thus while unconditional love is a matter of the higher basis (God within) (soul) and able to be embraced at practical levels (by the mind and the heart of the personality), it does not require all of life in the lower worlds to be unconditional. There are practical considerations in most every area of human endeavor. But these practical considerations need not inhibit the experience and expression of unconditional love.

Yet while unconditional love is very practical in making life in the lower worlds more meaningful (in terms of quality of consciousness and in terms of right human relationship), it is also something that facilitates self-realization (union with the God within). For as one embraces unconditional love, actually, one necessarily embraces the quality of the soul (which may otherwise (generally) be inaccessible to one absorbed in mundane life), the quality of the higher Self, which is pure and unconditioned. The effect of this is that the personality (mind) (ego) then becomes gradually conditioned or qualified by that higher quality. In this way, embracing unconditional love is also a potent technique for higher qualification.

New Age Delusions

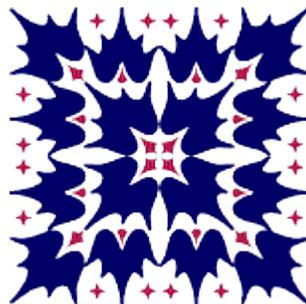
There is a great deal of underlying, uncommon truth associated with new age metaphysics, but there is also widespread delusion (in many or most new age practitioners) based on limited understanding of those truths and based on unrealistic self-perception.

One of the “truths” of new age metaphysics is that each person is a living God or Goddess, when in fact the actual truth is that God lives within each person, that there is an underlying divine nature, and that a person can in principle tap into that underlying divine nature and evoke changes or expressions of that divine nature in the daily life. But if the outer, superficial self (personality) assumes that “it” (oneself in the sense of the waking-personality or personality consciousness) is the indwelling God, then one is very definitely deluded. Because the ego (personality) is simply an artificial entity that is utilized by the underlying divine nature (soul) (higher consciousness) (monad). Most people who study metaphysics simply very wrongly confuse the ego and the higher self. The problem is compounded by the “new age” emphasis on self-esteem (even while healthy (modest) self-esteem is constructive for most people).

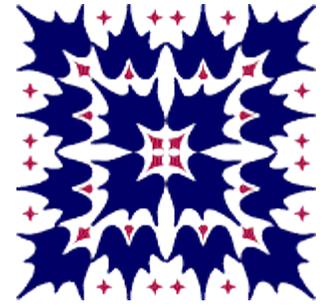
Another great metaphysical “truth” is that one can change one’s circumstances, create one’s future, in accordance with whatever is desired. Indeed, creatively having expectation does evoke energy and forces toward fulfillment of that expectation, but there is also a matter of karma (and practicality) that is often conveniently ignored by the new age practitioner. And indeed, one can bring about changes, but only to the extent that those changes are consistent with one’s karma, i.e., what one actually needs and deserves. One of the greatest new age delusions is the belief that “God wants me to be happy” which tends to justify whatever behavior evokes (artificial) feelings of happiness. The problem is that “God” does not “want” anything. God provides the creative evolutionary framework, but does not get involved in the details of manifestation or evolution (and does not get involved in “individual” lives or circumstances). Happiness and sadness are necessarily superficial. God is not.

Positive thinking can be a real boon to one's day-to-day life experience, and yet unbalanced, unrealistic, positive thinking is delusional. A broad framework of positive thinking (feeling) is healthy, but where positive thinking is applied to details of personal matters, there is some measure of delusion (inconsistency between what is expected and what is actual). And to continue to believe something that is unrealistic is also the beginnings of delusion compounded by denial, especially if one is entangled in day-to-day life and personal (artificial) circumstances (desires, expectations, reactions to circumstances).

Any emphasis on being "beautiful" or being prosperous or having great self-esteem or "taking charge of one's life" (another great metaphysical delusion) necessarily takes the person away from an emphasis on truth and reality. There may be needed lessons in new age metaphysical delusional experiences, but the spiritual student rather needs to cultivate humility and a dedication to truth that allows the truth to be seen or perceived relatively more clearly despite whatever tendencies there may be to the contrary. Indeed, if one focuses on being open to truth, embracing truth, and living the truth as best one can, than one will naturally tend to be "beautiful" and prosperous and not lacking in self-esteem, but without the otherwise attendant delusions.



