



The Upper Triad Material

Topical Issue 4.3

Human Nature

The Exigency of the Human Being



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Chapter 4.3

Human Nature



The Exigency of the Human Being

- The human being in incarnation is a more or less intelligent animal having an inner, subtle, and unconscious connection to the real self or human soul. Through the course of human experience, being largely unaware of the true nature of oneself and being largely unaware of the underlying nature of the world, the human being (personality consciousness) gradually develops the character, temperament, and values needed for graduation or fulfillment of this cycle of manifestation.
- Human nature is ultimately a matter of the lower, personality nature, and a developing relationship with the soul or higher self. As the lower nature is refined, the higher nature is then able to express itself. But the lower nature tends to dominate until the latter reaches of the spiritual path.

Human Nature

In the context of the esoteric philosophy, human nature points to the exigency of the human being. The human being in incarnation is a more or less intelligent animal having an inner, subtle, and unconscious connection to the real Self or human soul. Through the course of human experience, being largely unaware of the true nature of oneself and being largely unaware of the underlying nature of the world, the human being (personality consciousness) gradually develops the character, temperament, and values needed for graduation or fulfillment of this cycle of manifestation.

Of course there is the tendency of the ego to justify one's tendencies, actions, shortcomings, attitudes, behavior, etc., by saying or thinking that it is, after all, simply one's human nature. This is true. In the lower sense of the animal-self immersed in materialism and egoism, in self-acceptance in the lower sense. As one identifies with this lower self one cannot recognize higher values. The atavism of absorption at the level of the animal-self is natural, relatively easy, but counter-evolutionary. It is the path of least resistance for most people. But it is only temporarily so, for the evolutionary forces are counter to materialism and egoism and eventually one is encouraged (forced) (nudged) upward and onward. And as one progresses somewhat, one finds that within the human being, but above the animal-self, there is another, higher, more noble human nature. And as one begins to identify with that higher nature, it becomes more and more natural to express that higher nature (and less and less natural to revert to the level of the animal-self).

There are, in this exigency, many qualifications for advancement as well as limitations to be overcome. Those who are self-absorbed (personality-centered) are (to the extent of their absorption) unable to perceive these needs, let alone the process through which these needs are fulfilled. Yet, as one progresses however gradually toward the path there is an acceleration that occurs in consciousness. One begins to be dimly aware, unconsciously at first, then more consciously, of needs beyond the material or experiential existence (self-indulgence). And then the human nature begins to be transformed, through gradual refinement of physical, emotional, and intellectual levels, through

gradual adjustments in consciousness as the various lessons are afforded and learned (assimilated), as the higher human nature begins to emerge and the lower human nature begins to recede.

Qualifications for advancement include altruism, charity, cheerfulness, compassion, composure, confidence, considerateness, consistency, courage, discretion, gentleness, goodwill, harmlessness, honesty, humility, inclusiveness, moderation, peacefulness, poise, prudence, respectfulness, responsiveness, reverence, sacrifice, simplicity, and stability. And through the course of developing or unfolding these various qualities and qualifications the student naturally tempers the lower nature, becoming more and more refined in consciousness, ultimately transcending all sense of ego, intellect, separateness, etc.

There are thus also a number of limitations inherent in the lower human nature that must eventually be recognized and overcome. These limitations result in one way or another through immersion in and identification with material existence (and ego). As the human being has evolved through the mineral, plant, and animal stages, there is very much conditioning that must be overcome if the student is to stand freely upon the spiritual path and move on to the next level.

† Commentary No. 1091

The Basis of Human Nature

One of the prevalent excuses for self-centered human behavior is that it is, after all, only human nature (to be selfish, self-centered, materialistic, egoistic). But in fact it is only so in the sense that the lower aspect of the human being (personality) is formed of material substance and is generally enslaved thereby. It is also very much a function of unconscious acceptance (sometimes even conscious belief) of the animalistic notion that human beings are separate creatures and that each must look out for itself. Even when the intellect can appreciate the reality of collective consciousness (unity), the form continues to function as if it were a law unto itself.

The human being is a matter of consciousness. Human form is consciousness expressed through matter. As the form evolves it passes through various stages of development. The life (associated consciousness) thereby passes through the mineral, plant, and animal stages before becoming human. But the human form is predominantly an animal form, albeit more refined and more developed in a number of important ways. The so-called human nature derives primarily from the form, from the material substance, from the instincts and experiences of the passage through the animal kingdom, tempered to some extent from the subsequent human experience. But the real human nature is that of the inner Self (soul) which is not directly related to the form or to experience in the worlds of form.

Thus to be satisfied with the (lower) human condition is to identify with the form, with the (artificial) ego, and the lower nature. The spiritual student, however, cannot afford to be so satisfied. For the spiritual student there is an inner sense that there must be more to life than (lower) human experience and expression. There is a gradual realization of something higher, something deeper, something that is not the same thing as the personality (ego) (intellect), that also needs expression. But the ego (personality-centeredness) is inertial. It tends to undermine any identification with the higher by claiming all-encompassing integration (which is a noble concept, true in the higher sense, but generally not true for the ordinary condition of human consciousness). Or it tends to masquerade as that higher, inner Self in order to deter the more meaningful identification.

There are many impediments to this inner connection with the true human nature. The impediments tend to dominate destructively for a person who is not integrated, as the physical body identifies with the material, the emotions simply seek sensual experience, and the intellect seeks self-satisfaction on mental levels. When the personality is integrated (i.e., after being somewhat and sufficiently purified, qualified, and refined) then the principal impediment is the ego. The ego is generally present prior to integration and may either hinder or facilitate integration, but it generally doesn't dominate until integration has been accomplished. But even then, human nature is generally a matter of being absorbed in materialism, in the senses, in ego.

Identifying with human nature in this lower sense is a matter of passive absorption, i.e., being asleep. Identification may be conscious, but is generally unconscious. Going-with-the-flow in this context means giving in (yielding) (passively) to the form (senses) (ego) and allowing experience and expression on those levels to dominate (compared with more deliberate growth in consciousness). So, yes, "being human" is only natural. But it is also largely atavistic. But as people mature in consciousness (as human nature is refined), the human nature becomes less of an impediment and the inner Self begins to express itself. And that higher expression is simply more real.

† Commentary No. 1334

Human Motivation

Human beings in incarnation are motivated in a number of ways, variously according to their circumstances and conditioning and nature. There are many ways of looking at human motivation, among them Abraham Maslow's hierarchical perspective on motivation and personality.

Maslow's perspective provides a fundamentally sound view of human motivation in a non-metaphysical, non-spiritual framework. Thus it applies to most people but does not take into consideration the role of the soul or higher (deeper, spiritual) needs nor the place and nature of the spiritual path. In Maslow's hierarchy a person tends to address basic needs before moving onto higher levels. At the most basic level are physiological needs such as satisfying hunger and thirst and obtaining shelter. At the next level are needs relating to safety and security, finding protection from physical and emotional dangers. Then there are more social needs, to satisfy a need for a sense of belonging, for acceptance, affection, and friendship. To satisfy the need to love and to be loved. At the next level are the ego needs, relating to self-esteem, a sense of worthiness. These include both external factors such as attention, recognition, and status, as well as internal factors such as self-respect. Finally (in this hierarchy) there is self-actualization in the sense of accomplishing something.

In a sense, the human being at the personality level tends to seek to satisfy whatever are the apparent dominant needs at a given time. The hierarchy of

needs is dynamic, shifting according to circumstances, shifting according to the growth and maturation of the person. And some activities address more than one level of need. And the satisfaction of needs is quite relative and varies a great deal from person to person. What satisfies one person (in a particular need) may not be sufficient for another. What is a need for one person may not be of any concern to another. Some needs are artificial, evoked by society or marketing or peer pressures. And most needs are not really needs but simply wants.

Another approach to human motivation is afforded in the perspective of having, doing, and being, which is not inconsistent with Maslow, but is rather simpler and leads to appreciation of something beyond Maslow's personality levels (i.e., being). The ordinary (worldly) personality (ego) tends to be entangled at the having and doing levels, while the spiritual student tends to be more involved in doing (in a more noble sense than merely self-actualization) and being. Ultimately one simply embraces being, and while one has things and does things the motivation is not for having or doing but in being.

Yet another perspective, not inconsistent with the others, simply describes the various objects of typical human endeavor. In this perspective there are various motivations pertaining to health and wealth (money as an end in itself or for what it can buy in terms of perceived comforts), fame and fortune. There are motivations of beauty (vanity), material comforts, and various pleasures of the senses. There are motivations pertaining to power and position, of fame and status. There are motivations pertaining to accomplishments, noble and otherwise, according to values and intentions (e.g., one may undertake noble work for ignoble reasons). And there are motivations pertaining to freedom, both in the lower sense of physical, emotional, and mental freedom, and in the higher sense of spiritual liberation. And finally there is the motivation from within, for service, for simply doing what needs to be done.

Section 4.31



Aspects of Human Nature 1

- There are many aspects to human nature, many aspects to life in the world, to the human being being absorbed in worldly affairs, struggling to wake up. Much of this is a matter of the apparent separateness or individuality of the human being, of the human being being immersed in the material world without much appreciation for the underlying reality of the Self or of the world.

The Human Perspective

One of the perils of the human experience is the tendency of the human personality to be centered on the objective human experience, which is misleading with respect to any greater (broader) (deeper) experience (life) (reality). Through the natural course of human development and evolution, the human being becomes self-centered (self-conscious in the lower sense) and distracted by (entangled in) the illusions of separate (discrete) existence.

This has some rather definite consequences in terms of individual human viewpoints, particularly in the unenlightened. The vision and current experience of the individual is necessarily perceived and interpreted in accordance with the self-centered consciousness and the limited, past experience of the individual. That limited experience and narrow, self-centered perspective is further complicated (reinforced) by the mass objective illusion and the prevailing beliefs in the reality (?) of the human perspective. Consequently, the individual tends to understand only to the extent of his own experience and beliefs. A person may have difficulty in understanding foreign experience (impression) since it may not correlate directly with his own. The individual will (usually) interpret all sense impression in accordance with his own familiar experience, even where such interpretations may require distortion into more familiar terms. An even greater peril (for the spiritual student) exists when that interpretation (misinterpretation) is performed unconsciously.

The spiritual student is ever urged to overcome self-centeredness and to broaden (extend) (deepen) the perspective (awareness) to understand matters in more universal (real) terms. The natural arrogance (illusion) of self-centered consciousness must be overcome if the student is to understand the greater truths and recognize the place of all things in a greater context. As the student progresses, it becomes increasingly important for the student to understand and discern (recognize) relevance; for personal matters (the lessons or values of self-centered existence) become less relevant and impersonal matters (the interrelatedness of the whole) become more and more relevant.

The problems of the human perspective with regard to individual consciousness are similarly existent for human consciousness in general. Humanity has evolved through countless years of self-centered and human-centered experience. Consequently, any experience is interpreted (or misinterpreted) in predominantly human terms. Ordinary human experience merely sustains the illusions of human-centered existence; but extraordinary human experience is even more unfortunately interpreted in human terms by the self-centered. Thus the misunderstanding (conceit) of humanity is considerable, as the normal vision of humanity is centered on humanity rather than the whole of which humanity is merely a part. The tendency of humans to anthropomorphize or humanize the perception (or conception) of God, devas, etc. is one of many common problems in human perspective that create or sustain misunderstanding.

This problem of the human-centered perspective is basically one of wrong assumption. Man assumes self-importance and interprets his experience as if his is the only way to experience. Man assumes a great deal about his life and experience without any real basis; he tends to oversimplify his experience in familiar human (misleading) terms (in his limited (narrow) perspective). The natural remedy comes with some degree of humility (self-honesty) and the consideration of alternatives. With a broader, impersonal perspective, the student is more likely to learn the truth about existence and overcome the petty glammers and prevalent illusions of the self-centered (human) perspective.

† Commentary No. 329

The Human Animal

Man, the generic human being in incarnation (having a male or female physical body as the case may be), is a combination of matter, consciousness, and spirit. That combination incorporates various characteristics and principles of several different natural kingdoms: the elemental kingdoms, the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms, and the human kingdom. In essence, man is human consciousness induced upon or within an animal form (body). That animal form effectively integrates the incorporated lesser lives, while the human consciousness is man's link to the spiritual essence of the higher kingdoms.

Self-consciousness is the major distinction between the animal and the human being. The animal is governed almost entirely by its natural instincts (habits) (training as a consequence of programmed experience and development). The human being is (progressively) governed by self-consciousness which is asserted upon the human (animal) form. That form ultimately becomes a responsive instrument of human consciousness. In an analogous fashion, the integrated human consciousness (personality) becomes a responsive instrument of the human soul (except that in both cases the initiative comes from the human consciousness, as the mind responds to higher encouragement (law) (quality) and conquers the lower (animal) self, reforms and qualifies the integrated personality (and itself), and elevates the consciousness into alignment with the soul.

The discipline and qualification of the animal aspect is a major challenge. Once accomplished, the attention of human consciousness can be properly focused on the next major challenge (which is ego or self-centeredness). But the proper qualification of the human animal is no easy matter, for many natural (lower) urges and tendencies are deeply ingrained in the animal nature. Many of the urges may be natural for the animal aspect, but certainly not for the (intended) human aspect. The process of overcoming is the process of transformation and elevation (not suppression).

If the animal energies are merely elevated (to human levels), then the human being merely remains a potent, self-centered animal. If those animal energies are properly transformed into more appropriate energies and elevated, then the human being has tamed (disciplined) the animal self and has taken advantage of the available energies in the most useful (progressive) (evolutionary) fashion. The keys to this process of transformation are recognition and temperance. Man must recognize the animal urges for what they are, without incorporating them directly into the human subconsciousness, and recognize their higher (intended) correspondence, then temper them sufficiently to permit transformation. The (animal) sexual urges, for example, should be tempered (moderated) by human consciousness, and as the polarization of human consciousness becomes predominantly mental, the sexual urges can be naturally and ultimately transformed into the higher, creative potencies and mental abilities.

The human (animal) personality naturally seeks to maintain the animal nature, while the natural call of the higher self is to renounce lesser things and transform the animal nature. The ego (personality) is placed in the middle ground between the animal nature and the higher human (spiritual) nature. The ego and the animal nature are particularly vulnerable to external (astrological) (circumstantial) forces. The external (lesser) forces play a needed evolutionary role in human developmental experience, but the higher experience can only be afforded as the animal nature is properly overcome and as the human being overcomes its vulnerability to proceed according to higher, inner guidance.

† Commentary No. 333

The Human Ego

The human being in physical incarnation is a human personality or ego induced within an animal form. That personality is a transient creation (instrument) of the soul, further complicated by its close association with its animal body. It is the self-consciousness of the human ego or personality (lower self) that distinguishes the human being from the animal. The ego is the personal, self-centered individuality which experiences the illusion of externalization.

In the pure sense, the personality is the personality matrix (pattern) of the soul (which is inherently very different from the quality and nature of the soul itself) prior to its imposition upon the animal form (i.e., as it exists on archetypal levels). In incarnation, however, that personality is easily absorbed by the demands and illusions of mundane existence and is normally quite rapidly complicated by the circumstantial (earned) factors of heredity and environment. The ego is that more complicated, self-centered aspect of the personality that motivates self-centered (selfish) experience and expression, which normally values its own existence and self-importance over all others; and it is the ego which sustains and reinforces illusion and resists alignment with the soul (for such alignment portends the cessation of the ego's independence).

In the practical sense, the personality is derived in part from the personality matrix (which is a source of assimilated experience and developed abilities) and

in part from heredity and environment. The personality is the loose totality (not necessarily properly integrated) of all the physical, emotional (affective), and mental (cognitive) characteristics of an individual (including conscience). The psyche is essentially equivalent to the personality, taking into consideration both conscious emotions and the unconscious mind. The psyche is often referred to as the soul, but in the esoteric philosophy (terminology), the soul and psyche (total personality) are distinctly different concepts (entities), the soul being the impersonal, subjective self which is the cause of the individual personality life, yet remains distinctly beyond objective, personal experience.

The ego is more properly the relatively conscious part of the personality (psyche) that relates more or less directly with the external reality (illusion) via sense impression, the waking-consciousness (the focus of personality awareness), and personal, subconscious processes and conditioning. The external (objective) reality is the illusion of physical existence and separateness (relative to spiritual existence). The ego is that aspect of the personality that is deceived by that (apparent) reality and its own self-consciousness, that aspect of the psyche which has become enchanted by consciousness (to the extent that it has become an artificial entity), the center to which a person's psychological experience and expression is referred. In a more practical sense, the ego is the essence of self-deception and self-interest.

The principal illusion of human psychology is the identification of the human individuality with the personal self or ego, rather than the soul. The waking-consciousness (the mental focus) is only the superficial aspect of the human being and is not the soul. The ego is only the complicated self-illusion of the human personality, and is not the soul. Reality (enlightenment) dawns only as the ego, psyche, and waking-consciousness are recognized as aspects of the transient personality. Much glamour and illusion (and many levels of self-deception and egoism) must be overcome before the reality of the universal soul can be assimilated.

Ends and Means

Much within the realm of human endeavor is related to ends (objectives) (goals) and the means of their accomplishment. The evolutionary urge manifests itself on virtually every level or aspect of human experience, stimulating the human being (and collectively, humanity) to activity (expression) and progress. Even personal ends serve a purpose (individual experience), though a greater purpose is served where goals are less personal and where the means are properly chosen (and where the consequences are properly considered).

One of the interesting (philosophical) problems of ends and means is that of justification. Some (many) would suggest that the end justifies the means, that if the end is indeed a worthy (significant) goal, then the means are easily justified. Some would even suggest that the means are not in themselves particularly significant. However, the end and the means of accomplishment are very much interrelated (by energy and consciousness) (by karma). The premise of justification largely ignores the inherent relatedness of all things and tends to exaggerate the relative importance of the goal, depending on superficial reasoning. But where a more inclusive perspective is utilized, proper consideration is given to the end, the means, and the effects incurred (potentially) by the end, the means, and their interdependence.

The truly worthy goals are the more general, more inclusive objective, and the relatively less worthy goals are the more personal, more specific objectives. Spiritual students are thus more concerned with contributing toward the general (natural, evolutionary) goals of humanity (and the life/consciousness aspects), without presuming any particular objective to be particularly important. Nonetheless, particular (worthy) objectives do contribute to the accomplishment of the overall objectives). But the overall objectives (in the higher, esoteric sense) are recessive (approachable but not really attainable). Thus the concern of the spiritual student is the discernment of relative, worthy goals and the discernment of appropriate means. The intermediate goals are indeed attainable, while the greater goals provide the horizon and perspective to which the lesser goals and means are related.