Section 3.513



Flakiness

- Flakiness is a matter of perception and judgment or inference based upon one's values (and conditioning). Flakiness refers (conventionally) to someone who is distinctly eccentric or unconventional and whose values and beliefs do not conform to (all) the conventional social norms, especially in the sense that (some) conventional people make judgments about unconventional beliefs and the people who embrace them. Thus many people who embrace new age metaphysics are perceived by more conventional people as flaky.

Flakiness 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

† Commentary No. 702

Flakiness 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

† Commentary No. 703

Flakiness 3

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

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

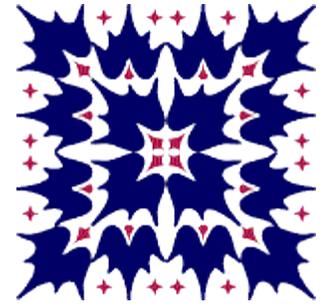
Flakiness and quiriness are not normally attributable to any defects in the brain, mind, etc. (although such may also exist), but are normally attributed to the natural disconnectedness of the “flaky” personality. An emotionally-polarized person (who is therefore not an integrated person) of an “airy”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

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

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

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

Section 3.514



Guidance of Spirit

- There are many people, both within and beyond the new age and traditional religious communities, who “look to spirit” or to “God” for guidance. For some it is simply a matter of prayer for understanding, for others a matter of seeking specific directions. For some it may be a matter of trying to live according to “God’s will” while for others it may be a matter of discerning the flow of life (the framework and pattern of evolution in consciousness) and living in harmony with that flow.

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The underlying principles of this are quite sound, namely that one should indeed look beyond the ego or “little self” for guidance or understanding or wisdom, and that guidance and understanding and wisdom are indeed available to those who seek properly and who are properly receptive. The ego is necessarily self-serving and very limited in its (artificial) intelligence and insight. The mind likewise, though more natural, but nonetheless limited by its qualification and the inherent limitations of “reasoning” ... Better to be moved by reason than by the stimulation of the lower senses, but even better to be moved by intuition and real insight. Seeking guidance is therefore a matter of the relative propriety of source and the relative proprieties of the manner and nature of what is sought.

The first problem has to do with the source. Most people, however sincere they may be, are unable to discern the difference between the sense (voice) of the ego (mind) (personality) and the sense (voice) of the soul (God) (divinity within). Thus many are led astray by their own egos, through their own desire nature and their own qualification and conditioning. Similarly, those who are perhaps more sensitive but nonetheless untrained are easily led astray by external entities posing as spirit-guides of one sort or another. Some of these spirit-guides may even be sincere, but they are not enlightened and their “guidance” is usually of little real value. The tendency of the mind (ego) is simply to interpret whatever impressions are received, however noble they may be, in whatever terms are (consciously or unconsciously) desired. Thus whether the “guidance” comes from within or beyond it is often (biased) transformed into whatever is wanted.

The second problem has to do with the manner and nature of what is sought. Most people are ego-based (personality-centered) and their manner and nature of seeking is largely mundane, personal, and self-serving in some sense or another. Many seek merely to do what they wish, and so by seeking "external" guidance (from "spirit") they actually seek to avoid responsibility for their own decisions or desires, to somehow "justify" their own actions and inclinations. This is generally so even where there is not inconsiderable sincerity. People are simply generally not aware of their own nature in consciousness. Wherever there is personal motive, there is bias.

In wisdom, the spiritual student seeks whatever guidance is pertinent, without judging what is or is not pertinent or needed and without any expectation of specifics. In wisdom, the spiritual student properly seeks guidance from the God-within and not from any external sources. The spiritual student may listen to externals (people, spirit-guides), but proceeds only according to what rings true, and the student properly always takes responsibility for the action and its consequences. And the spiritual student properly seeks only insight that is relevant to the path and living a spiritual life, not (properly) that which is personal or mundane. Thus key ingredients are discretion and discernment.

† Commentary No. 1412

Guidance of Spirit 2

The other dimension or factor is that of "God" or spirit. Many consider whatever is "received" from "God" or spirit to be absolute, infallible, or otherwise compelling. If "God" or "spirit" or an angel says this or is "sensed" in some way, then it must be true. Much that is "received" is simply a matter of self-delusion, but there are instances of genuine inspiration (but not specific "guidance"). But aside from the problem of legitimacy there is a matter of just what is God or spirit and how do they function with regard to prayer or requests for guidance.