Provided a particular means does indeed support a worthy objective, then consideration should be given to the merit of the means and their ethical and causal implications. As the student progresses along the evolutionary path, the means become relatively and increasingly more important relative to the intended goal. This is due, in part, to the increasing mental and spiritual potency of the individual and the concomitant potency of the effects. The ways and means of accomplishment (the motives and ethics of the causal chain) thus deserve consideration beyond the superficial, for much of the implication of activity is subtle (less obvious) (superphysical), and the appropriateness and the ethics of the means may be the proper deciding factor for success (i.e., means are also causes). If suitable (worthy) means cannot be found, it may indicate insufficient consciousness (ability) (understanding) or an inappropriate objective. Even if a suitable means can be realized, the means do not necessarily justify the end any more than the end can (reasonably) justify the means. It seems far better to consider the end and the means as a single focus.

The general goals of human evolution and the spiritual path (in its broader sense, the means of accomplishment) are so interrelated that it is hardly possible to disassociate them. In a sense, the spiritual path becomes an end in itself, as the participants and contributors become the path. But in this case, at least, the means offer considerable merit to the quality of accomplishment.

† 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. 745

Custodianship

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

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

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

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

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

Territoriality

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

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

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

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

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

† Commentary No. 791

Status Quo

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

For those at the lower end of the continuum, life may be (or may appear to be) a struggle to merely maintain existence, even though it may not seem so to them, for such concepts may require mental abilities which do not exist yet for them. For the majority of mankind, life is not as survival-oriented, even though it may seem so, for the personality usually makes things seem worse than they are (i.e.,

it may have a negative outlook). Thus, these individuals (may) feel that life is harsh and unfair, no matter the reality (circumstances are always warranted, for they offer opportunity for experience). Also, this perspective may exist as part of the fourth ray manifestation of "harmony through conflict" (can harmony be achieved otherwise?). Regardless of specifics, individuals at this stage enjoy (appreciate) (worship) (crave) (relish) (desire) life, thriving on the day to day personality-oriented existence provided (which is as it should be), regardless of the circumstances.

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

At this point in consciousness, the individual has a choice. The issue is whether to maintain the status quo (indulge the personality) or to move forward to a more inclusive existence. This process is usually many things. For instance, it can be (but is not limited to) (and it does not have to be this way) a frustrating, difficult, traumatic, and even humorous period, for the personality does not want to give up control (it fears change). A certain irony exists here, for on one side the individual (probably) is tired of mundane life, while on the other side, is the personality existence of pettiness, strife, hate, greed, lust, etc., that great to begin with? Thus, it is natural to seek another (higher) existence (in consciousness).

As part of this process, many have gone the way of the soul (to a higher existence). However, in the past this transition was achieved over a long period of time, and thus, the process was achieved individually. Now, since more people are coming to this awareness together, more and more the transition is being made in groups and (relatively) more openly. Thus, we have a long line (over a long time) of forefathers (pioneers) to follow, but today these steps are being hastened and broadened (becoming more inclusive). In one respect, this makes the transition easier (for the individual is not alone), but in another sense

it is harder, since it is difficult for the personality to accommodate the group formation (not the case of the soul), which means the issue will be resolved by how much (or how little) the personality is responsive to the soul infusion. With group approach, treading the path involves greater group and associated individual momentum than in the past (treading the path is never more or less easy (personalities make it difficult), but dynamic).



Section 4.32



Aspects of Human Nature 2

- Understanding human nature and placing that in the context of evolution in consciousness are key to progress.

Appropriateness of Speaking

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

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

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

While speaking needlessly may not be a serious condition for humanity in general, it is (can be) a very serious impediment (self-imposed limitation) for the spiritual student for several reasons. First, this "disease" means that the person is enmeshed in mundane life (the personality) and is not practicing one of the disciplines of the path, i.e., a contemplative, soul-oriented existence of relative silence (silent demeanor). Thus, in being noisy, an aspirant has little (no) chance of perceiving the ever present Voice of the Silence. Second, it means that the person is probably not weighing (assessing (monitoring) the quality) of

that which is said, meaning that the student is (probably) being verbally impositional (another ignored discipline) (possibly with harmful consequences (at least from a higher perspective)). If the student is not acting in a wordlessly silent demeanor (as possible), then he/she is not maintaining a contemplative aura, and thus, instead of projecting a relative presence of calm and peacefulness, the aura is noisy (relatively violent).

Being relatively violent (reactive) (from a higher perspective) is (relatively) serious, for the spiritual student is not acting at the highest level possible (i.e., practicing a harmless, detached, and wordlessly silent existence), which means the student remains outside the (desired) aura of the Christ within. While this may not be a serious consequence for the aspirant who is initially approaching the path, it will become more of an obstacle to progress as the path unfolds, as one's position on the path becomes more difficult to maintain (i.e., the path becomes narrower (more particular) as the path is ascended) (but as the path unfolds, the spiritual student should have developed the qualities necessary for each stage, if he will only use them). Thus, many who are otherwise qualified get (needlessly) stuck at this (seemingly) considerable hurdle, for idle speech (gossip) (and a wandering mind) usually indicates that the personality does not wish to relinquish its position (even though eventually it will (must)).

† Commentary No. 797

Disposition

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

In the first sense, disposition is keenly related to karmic fulfillment. Whether in relation to the fulfillment or settlement of property and/or responsibilities (mundane, professional, moral, or otherwise (spiritual)) or to the orderly and

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

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

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

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

† Commentary No. 934

Enjoyment

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

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

On the spiritual path, at least in the relatively early stages, the mystic "enjoys" the mystical experience, the sensations of devotion and service, etc., while the

occultist “enjoys” the occult experience, working with forces and evocation of results, etc. As the student progresses further he or she becomes less and less concerned with the experience (pleasure) per se and more concerned with results. As the student progresses beyond that stage, even concern with results is transcended in appreciation of the way (path) (quality) itself. One then tends, more and more, to enjoy life incidentally and indirectly rather than directly. Enjoyment is transcended as an object, but allowed as an incidental (superficial) experience. Joy thus becomes more and more subtle, and less and less an impediment to realization.

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

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

Latency

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

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

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

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

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

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

† Commentary No. 1416

Self-Centeredness 1

There is a spectrum or variety of self-centeredness, at one extreme there is selfishness, at the other there is self-absorption. All are included in self-centeredness in the broader sense, while self-centeredness in the narrower sense is a matter of bias in thinking and feeling, and does not necessarily include being selfish or self-absorbed.

Most people are selfish to some extent, self-centered to some extent, and self-absorbed to some extent. Indeed one can consider these three "qualities" as more or less independent. One does not necessarily follow from another. Thus one can "embrace" these three characteristics in varying degrees and combinations. Some people are relatively more selfish but not necessarily self-centered or self-absorbed. Some people are merely (particularly) self-centered.

And some people are relatively more self-absorbed but not necessarily selfish or self-centered. Some are selfish and self-centered but not (really) self-absorbed. Some are selfish and self-absorbed but not (really) self-centered. Some are self-centered and self-absorbed but not (really) selfish. Some are selfish and self-centered and self-absorbed. And a few people are not (substantially) selfish nor self-centered nor self-absorbed. Each of these combinations results in a (different) particular manifestation of consciousness.

Selfishness is “being concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself, seeking or concentrating on one’s own (apparent) advantage, pleasure, or well-being, without regard for others.” Thus a selfish person is simply one who does not care about the welfare of others. A selectively selfish person is one who cares only about some immediate (or not so immediate) group of people (e.g., friends or family (members of the same race, religion, etc.)) to the exclusion of others. Self-centeredness is “being (superficially) independent of outside forces or influences” which means having a lack of awareness of others and of external factors. Selfishness is a more active quality, of not caring, of behaving in such a manner that other’s concerns or interests are actively ignored. It is the “position” of one who lacks awareness or understanding of the collective consciousness, of cause and effect relationships, of underlying reality.

Self-centeredness is more passive, concerned with the way things are perceived, about (lack of) awareness. A self-centered person who is not otherwise selfish, will generally be considerate of others to the extent that he or she is aware, but such a person is not naturally or generally so aware. Thus a self-centered person generally exhibits a mix of behavior depending on the nature of (passing) awareness. Some forms of self-centeredness relate mainly to biases in thinking and feeling, to having strong attachments or to having opinions, such that a broader, deeper context cannot be apprehended or considered. But a (merely) self-centered person is not generally without some potential for learning and growing, just that such a person is limited in his or her ability to learn and grow, by virtue of (the extent and nature of) his or her self-centeredness. Self-absorption is a more extreme case of self-centeredness, in which there is virtually no responsiveness to external forces and virtually no awareness beyond one’s own thinking and feeling.

Each of these three qualities indicate a lack of responsiveness to others and/or others' needs. Where there is some awareness of others and/or others' needs, they are generally perceived more unconsciously than consciously, and usually in accordance with one's own (naturally) self-centered perspective (and values).

† Commentary No. 1417

Self-Centeredness 2

Self-centeredness and related (excursionary) qualities of selfishness and self-absorption result from immersion in the material world to the exclusion of the inner and higher senses. They result from entanglements in the world, e.g., being entangled in materialism or the senses or the intellect (ego) or some combination of these things. In every instance and extent of self-centeredness there is simply a lack of embrace of higher, deeper consciousness. It is a matter both of ignorance (absence of knowledge and understanding) and lack of capacity for realization. It is a matter of the illusion of separateness, of being relatively substantially isolated in consciousness. Thus one who is selfish or self-centered or self-absorbed is considered to be asleep (in consciousness).

The challenge, then, is to wake up, to become relatively less selfish, to become relatively less self-centered, and to become relatively less self-absorbed. To become relatively more free from these things and thereby relatively more able to see things as they are rather than according to one's self-centered perspectives. The problem is reinforced and compounded by the world, by the vast majority of people being similarly asleep and unresponsive to higher, deeper energies and insights. Worldly societies (based on collective ignorance (unconsciousness)) reinforce notions of independence and of self-interest by virtue of customs, mores, laws, and other common practices in thinking and feeling and behavior.