In some sense "God" and "spirit" are equivalent; in some sense "spirit" is simply a manifestation of God. And angels (devas) are real (but not anthropomorphic except in one's imagination) (and they do not (ever)

communicate in any objective manner). The problem is that neither God nor the manifestations of God are particularly interested in the mundane or personal lives of anyone. They do care about all life, and offer generalized encouragement for evolution in consciousness. But they do not get involved in individual lives or personal matters. They do, however, respond to prayer or other projections of energy. But they respond in some holistic fashion, within the framework of cause and effect (and evolutionary needs). Thus if one projects energy, then that energy evokes some (universal) response. There is an underlying wisdom in this response, that can be applied to the person, but the response itself is just qualified energy. The "interpretation" of this energy is wholly personal or inferred by one's own biases and expectations.

So. Whenever someone genuinely thinks that "God wants me to do this" or "Spirit wants me to have this" there is self-delusion. Because God does not "want" anything. God is beyond wanting. God is all-embracing and underlying and overshadowing, as well as indwelling. And God is personal (only) in the sense that God lives within (all) and qualifies everything, but is not personal in any other (ordinary) sense. The closest that God comes to "wanting" is the divine intention, which is evolution in consciousness. That divine will or intention is reflected through various (energy) qualifications and laws (such as karma). All that is and all that happens is simply a consequence of that intention (purpose). But it is not a "wanting" at all. And it is not at all personal. It is individualized only in the sense that people respond to evolutionary pressures in different ways and those pressures are tailored by karma to fit the person and his or her circumstances.

There is, however, another sense of seeking guidance, and that is seeking to discern the patterns of "life" or the various flows of energy as they relate to one's own life. There is a natural balance of energy. There is a natural flowing of energy. If one is consciously or unconsciously "attuned" to this flow then things tend to "fall into place" however they need to (not necessarily as one "wants" them to). Things will happen as they need to, but if a person is antagonistic or unresponsive to the natural flow of energy then the energy tends to be disruptive. While if a person is receptive or responsive then the energy tends to be supportive. This does not mean that the student should be passive, but it does mean that the student should be aware and consciously conforming to the natural flow of energy.

Thus “seeking guidance” for the spiritual student generally means seeking to discern the flow of life and how one can more effectively participate in that flow. In this way one is more likely to learn, and one’s opportunities for growth and service are naturally enhanced and increased.

† Commentary No. 1413

Guidance of Spirit 3

There are, however, a number of relatively mature approaches to “seeking guidance” especially within the framework of true mysticism (embracing the heart, deeply and necessarily quietly), where the role of the ego is recognized and discerned (discounted) (tempered). Finding and listening to the God within (voice of the silence) is not so easy. Proper meditation and quiescence of mind and emotion are essential. But overall the most important factor is self-qualification or preparedness. If one is not clear (peaceful, purified, receptive) then one cannot sense clearly. If one is entangled in materialism or the senses or the ego (lower self), then one cannot be receptive to anything truly insightful.

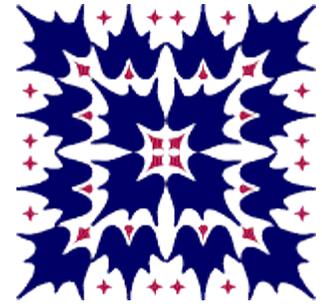
It may be helpful to meet with others of similar sincerity and qualification. In a proper group environment one is generally able to be more attuned. Group sincerity (potentially) offers encouragement and helps build momentum. In the Religious Society of Friends (and other proper formulations of mysticism), for example, there is generally not inconsiderable encouragement toward (mature) receptivity, based in large part on the qualification of environment (the meeting for worship) through silence and sincerity. Many groups purport to facilitate “attunement” but most more often than not offer distraction (entertainment) (a more worldly or more personality-centered or more glamorous focus). Most people who “go to church” do so simply through habit and social contract, not through (genuinely) seeking to grow spiritually or to serve more effectively. But where there is a genuine “seeking to grow” then there is progress, whether it is within the framework of conventional religion or beyond those boundaries. God or “spirit” is everywhere and always. But it is easier to embrace through proper approach and through a proper atmosphere (group or individual).