People are usually "rewarded" by society based on superficial (worldly) accomplishments (e.g., accumulation of wealth, to the detriment of others). The active (even passive) pursuit of fame and fortune and power and status are deadly (in consciousness) and serve only to further separate one from another. Even the pursuit of these things on behalf of a group of people (sex, family, race, religion, nation, culture, humanity as a whole) is separative at that group or

collective level. But none of these things (fame, fortune, power, status) has any real or enduring value. Most worldly accomplishments are simply matters of illusion.

But there is some hope that understanding on some intellectual level leads to growth of awareness and change-in-consciousness, but real change comes only when that understanding is felt in the heart. Understanding that one is (relatively) selfish, or self-centered, or self-absorbed helps. Understanding that one's own accumulations (possessions of things or experience) or interests can be detrimental to others also helps. Understanding that one is biased or prejudiced in thinking and feeling, likewise (and that such bias and prejudice leads unconsciously to associated behavior). But it usually requires a crisis of some sort, reinforced either through intensity or repetition or both, before a person begins to awaken from the clutches of self-centeredness. As one awakens in consciousness, the new insight is incorporated, in consciousness, in perspective, in values, and in behavior.

Most people are substantially self-centered in some ways and will simply gradually experience what they need to experience and eventually become more aware, and eventually become less self-centered. But for the spiritual student self-centeredness is much more significant, for the spiritual student has a greater (more urgent) need for truth (honesty) (clarity), and even small measures of self-centeredness (selfishness) (self-absorption) are problems-in-consciousness, for the spiritual student. And so there is a great need for honest observation and self-awareness, leading to self-realization.

Idealism and Pragmatism

Idealism is the philosophy of embracing ideals, of embracing the relatively more noble practices without any real consideration of practicality or more worldly considerations. The essence of idealism is that concepts and ideals and principles are more real (enduring) (significant) than more worldly considerations, that “the essential nature of reality lies in consciousness or reason.” Idealism is also the practice of forming or realizing ideals and living under their influences, i.e., being guided by principles. Idealism to some extent involves living as if one is entirely noble, and that others are also (entirely) noble, without substantive appreciation for the limitations of human nature, i.e., being somewhat naive.

Indeed the essential nature of reality does lie in consciousness, but not in reason. Reality begins with archetypes and involves noble principles. If one lives according to higher principles one is therefore closer in consciousness to reality, and one progresses accordingly. The nice thing about having and seeking to embrace ideals is that that having and embracing leads one toward the ideal. The problems with idealism are two-fold, namely (1) discerning what is real or noble, i.e., what the ideals are or should be, and (2) living consistently in accordance with one’s ideals when the outer world seems to be governed by more practical matters.

Pragmatism is in some sense the opposite end of the spectrum, embracing a more practical approach to problems and affairs. The problem with pragmatism is that it is based on superficial considerations. Worldly behavior, based on (necessarily superficial) understanding of how things work may be relatively self-serving but it is also a matter of self-delusion. Because the world is not actually as it seems to be. Because there are underlying causes. Because there are underlying principles (cause and effect, evolution in consciousness, karma) that determine more enduring outcomes than what is merely apparent. Pragmatism is based on the illusion of separateness, that people are inherently separate and independent, and that one can advance one’s own interests, e.g., through accumulations and achievements without any real consideration for the consequences to others. Even where pragmatism is adapted with conscience, it

remains necessarily superficial, because it does not generally take into consideration the evolutionary framework.

Some people are more principled than others and seek to live according to their ideals, oftentimes placing ideals before practical considerations; others are entirely pragmatic and simply do whatever they need to do in order to achieve their objectives. But it is more effective, in terms of learning and growing in consciousness and serving meaningfully, to find a middle ground between idealism and pragmatism. Some would suggest that being pragmatic is being realistic, but that assumes that superficial reality is indeed reality. But in understanding ideals as goals, and in understanding human nature and worldly considerations, the spiritual student is better able to tread the middle ground.

The student should endeavor to live according to his or her ideals (higher, more noble values) (principles) while making (some) allowances for practicality, without necessarily compromising one's ideals or one's nature. In understanding the more subtle nature of the world, in understanding cause and effect relationships, one can then more actively embrace right action and right attitude, in a practical manner. Yet it remains better to err on the side of one's ideals than on the side of practicality.

† Commentary No. 1438

Egalitaria

Egalitaria or egalitarianism is the "belief in human equality, especially with respect to social, political, and economic rights and privileges." It is also "a social philosophy advocating the removal of inequalities among men (people)." In fact, human beings are (all) equal, in principle and in value. And all are equal under divine law (karma). The apparent inconsistencies and inequalities are part of the process of learning, of experience in the lower worlds, leading each person eventually and inexorably to evolution in consciousness. Through karma, through the law of action and consequence one evokes subsequent experience and circumstances that facilitate the learning of the needed lessons.

Thus all of the conditions that a person faces are necessarily self-created, and do not imply either inequality or inconsistency. Each person is entirely responsible

for his or her own circumstances. However, part of the learning process involves both individual and collective realization of the underlying equality (and the underlying reality) (and the underlying (higher) principles). And this means that egalitarian ideals are quite worthy of effort to embrace and fulfill. In practice this means that as humanity evolves there is an improving consideration for equal rights under (human) law, and eventually that emphasis on human law is replaced by understanding and consideration of underlying truth and (higher) principles of justice. Thus the relatively more "advanced" nations and societies are relatively more egalitarian, where there are equal rights under law, where there are equal opportunities for health, education, and welfare.

But in practice, in this context of egalitaria, there are several challenges. One challenge involves consideration for the (practical) fact that people are quite diverse in their abilities (talents) and consciousness (awareness) (understanding) (wisdom), that some are naturally more capable in the ways of the world than others, that some are more insightful in the (higher) ways than others. It is impractical to expect everyone to live according to the same standards, or even to place some standards ahead of others, for each has needs according to consciousness and circumstances, and those needs can be very different.

Thus there needs to be (and there is) not inconsiderable freedom for each to embrace his or her own principles, consciously or otherwise. Some live more according to higher principles. Others live more according to the more apparent worldly and self-serving considerations. As a society evolves then the lowest standards are raised and the bulk of people are expected to embrace them, even while some (pioneers) are living well beyond those standards. As the collective consciousness understands matters of health and (true) justice then the societal standards change accordingly.

Another (serious) challenge has to do with the distribution of wealth and the problem of extremes. In a more proper egalitarian society there are no great disparities in income or in wealth. Wealth is truly a collective quality, and where there are wide disparities (apparent inequalities) then there are evoked collective (sometimes dire) consequences. But what actually advances is not the equal distribution of wealth, but a more balanced sense of merit, such that the

larger disparities disappear and the lesser disparities are more consistent with merit. Which also means that societal values evolve and that standards are less based on material and ego (superficial) values and more on values in (quality of) consciousness.



Section 4.33



Human Limitations 1

- There are a number of limitations inherent in the lower human nature that must eventually be recognized and overcome. These limitations result in one way or another through immersion in and identification with material existence (and ego). As the human being has evolved through the mineral, plant, and animal stages, there is very much conditioning that must be overcome if the student is to stand freely upon the spiritual path and move on to the next level.

Alcohol 1

Another of the various limitations that ultimately inhibit growth in consciousness is the practice of drinking alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, liquor, anything having any measure of alcoholic content). Drinking (alcohol) is not a matter of coarseness, but a matter of integration. Drinking inhibits and ultimately actually precludes the proper integration of the personality into a coherent instrument.

There are health and safety issues associated with drinking, and there is no doubt that drinking facilitates relaxation. But there are other, more natural, less harmful means to accomplish relaxation without the detrimental effects of drinking alcohol. This is not to say that drinkers cannot or do not develop or make progress by virtue of their experience and expression in the lower worlds. It is to say that at some point, as opportunities are fulfilled, drinking becomes a limiting factor. One simply cannot achieve a proper (non-temporary) integrated state until one transcends the need for or practice of drinking alcohol. That most people do not need an integrated state is beside the point. The spiritual student needs to achieve an integrated personality. The spiritual student seeks union with the higher Self, and a lack of proper integration precludes the possibility of alignment.

Drinking loosens the connections between the various lower bodies (physical, etheric, astral (emotional), and mental). A person may seem to be integrated, but in the occult sense of the term, of the four lower bodies being integrated by a single personality ray, drinking precludes integration. And integration is a prerequisite for alignment of soul and personality. It doesn't mean that a drinker cannot be sensitive or spiritual; many are. It just means that drinking is a substantial and inhibiting limitation to the progress that is implied by the spiritual path. Some say that an occasional drink cannot hurt, yet in fact each drink undermines whatever progress has otherwise been made toward integration.

In order for a person (spiritual student) to achieve the integrated state, there must be a sustained practice of refinement and gradual integration of the lower

forces (physical, etheric, emotional (astral), and mental (intellectual). A number of diverse but related accomplishments (adjustments) are required. But this also requires self-control, as the personality ray gradually dominates (integrates) (enfolds) the rays as expressed through the various components. Drinking inhibits the required coherence. Drinking also damages and weakens (loosens) the aura to the extent that the person remains somewhat-to-substantially (depending on other factors and circumstances) vulnerable to external forces (mainly on astral levels).

Many aspirants and spiritually-minded people drink (or smoke) and accomplish a great deal along spiritual lines before they reach the implied limitations of these practices. Some then wonder why progress has slowed or why other limitations (e.g., habits in temperament) are so difficult to overcome. Yet, in every legitimate esoteric school the student is required (at some stage) to permanently forgo both smoking and drinking (and eventually forgo consumption of flesh foods as well). It is not merely a matter of discipline. It is also a matter of health and energy (and facilitation beyond merely health and energy). But there is also a matter of freedom of choice. The committed student exercises that freedom of choice and chooses to eliminate these practices in order to more effectively embrace the path. It is simply a matter of personal values. And commitment.

† Commentary No. 1491

Alcohol 2

Alcohol is the intoxicating agent in fermented and distilled liquors, such as beer, wine, and whiskey. Some “drinks” contain more alcohol than others, but even so-called non-alcoholic beer contains some alcohol. Alcohol is in fact a recreational drug which helps people to relax or to “feel good” in some superficial sense. Alcohol is embraced by many people as harmless in moderation. Indeed, in moderation, alcohol has a relaxing effect on most people. And in moderation, alcohol indeed evokes “good” feelings. Alcohol is popular because it is an easy way to become relaxed, an easy way to achieve a “good” feeling, an easy way to “fit in” socially, and an easy way to avoid whatever it is that needs to be avoided. Alcoholic use tends to be habitual, a matter of habit or conditioning, a matter of social convention, although for some

it is more or less occasional. And for some (relatively few) it simply has no place at all.

Most people who are intelligent in the ordinary sense realize that alcohol can be abused and that it can be addictive, indeed that some people are alcoholics and should not drink alcohol because they are unable to control their drinking. The continued excessive or compulsive recourse to intoxication by means of alcohol is considered more a matter of "disease" than a lack of self-discipline.

Consuming large amounts of alcohol can be fatal or injurious, either through the inability to metabolize it quickly enough, or to damage to various internal organs. Indeed, consuming large amounts of almost anything can be fatal or injurious, but alcohol (and other recreational drugs) are dangerous at almost any level of consumption. And consuming even moderate amounts of alcohol can be fatal or injurious to oneself and to others in the sense of resulting behavioral and perceptive impediments.

These dangers of consumption of alcohol are only the superficial or readily apparent dangers, that many people recognize and acknowledge. For most people, who are not embarked upon a spiritual path, who are in the experiential phase of life on earth, drinking (alcohol) in moderation is okay. But for someone who is embarked upon the spiritual path, it is a different matter altogether. For even in moderation, alcohol is inherently counter-evolutionary. That does not matter for most people, but for the spiritual student it is important. The spiritual student must learn to temper the personality, and integrate the personality, and align the personality with the soul. Alcohol undermines that process of tempering. Alcohol prevents integration and alignment is simply not possible without both tempering (refinement) and integration (coherence).

It is also essential for the spiritual student to deepen and broaden his or her awareness, and alcohol undermines and prevents that from happening. Alcohol dulls the senses, impairs perception, and places the most superficial part of the person "in control" of the personality. Even in small amounts, alcohol undermines the spiritual focus that is necessary for the student to be more properly aware, of oneself, of one's environment and circumstances. Moreover, the spiritual student must necessarily be dedicated to embracing the truth, and alcohol undermines even this. Alcohol leads to greater self-deception, a blurring of the ability to recognize the truth.

For the spiritual student, the consumption of alcohol, even in small and occasional amounts, is simply a matter of engaging and encouraging one's fundamental weakness, which is personality-centeredness. Properly, the spiritual student embraces the natural discipline of the path, and avoids alcohol and other recreational drugs, unquestionably.

† Commentary No. 1053

Anger

Given the spectrum of human experience and its inherent fourth ray flavor (harmony through conflict) and given the (lower) human nature and conditioning which is also along fourth ray lines, it is not surprising that much of life's contrast and conflict tends to evoke anger in the human being. Those who are relatively coarse, emotionally polarized and/or intellectually oriented, who have strong desires, expectations, insecurities, and/or opinions, are particularly susceptible to anger, as the flow of life is generally not in agreement with one's lower desires or specific expectations (or one's own (personal) (distorted) sense of justice or rightness). How one responds to the tendency toward anger determines whether or not the experience is inherently constructive and progressive or inherently destructive and inertial.

Anger is defined as "a strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism." Anger is a natural phenomenon, albeit of the lower nature (and personality-centeredness (egoism)), and may be allowed full reign, moderated or tempered in some manner, or repressed. At one extreme, allowing anger to be fully manifested, anger is generally quite destructive, particularly where it is directed at some person or persons rather than at "circumstances." The karmic consequences of such unrestrained anger implicate both parties, i.e., both the angered and the catalyst or whoever the anger is directed toward. Anger expressed openly is a psychic force of considerable intensity and effects, and is not only harmful to the object of anger, but also to the angered person whose progress along more constructive lines tends to be thereby undermined.

At the other extreme, repressing one's anger, the dangers are much more insidious and no less harmful to all concerned. For repression of anger (or

comparable feelings, e.g., bitterness, resentment) is an unnatural blocking of the flow of (animal) energy. It is generally better to release the energy than to repress it (obstructing the flow of energy, allowing it to accumulate without being resolved constructively, tends toward delayed but potentially explosive consequences). And it is better still to direct the energy in non-harmful ways than “at” some perceived offender. On the other hand, far better to transcend anger altogether, by refusing to yield to the lower nature (yet without repressing it), by turning the energy into something far more constructive.

In the metaphysical (karmic) context, the perceived offense and the offender are of lesser (little) consequence. What really matters is how one responds to the circumstances, i.e., of being offended or remaining poised and unruffled (and non-judging). If one admits the tendency to anger, but tempers the response through realization of its inappropriateness, the “energy” can be turned to more constructive channels, e.g., through refusing to vent the anger but through “walking it off” without allowing resentment to take hold. By focusing on respect for others, by realizing that others do not live generally according to one’s own standards (and should never be held externally accountable), by realizing consciously that one can never truly understand another person’s experience or values, by realizing that what angers is generally a matter of conditioning, and should never be taken personally, one can transcend the coarseness and dangers of anger and resentment.

One should not forgive others for offending, because one should not be judging others in the first place. People do not offend. It is only the ego that can only take offense (or not). Thus one can choose not to be offended, not to be angered. But this requires heart quality. It requires a measure of spiritual poise. And it requires a measure of freedom from egoism.

Exuberance

Exuberance is defined as the state of being joyously unrestrained and enthusiastic, of being extremely inflated or profuse. Profusion implies extravagance, while exuberance implies marked vitality or vigor. However positive it may be, exuberance is a decidedly personality-centered experience and indicative of a strong personality.

There is of course nothing wrong with being exuberant (nor is there anything wrong with being personality-centered or having a strong personality). For those who live predominantly in the mundane world, a strong personality is essential. But for those who live predominantly in the real (inner) world, a strong (independently active) personality is a distinct liability (as also a “weak” or passive personality would be a distinct liability). Exuberance tends to be a positive quality, indicative of etheric and emotional vitality, of enthusiasm for life in the lower worlds. But for the spiritual student there are different factors and considerations than are more generally applicable. For the spiritual student, exuberance implies (symptomatically) emotional polarization and a lack of an integrated personality. The spiritual student seeks to become mentally or intuitively polarized, and in transcending the emotional polarization it becomes possible to integrate the personality. Exuberance would tend to undermine that effort.

Exuberance indicates that the emotional body is functioning more or less independently of the personality as a whole (which of course does not really exist in the case of a non-integrated person (in such case the “personality” is a loose collection of physical, etheric, emotional, and intellectual components)). In the non-integrated personality, the emotions may be reactive to physical or mental experience (stimuli), but are not generally responsive to the tempering influence of the personality as an integrated whole nor to the more subtle influence of the higher Self. That more subtle influence cannot even be manifested directly until the personality is properly and fully integrated and that integrated personality becomes responsive to the qualification (presence) of the higher Self.

Exuberance also implies that a person is absorbed in the senses (sense perception), in sense experience and expression, which of course is the case for the vast majority of humanity, who need to be so absorbed in order to experience and express themselves appropriately. But the spiritual student needs to learn not to rely on the senses, not to be distracted by nor absorbed in the senses, but to eventually transcend them altogether (as higher senses begin to manifest, the lower senses cease to serve any real purpose). Enthusiasm for life in the lower worlds is wonderful, yet the spiritual student naturally embraces another form altogether, that being the quiet joy of interior experience, quiet enthusiasm (not excitement) for the experience and expression of the path, of living in accord with the way (higher consciousness) rather than being immersed in the senses.

For the spiritual student the emotions are not properly restrained. Restraint implies unnatural force. The spiritual student naturally prefers to temper the emotions through higher focus, by not engaging the lower emotions, but by cultivating the more refined emotions (e.g., aspiration, compassion, quiet joy). For the spiritual student the emotions are neither restrained nor do they function independently of the whole. Thus for the spiritual student exuberance does not really apply. The quiet joy of the higher (inner) (deeper) Self supersedes any need for exuberance.

† Commentary No. 325

Fear 1

In the orthodox sense, fear is defined as an unpleasant, often strong emotion (emotional state) caused by anticipation or awareness of danger. Fear is inherently negative (passive) (reactive) (personality-centered) and often compounded or precipitated by conscious or unconscious imagination. Fear can be internally or externally generated (self-induced, received from external sources (general or specific), and/or transmitted to others), and fear can be precipitated as a consequence of concern on any level. Fear pertains to the personality, not the soul, for only the personality can experience fear and can be emotionally or mentally disturbed by (real or imagined) danger.

Fear can relate to a concern for physical harm, emotional distress, and/or mental anguish. Fear can be instinctual, via the animal (bodily) nature. Fear can be

manifested physically, via the etheric body. Fear can also (usually) be stimulated astrally, as fear is essentially an astral (emotional) phenomenon (to a lesser extent etheric and/or mental), intensified and/or precipitated by mind, or triggered reactively via the astral plane. The two primary sources of fear are the individual's imagination (which can have considerable and subconscious effects) and the collective (mass) consciousness on the lower levels (sub-planes) of the astral and mental planes. The vast majority of fear is unfounded (without merit); in fact, all fear is unwarranted, even that which relates to real danger (the individual can be aware of potential danger, without fear).