Another key to proper receptivity is simply not wanting. If one seeks too earnestly then this very entanglement in seeking hinders insight. If what one seeks is ego-driven one is much less likely to find insight. If what one seeks has to do with material needs, likewise. If what one seeks is less self-centered, there is greater likelihood of success. If what one seeks is simply understanding or wisdom, if one is receptive and not simply pushing insights away through striving, then one is more likely to find the needed understanding or wisdom.

If one genuinely and properly seeks guidance from the God within, then there results a growth in spirit, a deepening of one's qualification and understanding, a strengthening of one's spiritual focus, a lessening of entanglements in the world (and lower self). One simply begins to see things more clearly, to see things with a better (higher, deeper, more subtle) sense of proportion. One's sense of what is important will generally change. One becomes less intense (as a person), more centered (in the deeper sense), and more embracing of life (in the higher, deeper sense). It is not so much what is received but that something (energy) is embraced. It is not the knowledge or even the understanding that matters, but the quality of consciousness evoked and embraced.

In the final analysis it is not "guidance" of spirit that matters, but (conscious) participation in spirit. It is not what one receives that matters, but what one gives to the process. One grows to the extent that one commits to the process of evolution in consciousness, which is not about receiving guidance or insight, it is about being (spirit).

Section 3.52



Metaphysics Proper

- Metaphysics proper is metaphysics without (new age) flakiness, without substantive glamour, and without excess gullibility. Metaphysics proper is also metaphysics without the rational speculations of academic philosophical and religious thinking.

Metaphysics Proper

Metaphysics proper is metaphysics without (new age) flakiness, without substantive glamour, and without excess gullibility. Metaphysics proper is also metaphysics without the rational speculations of academic philosophical and religious thinking. Metaphysics is properly simply a matter of studying that which is not readily apparent to the senses, of looking at the underlying truth and reality of life and manifestation. It is experiential in the sense that its truths must be realized through experience, and not merely through intellect. It is also rather expressive, in the sense that in embracing metaphysical principles the student (properly) applies those principles to every aspect of life in the world.

In effect metaphysics is a combination of mysticism and occultism. More properly mysticism and occultism are the two dimensions or aspects of metaphysics, mysticism being the heart-centered domain of (lower) emotional and (higher, deeper) intuitive experience and occultism being the head-centered domain of intellectual considerations and focus of mind. Theosophy is properly simply a broader, more comprehensive framework than metaphysics. Indeed, metaphysics proper is the practical dimension of theosophy, that which is implementable in the daily lives of metaphysical (spiritual) (theosophical) students and those who are not actually spiritual students but approaching the path and becoming more amenable to metaphysical principles, even if they are not recognized as such. Thus metaphysics is an important bridge between the world (of worldly peoples) and theosophy proper (which is inherently spiritual, not academic).

The true value of metaphysics is the psychological framework of metaphysics, where the student is not entirely deceived by the senses, where the student is able to see (slightly and increasingly less slightly) beyond and beneath the merely superficial dimensions of life in the lower (objective) world (of matter and ego). It begins with the unconscious realization of the existence of underlying truth and reality, and grows through experience until the various (proper) metaphysical principles are actively and consciously embraced. The metaphysical framework makes much more sense of life in the world than more

conventional psychological frameworks (which tend to be heavily biased by the delusions of matter (form) and ego (personality)). Metaphysics is a dimension of life in the world that facilitates understanding and growth in consciousness rather than absorption in the senses or in the mind. It is the framework for awakening from the sleep of materialism and egoism.

Thus in a sense, metaphysics is a stepping-stone toward the spiritual path for those who come from the world (being absorbed in matter and ego), who gain some modest metaphysical insights, and who gradually become more spiritual as the various glammers are realized and overcome (as the outer, lower life is conformed more and more to metaphysical principles). In another sense, metaphysics follows and broadens the more conventional (religious) spirituality for those who emerge onto the path through the various religious traditions.

The key to metaphysics proper is spirituality. That is what is generally missing from the academic approach to metaphysics and that is what is generally missing from the (popular, self-centered, trendy) new age approach to metaphysics (i.e., true spirituality, not the glamour of spirituality (the false spirituality of sense experience)). Spirituality is about selflessness. And metaphysics (and theosophy) is (properly) about evolving in consciousness to and through increasing selflessness.

† Article No. 94

Metaphysics Proper

Metaphysics proper is defined as the study and apprehension of the invisible worlds and all of the implications for a human being living in the visible or material world. It is the study of the psychic realm. It is the study of cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis, of mysticism and occultism. It is the study of reincarnation and karma and cause and effect relationships. It is the study of the seven planes of consciousness. And it is the study of the seven rays.