Many thought-forms (intensified by astral association) are created and sustained artificially (deliberately (consciously) or carelessly (unconsciously)) on the astral (mental) plane. Anyone who is emotionally or mentally passive (reactive) (vulnerable) (personality-centered) may respond to the coarse vibrations of the lower sub-planes, which include the mass of glamour (illusion) and fear. Much of the individual (mass) fear is a negative reaction to the unknown (uncertainty) and a reluctance to face truth (reality) (inertial resistance to change (progress) (evolution) (due to the acceptance (preponderance) of maya, glamour, and illusion). This fear (of the unknown) is a problem of the ego (individual self-centeredness). In general, fear is a problem of the non-integrated personality.

Fear is predominantly a matter of darkness (ignorance) and ego. Fearlessness (arrogance) is the opposite extreme and is also a problem. The place of the spiritual student is to be without fear (to be non-reactive), neither fearful nor fearless, but untouched by separateness or ego (to be fearless and humble at the same time). An awareness of danger is not fear; fear is such an awareness coupled with an emotional and/or mental disturbance. Freedom from fear results from individual confidence in the one soul (God) (the plan), recognition of the existence of a greater wisdom (the soul) (the brotherhood of elders), and the cultivation of an integrated, purified, non-reactive personality.

The spiritual student is expected to remain poised in the face of uncertainty, to be concerned with relative truth, to grow relatively immune from glamour and illusion, and to proceed according to what is known or understood (and according to whatever discretion, enlightenment, or wisdom is present), carefully but without fear (with due respect for the unknown factors). More

importantly, the spiritual student should, as a consequence of consciousness, share whatever positive energies are present, projecting light and love to all levels of the astral and mental planes, that fear might be overcome by all. But the real object of service (evolution) is encouragement in consciousness.

† Commentary No. 1235

Fear 2

Fear is defined as an unpleasant and often strong emotion evoked by anticipation or awareness or perception of danger on some level of consciousness. There are a number of natural and artificial processes that can evoke fear, and whether real (well-founded) or not, most are inherently self-protective.

The most fundamental fear is the elemental or instinctive fear evoked at the animal (body and emotions) level. This fear is based on the experience of the matter of the body and the collective consciousness of the body, resulting in conditioned (basic) awareness and conditioned response to perceived threats. In other words, the body is conditioned to avoid danger to itself, to avoid harm, to defend and heal itself (e.g., responding to infection). This fundamental fear is quite natural and unless compounded by higher-order fears, it is generally soundly protective.

At the next level there are fears on emotional and/or mental levels, fear based on insecurities, and fear evoked by (vulnerability to) external influences. These are also natural fears, based on experience and the condition of consciousness. But unlike more fundamental (elemental) (instinctive) fear, fear on emotional and mental levels is prone to compounding, as fear feeds upon itself and evokes secondary reactions, potentially substantially complicating the process. The astral plane is filled with expressed emotions and feelings that are created through fear, that vulnerable people can (unconsciously) embrace and react to. Sometimes these fears coalesce and take on artificial "lives" of their own. At this level there may also be some elemental fear, of the emotional body naturally seeking stimulation (regardless of consequences for the personality as a whole). There may be a significant basis (insecurity) (vulnerability) that needs to be

dealt with, but resolving fear at this level is generally a matter of achieving coherence as an integrated personality, where none of the separate elements (physical, etheric, emotional, mental) are allowed to dominate in consciousness. This naturally tempers or moderates the influence of each element and allows the personality consciousness to proceed (respond) more sensibly.

At the next level there is ego-based fear, which is wholly artificial. This fear is based on manipulation of thinking and/or feeling by the ego for its own purposes (self-sustaining) (maintaining (artificial) control). Many times a person's fears are engendered by (ego-based) (conscious or unconscious) rationalization. Where there are more fundamental or more natural fears or insecurities present, it is easy for the ego to build upon those weaknesses and make things even more complicated. Fear naturally (and unnaturally) grows unless moderated in consciousness.

In a sense, all fear is artificial, because all fear arises from the illusion of separateness (if a person is truly one with all lives how can there be any fear of oneself). All fear functions only at the personality level; the soul does not experience or exhibit fear on any level or in any way. The soul is above and beyond fear. With reliance on intuition (and with the ability to discern the difference between true intuition and merely astral impressions or subtle, ego-based fabrications), real "threats" are perceived and dealt with sensibly (knowing that there are no "real" threats). Fear is, ultimately, simply the allowance of fear, the allowance of fear taking hold and having influence on some level. Rather than embracing (arrogant, egoistic) fearlessness, the student is encouraged to transcend fear.

Habit

The human personality is an instrument that can be fairly easily programmed. As the physical body is developed early in each incarnation, various habits are established through conscious and unconscious learning. As the emotional and mental bodies are developed, various habits or patterns are established as a result of experience (learning) and repetition of action (feeling) (thinking).

Each habit is a consistent or recurring disposition or tendency to act (react) (respond) in a certain way, usually acquired by frequent or timely repetition (association) and conscious or unconscious programming (intention). Thus, many patterns of behavior, feeling, and thinking are established in the personality instrument throughout the incarnation (and especially during the early years). The establishment of various habits in the personality may be the result of hereditary and environmental conditioning (learning) (karma) as well as conscious (deliberate and intentional) programming.

Habits tend to be rather strong due to the nature of material existence. Physical, emotional, and mental habits are actual patterns programmed in physical, emotional, and mental matter. Through repetition or intensity each habit is imprinted (established) in form, and that form is naturally resistant to change due to the inherent inertia of matter. Habits can vary in intensity due to the degree or strength (consistency) of programming. Once an action (feeling) (thought) has been performed (experienced) it is (usually) easier to perform it again because of the pattern or path that has been created by the action. As the action is repeated, the momentum of the pattern is increased to the extent that the practice or action becomes more or less involuntary, being almost entirely dependent on the triggering mechanism. A similarity of circumstances may be all that is necessary to trigger the programmed response.

Given that the personality is a programmable instrument, and given that a great deal of programming takes place unconsciously, the spiritual student should be aware of the problems of unwanted (and unrealized) habits and the opportunity for conscious reprogramming. The student should endeavor to recognize the habits already established and selectively reprogram (cultivate)

the personality according to the needs and intentions of the spiritual path. For the experienced and mentally-polarized student (having a fully integrated personality), such programming (and reprogramming) is a simple matter of minor mental adjustment (by consciously establishing a pattern of cause and effect within the personality). Vulnerabilities can be eliminated; awareness of certain experience can be programmed; and constructive habits (patterns) (meditation, study, right thinking and feeling, virtues) can be established.

Even beliefs and subconscious habits can be reprogrammed for increased effectiveness and realization (consciousness). Throughout the incarnation the student is surrounded by mental and emotional patterns of glamour and illusion. Mostly through subconscious habit, these unfortunate patterns are incorporated (assimilated) into the personality instrument. Habits (acceptance) of glamour and illusion simply sustain their existence (in form). The spiritual student must endeavor to bring the truth (reality) of higher existence into the lower self so that the habits of illusion (the distortion or exaggeration of truth) may be eliminated. The student should be quite careful to be accurate and truthful in all things, for patterns of thinking (feeling) (speaking) are involved which may be sustained unconsciously. With wisdom and discretion, the student can experience the incarnation more effectively, with a combination of positive programming and creative (dynamic) (intuitive) interaction.

† Commentary No. 128

Haste

The spiritual path is often called the hastened path of conscious evolution, but the implications of haste are not entirely appropriate for the spiritual path. The spiritual path is certainly quickened and accelerated, but the path does not imply haste, urgency, or rashness. The path is actually guided by experience, wisdom, and maturity, with deliberation and concern for quality, stability, and effectiveness. Haste implies undue eagerness and a lack of preparation or wisdom.

Haste tends to precipitate (encourage) (call forth) mistakes, and although mistakes are often a part of growing and deepening spiritually, they should be a

natural part of qualified experience rather than a consequence of hurrying. Hurrying along any path can involve a reckless (inefficient) expenditure of time and energy. One of the many guidelines for progress along the path is to proceed with reasonable dispatch (speed and efficiency) and reasonable deliberation (carefulness and understanding). Flexibility, dynamic usefulness, and even momentum are associated with the path, but haste is not. Hurrying is often an unconscious process that undermines the flexibility and the momentum of the spiral path of increasing consciousness.

One of the greatest covert deterrents to spiritual progress is impatience. Impatience, like undue or intense seeking, creates stumbling blocks. Like haste, impatience is a potent force for blinding and distracting the individual from the inner guidance that is necessary for successful progression. Allied to impatience in its effects is a sense of urgency. Such a sense is usually founded in exaggerated importance (both for the individual and for humanity). There is a certain spiritual impression that is sometimes misunderstood and interpreted as an encouragement for urgency from those who subjectively guide the human evolution. But even on hierarchical levels there is no real sense of urgency. There is always concern and interest in humanity, along with encouragement and guidance in many ways (if it can only be properly recognized and understood), but there is no exaggeration of the significance of any individual nor is the value of humanity exaggerated, on those higher levels. Patience and constructive encouragement are among the guidons for humanity.

Another aspect of haste concerns the intensity of objective life, or the pace of life on Earth. Amid the noise and haste of common (worldly) existence is a powerful force for absorption into that which is mundane. Those who live a life of great intensity in the lower worlds are quite easily absorbed and distracted from a real sense of spiritual value. Where the pace is great, it is quite difficult (almost impossible) to maintain continuity between the higher self and waking-consciousness. But where the pace (intensity) of the lower, objective life is not so great; where the spiritual student maintains the inner calm amid the intensity (noise) of the outer life; there is an effective disciple of spiritual poise, where the waking-consciousness can function clearly and with wisdom through an aura undisturbed.

The relationship between human nature and haste is understood as the force for evolution and the pressures inherent in objective existence are recognized. Haste is simply a response to increasing pressure. But there is really no need for haste; humanity has an eternity in which to evolve. And each human being who heeds the inner call has time enough to accomplish the goals of evolution, with expedition (efficient promptness) and without haste. The disciple is asked to proceed conscientiously, that the pressures of the outer world might be balanced, and that spiritual poise might be enfolded and shared with all.



Section 4.34



Human Limitations 2

- Understanding the various limitations of the human being in incarnation is key to tempering the human nature, overcoming those limitations, and making the personality (body, emotions, mind) a more qualified vehicle for consciousness.

Pettiness

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

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

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

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

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

† Commentary No. 457

Pleasure

Pleasure is defined as a state of gratification or enjoyment, and normally refers to sensual gratification since most people are physically or emotionally polarized. In a more general sense there are three basic types of pleasure.

The first type of pleasure and the one that currently predominates in the mundane world is hedonistic or sensual pleasure. Hedonistic (sensual) pleasure prevails only where the individual is physically or emotionally polarized (or between those two levels). Hedonistic pleasure is largely self-centered and absorbing; i.e., the hedonist exhibits a considerable inertia (resistance to spiritual progress) and typically remains wholly absorbed in the realm of (sensual) experience. Such a person grows very slowly (assimilating experience

only between incarnations where the senses are not a distraction), since the mind is either (relatively) undeveloped and/or dulled by the intensity of the sensual absorption. The pleasure experience (sensual absorption) is appropriate to those who are physically or emotionally polarized, who need such experience, but not for those who are developing mentally.

The second type of pleasure (and the one that is generally (gradually) replacing the pleasure of experience) is the pleasure of (pragmatic) achievement. Pragmatic pleasure is the pleasure of action and accomplishment and is not so dependent on sensual involvement as it is upon the mental ability to value achievement. Thus pragmatic pleasure prevails only where the individual is mentally polarized or in the transition period between being emotionally polarized and being mentally polarized. The pragmatist is content to work for personal achievement or to perform some service for some (perceived) good beyond mere personal achievement. The pragmatist is (potentially) much more responsive to learning opportunities than the hedonist, although the pragmatist may very well be so absorbed in the work (process of achievement) that he (she) is unresponsive to spiritual impression (qualification) (learning). In such a case the individual develops more gradually and the momentum is somewhat limited (albeit more progressive than the hedonistic case).

The third type of pleasure is the pleasure of understanding (the pleasure of spiritual rapport) and prevails only where the individual (student) is wholly mentally polarized or in the transition period between being mentally polarized and being intuitionally polarized. Where the pragmatist utilizes the mind for action and achievement, the mentalist (contemplative) uses the mind for growth, learning, and sharing (service) on a mental or intuitional level. Where the pragmatist forgoes hedonistic pleasure, the contemplative forgoes both hedonistic pleasure and the pleasure of action and achievement. Or in other words, where the hedonist and pragmatist are enslaved by desire and ego (respectively), the contemplative has (more typically) conquered both desire and ego and is free to become the spiritual self.

The momentum of the true (spiritual) student (scholar) (disciple) is quite considerable, the student being free from the distraction and absorption of the senses and the ego. The student (contemplative) is still (potentially) a worker (and an effective one) but is no longer absorbed by the process of achievement

(i.e., the work is important but truth (spiritual reality) is even more important). The proper student is not an intellectual, since intellectuals are a subset of pragmatists, but is rather mental and intuitive (i.e., the intellect is related more to the mind than it is to the physical brain). The pleasure of the spiritual student is more properly a quiet (subtle) (non-distractive) joy rather than pleasure per se.

† Commentary No. 430

Reactiveness

One of the most formidable and serious obstacles for the evolving individual to overcome is the reactiveness of the personality (ego). This reactiveness is inherent in the material nature of the personality (i.e., coarse matter is reactive, while refined matter is intelligently responsive) and further enhanced and/or strengthened by emotional and mental conditioning (i.e., the conditioning of the personality by external (mundane) (personal) forces and habits).

The distinction between reactiveness and responsiveness is an important one. A personality reaction is an unintelligent response to some stimulus, born of the coarse nature of the material personality (such coarse nature including the emotional and mental bodies). An unintelligent response is generally one that is rapid, defensive, separative, and without the conscious self-control of a properly integrated, refined personality. Some reactions are positive, such as the deeply programmed natural resistance to disease on a microscopic level. But most reactions on a macro-personality level (i.e., the personality as a whole rather than some small aspect of the personality) are negative (separative). An intelligent response is a more reasonable, thoughtful (considerate), and constructive response by the refined and well-integrated personality (where emotional reactions are properly discouraged by a balanced, healthy, poised, mentally polarized (or better) (higher) personality).

Taking exception to something or taking offense to someone or something are examples of (separative) personality reactions. Such reactiveness (negative conditioning) must be fully overcome if the student is to properly progress beyond the personality-centered (personality-indulgent) stage. Such reactiveness implies some degree of coarseness in the personality, some degree

of ego (for only the ego is defensive and only the ego can feel a sense of insecurity), and a lack of self-control and spiritual poise. A more proper demeanor (internally and externally) is not taking offense at anything (taking offense is personal; being concerned is more impersonal and therefore more constructive), not allowing the ego (imagination) to distort the perception along personal lines, and not allowing other people or circumstances to dominate (or trigger) one's responses. One should be able to interact intelligently and moderately with all people and all circumstances, not passively, reactively or personally, but more properly.

The way to overcome the reactivity of the personality is to properly qualify and refine the nature of the entire personality, becoming mentally polarized (or better) and balanced between the head-centered nature and the heart-centered nature, to deliberately condition (qualify) (program) the personality to be (intelligently) responsive, to think before acting, to refuse to be offended, and to respect others' beliefs and activities (respect does not imply acceptance, but it does allow a less separative, more inclusive relationship).

One whose personality is reactive cannot properly be trusted, for such a person is not properly stable or sufficiently cultivated (qualified) (refined). Extreme reactivity is spiritually fatal (e.g., an emotionally polarized but (concretely) mentally well-developed person who is essentially reactive is potentially very potent personally but utterly ineffective spiritually, being highly separative if not destructive). But one who is honest, humble, reasonable, open-minded, intelligent, and responsible (rather than reactive) is not only closer to self-mastery but also has the potential to be a constructive influence in the environment of humanity.

Recklessness

Recklessness is defined as being marked by a lack of caution or proper consideration. Recklessness is an egoic indulgence, centered in the strength of the personality (ego), and related entirely to the lower (animal) (independent) nature. The degree to which recklessness is dangerous depends upon the consciousness of the individual, the place of the individual upon the path, and the vulnerability matrix of the individual.

For those who are not upon the path, recklessness is a simple matter of increased vulnerability. The consequences may vary considerably in magnitude and timing, depending on the individual karmic equation. But for those who are upon or approaching the path, recklessness is not such a simple matter, for as one progresses upon (along) the path, the karmic consequences are (generally) intensified and quickened, and the place (potency) (influence) of the ego is a major consideration. For a professed (or self-presumed) spiritual student to be reckless indicates that such a person is not firmly established upon the path, that such a person is unduly influenced by the lower nature (ego), and that such a person cannot properly be trusted (or that any trust must be clearly defined and appropriate in consideration of the relative strength of the ego).

One who is reckless is one who is both imprudent and impudent (insolent) (to some extent, subtly or otherwise). In the context of the path, these are separative (or at least inertial and preventative) characteristics, for proper caution and consideration (prudence) invites spiritual poise and the responsiveness of the personality to the soul, while imprudence and impudence undermine the process of self-mastery (egoic conquest) and spiritual responsiveness (rapport with the higher self (soul)). Recklessness (rashness) (boldness) (casual or otherwise) may be part of a vicious cycle in which (apparently successful) recklessness sustains and encourages the ego and its hold on the personality, and in which that egoic strength then encourages continued recklessness. The physical (or psychic) peril is one matter (serious enough), but the preclusive nature of such a (reckless) personality (ego) in the context of the path is of even greater significance.

Wherever (and to whatever extent) a person is absorbed by (in) the personality, deceived by the ego, etc., it is most difficult to progress spiritually (i.e., to break the fetters of such absorption or deception). Furthermore, those who are (merely apparently) successfully (safely) reckless are drawing heavily on the strength of the ego for energy (force) to avert (near-term) peril. In other words, recklessness (insolence) (arrogance) invites peril which can only be averted (or transformed into something more subtle and therefore more perilous) by the force of the ego (or relatively immediate responsiveness to the implied learning opportunity). The appropriation of egoic (personality) energy for these purposes (aversion) (albeit unconsciously so) reduces the overall effectiveness of the individual in the context of the path (and any associated group). As one progresses upon (or toward) the path the consequences of (even mild) recklessness become potentially more severe, in the sense of direct peril or through (subtle) deception and absorption.

The composure (poise) (overall qualification) of the spiritual student is important to progress and effectiveness. Imprudence (recklessness) and all that that implies must be transformed into prudence, a proper sense of caution and consideration (without fear or worry). The lack of self-restraint must be transformed into self-mastery, coarseness into refined qualification, personality absorption into true freedom (from ego), and folly into wisdom.