The first import of metaphysics proper is that it provides a context for human evolution. It shows where human beings come from and where they are going. It shows the true nature of the human being and relationships to God and other lifewaves. It shows the true nature of God (immanent and transcendent). It

shows what actually happens to a human being in incarnation (how a person is affected by psychic forces and how a person influences his or her psychic environment), and what happens when someone dies (purgatory, purification, and preparation for rebirth). And it shows the immediate and long-term consequences for actions on physical, emotional, and mental levels. It shows the wisdom of karma. And it demonstrates quite clearly that virtually everyone is asleep. Ultimately, it demonstrates how the human being can wake up, at least to some extent.

Popular or new age metaphysics is simply a very-poor-but-useful reflection of some of the truths of metaphysics proper. The problem with new age metaphysics is that it is filled with half-truths and compounded by misunderstanding and ego. Worse, there is englamourment, and there is the (false) belief in understanding (lack of humility, lack of openness to deeper truth). And people who embrace popular metaphysics are also generally compounded by personality-centeredness and a lack of genuine spiritual focus. Indeed, it tends to strengthen the independent personality and feeds the illusion of spirituality. But for the student who can go beyond popular metaphysics, without being impeded or conditioned by popular metaphysics, there is growing clarity and depth of realization.

The second import of metaphysics proper is that it provides a means for conscious evolution. It provides rules or qualifications for advancement along with the needed means and methods. This begins with understanding the context of human evolution. Then there is the preliminary discipline which prepares the student for more conscious spiritual endeavors. And real work. Which leads to real learning, real growth, and real service.

There are of course numerous additional contrasts or distinctions between academic metaphysics, popular metaphysics, and metaphysics proper. Academic metaphysics tends to be head-centered and lacking any real spiritual focus or insight. The mind and its intellect may be a very powerful tool, but ultimately it limits understanding. Popular metaphysics can be head-centered or heart-centered, but based primarily in beliefs, reasoning, and speculation, rather than actuality. Metaphysics proper is based on proper qualification and training, leading to first-hand knowledge. It is one thing to believe in the invisible worlds. It is quite another to actually perceive them correctly. Many

who embrace popular metaphysics believe they perceive things correctly, but without qualification and proper training their perceptions are mostly very limited, biased, and self-serving.

To perceive correctly on super-physical levels one must be qualified through proper discipline and training, to undo the conditioning of the physical world, indeed even to undo the conditioning of popular metaphysics. One must temper and qualify the personality. One must learn not to rely on the lower senses. One must learn not to rely on the mind. One must pass beyond glamour. One must learn how to distinguish between the ego and the higher self. And none of this can be accomplished without genuine humility.

There is also a distinction between humanism and spirituality. Humanistic popular metaphysics is admirable in contrast with the more worldly focus and associated values, but humanism is not spirituality. To merely embrace popular metaphysical principles is not being spiritual, because merely embracing popular metaphysical principles is ego-based, and true spirituality is not ego-based.

Which leads to the third import of metaphysics proper, namely overcoming glamour and ego, i.e., real progress in consciousness. It is not enough merely to (superficially) understand cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis, to (superficially) understand the various planes of consciousness and the context for human evolution. It is not enough merely to embrace the methods and means of metaphysics proper (the spiritual path). One must also actually overcome the conditioning of life in the lower worlds. One must also actually become unenglamoured. One must actually become actually honest. One must have a strong sense of ethics and morality (harmlessness), without being judgmental. One must also actually become non-egoistic.

There are two fundamental approaches to metaphysics proper, namely mysticism and occultism. Mysticism is the heart-centered or subjective approach. It works well only when one is properly qualified, intelligent, and genuinely heart-centered. Occultism is the head-centered or objective approach. It works well only when one is properly (genuinely) motivated, qualified, and trained, when one is genuinely spiritual (selfless). But the mystical or heart-centered approach, and the occult or head-centered approach, both lead

ultimately to a balancing of the head and heart and to the transcendence of personality, intellect, and ego.

All of this is apparent to one who is properly qualified and trained, who can perceive intelligently and therefore relatively clearly on metaphysical levels, who is honest enough to truly appreciate one's own limitations, who can progress through genuine understanding based on first-hand knowledge of the metaphysical realm, both of the realm itself, and one's place in that realm.