† Commentary No. 1090

Smoking

Much of the preliminary endeavors on the spiritual path involves gradual refinement of the physical, etheric, astral, and mental bodies. Each person (and each spiritual student) tends to progress as far as he or she can until certain limits are reached. At that point, the person (student) either transcends the limitation and proceeds on, or the person loses momentum or suffers gradual regression as inertial forces become dominant. The various habits and practices (limitations) may be rationalized or self-justified either way (to sustain the practice or to transcend it), but in the final analysis, it is a matter of what either actually facilitates spiritual growth or actually inhibits such growth.

One of the many limitations is the smoking of tobacco (or other substances) (which may also be compounded by addictive effects). Smoking is a habit or practice that is generally either discouraged or prohibited by virtually every legitimate occult school. The reason for this discouragement is simply a matter of facilitation of progress in the context of occult training, spiritual growth, etc. Smoking is detrimental to physical and etheric health, but in the context of the path, smoking reveals and sustains certain limitations that preclude much of the experience and development that is needed for progress. This is not to say that one who smokes has necessarily reached the limit of afforded (appropriate) experience and expression, but that at some stage of experience (development) smoking becomes a sufficient limitation that further progress is either inhibited or precluded. The problem is essentially one of coarseness, debilitation, and distraction.

Smoking tends to weaken the aura, reducing the vitality (reducing the circulation of vital energies), and reducing the sensitivity to higher impressions. Smoke can be observed in the aura. It dulls the colors of the aura. It fills the aura with (etheric) particulate matter that is naturally (necessarily) coarser than would otherwise be the case. This leads to a coarser temperament than would otherwise be the case. This does not mean that a smoker cannot also be a very nice person, only that not-smoking, given that everything else is equal, facilitates the refinement of the physical and etheric bodies. The etheric body consists of matter on several different sub-planes. Smoke inhibits the preponderance of "matter" being on the higher sub-planes. Smoking is not non-spiritual. It is merely inhibiting and limiting. On the other hand, giving up smoking without the requisite basis of understanding may not be very constructive either. Usually there are adjustments in character, temperament, and values that must occur before the "change" will be effective (natural). And naturally the ego-self will oppose the change.

Some metaphysically-minded people (who smoke) might argue that smoking helps them remain "grounded" or that it has a stabilizing effect. This may be true. But, if so, it masks more serious problems. There is no doubt that people who smoke do so either because it feels good or because they want to for some other reason, consciously or unconsciously realized. But the spiritual student is challenged to do whatever facilitates spiritual growth, through elimination of whatever practices are substantially limiting (and are not otherwise necessary).

Of course each person has the right to choose his or her own practices in accordance with personal values. Anyone who is earnest in spiritual seeking, who realizes the benefits of not smoking, and who can, will generally and naturally undertake the change in practice (and go on to other, more subtle challenges).

† Commentary No. 1099

Superiority

There are at least two dimensions to this notion of superiority, one being actual superiority and the other being perception of superiority. Actual superiority is a matter of delusion. There is no actual superiority. Perception of superiority is a matter of conceit.

Superiority is a function of glamour, of misplaced ego, of not understanding the reality of God in manifestation. It manifests through the misguided sense (belief) (practice, or action based on the belief) of the human being being superior to other, "sub-human" species (and the presumed rights of the "superior" species to appropriate whatever is wanted, even to the detriment of the "sub-human" species), of a human being being superior to another human being by virtue of race, culture, nationality, education, intelligence, etc., of a human being being superior by virtue of fame or fortune, of a human being being superior by virtue of spiritual practice (not smoking, not drinking, not using drugs, not eating flesh foods, etc.).

Regarding the so-called sub-human species (inhabitants of the animal, plant, and mineral kingdoms), humanity is only "superior" in superficial ways. Lifewaves are equal, even though one necessarily precedes another in the succession of lifewaves in manifestation. The human being is different than the animal. The human being is more developed in some ways, the animal more so in other ways. Human consciousness may be "higher" but is not necessarily superior. For there is a great deal of "value" in each lifewave that is not readily apparent based on superficial observations. Thus the collective soul of the animal kingdom is no less significant, no less contributive, than the collection of souls that is humanity. The human being needs to transcend the residue of

conditioning acquired through prior experience (in the then-animal kingdom), but that is predominantly a matter of calling (the evolutionary plan). The manifestation of a lifewave is always superficial and partial. The reality of each lifewave vastly exceeds the appearance.

Similarly, "superiority" based on race, religion, culture, nationality, education, intelligence, etc. is merely superficial. Each segment of humanity contributes in its own way. And every human being is essentially and fundamentally equal (not identical, but equal in value, and equal at the soul level). Qualities are developed and expressed at every "level" of human experience. Each contributes to the whole. Those who exhibit certain "accomplishments" should not be compared to those who have apparently not yet developed those characteristics or attributes, however intended. For life in this world is an arena for learning, and many who have accomplished a great deal do not exhibit in any given lifetime all of the quality and character that has been achieved as a whole. Personalities are merely partial expressions of the underlying (real) life.

Even in quality of consciousness there is no matter of superiority even though one may be more or less "refined" than another. Differences (even accomplishments) simply do not constitute superiority. Thus one who smokes and drinks and eats flesh but who is kind and light-hearted may be more spiritually-minded (yet limited by these habits) than one who is merely (artificially) non-smoking, non-drinking, and vegetarian. Yet making such judgments is fallacious (and exercising judgment-of-others is a spiritually harmful and wrongful practice). Making judgments based on appearances is even more so (for one simply does not perceive or understand the whole truth of anything). Feeling "superior" based on real or superficial accomplishments is simply specious.

Wine

Of all the alcoholic beverages, wine is probably the most dangerous because of the widespread (but wrong) belief that the effects of wine are almost entirely beneficial. While stronger alcoholic beverages are more obviously intoxicating, the effects of wine taken in moderation would seem to be not really serious. There is a widespread illusion that the only evil of alcohol is the loss of control implied by substantial intoxication, and so wine is generally not seen a real problem. It is perceived by most as simply helpful in some relaxing sense and pleasurable.

But the truth is that all alcohol is detrimental in the sense that it strengthens the hold of the ego or superficial self upon the person in manifestation (incarnated self). It undermines, even precludes the integration of personality and prevents alignment of higher and lower selves. But because the effects of wine (and relatively more gentle alcoholic beverages) are less obvious and apparently less substantial, and because wine tends to appeal more to people who are relatively less coarse, consumption of wine is actually more and deceptively dangerous. Most people who drink wine believe they remain "in control" and are not substantively impaired, and this is really quite deceptive. The problem is that the effects of alcohol in moderation are simply relatively more subtle. Most people confuse superficial "control" with self-mastery, while self-mastery actually requires a great deal more effort and accomplishment than merely embracing the facade of normality (the facade or appearance of self-control).

From a very superficial perspective, of physical body chemistry, the effects of alcohol are reasonably well known to modern "science" and these effects are not really pervasive or long-lasting. So occasional drinking or drinking in moderation would seem not to be detrimental. But this is only true in the physical-superficial sense. The actual effects on more subtle levels (etheric and astral) are much more substantial and much longer-lasting. A single drink of some gentle beverage such as wine can evoke effects on subtle levels that last for many months. If this is reinforced through occasional-modest drinking, then the effects are compounded and cumulative and never really leave the system.

Now this may not be a problem for the ordinary human being, who has no need to find the truth within or to integrate the higher and lower selves, indeed such a person generally has no need to even realize that there is a higher self at all. But for the spiritual student it is another matter altogether.

The spiritual student needs to be free from all intoxicants, from all drugs, from anything that undermines growth in consciousness and the ability to see the truth of things. The spiritual student needs to temper the entire personality (ego) (and intellect) and begin to discern the differences between higher and lower selves so that he (she) can be gradually attuned to that higher self. Which means tempering or eliminating anything that is necessarily preclusive or inhibitive to these goals. The spiritual student needs to be (relatively) free from conditioning, free to perceive and embrace the truth, free to be who he (she) really is (the soul) instead of simply living through the facade of personality (ego).

So for the earnest spiritual student, wine is simply not an option. While those who embrace the facade of the spiritual path may justify their actions and indulgences, the genuine spiritual student simply proceeds quietly, gently, according to the rules of the path, gradually-ever onward and upward.

† Commentary No. 1232

Worldliness

There is no problem with worldliness. Worldliness is the condition in consciousness in which people are devoted (largely unconsciously and mechanically) to the ways of the world rather than to religious or spiritual pursuits. It is a natural condition. It is where (how) most people need to be, a place in consciousness that affords (worldly) experience and expression. Worldliness (blindness) is only a problem for those who seek liberation (self-realization) (God). Worldliness is only a problem in contrast.

Most people identify with their bodies and the ways of the world. They are naturally entangled in their (external) senses and cannot see much beyond the maya (condition) (glamour) (illusion) of the world, i.e., the materialism and

egoism of worldly experience. Even most religious and spiritually-minded people are predominantly worldly (i.e., engaged to some extent in spiritual materialism or spiritual egoism). But gradually, as a person (student) embraces spiritual practice and deepens in consciousness, the student begins to discern the subtle distinctions between the worldly and the real, between the ego (personality) and the soul, between worldliness and holiness.

Then it is a matter of more and more fully embracing the real, and allowing that which is not so real (the worldly) to fall away from one's consciousness. The student is then progressively less entangled in the ways of the world, less entangled in materialism and egoism, less entangled in the senses. The voice (sound) (quality) (character) of the soul (higher Self) (God-within) begins to be heard (sensed) and the person naturally becomes more subjective, more other-worldly. And yet without losing one's place in the world. Such a student remains in the world, and remains able to work in the world, yet without being entangled, without being overly conditioned by the world, without compromising one's higher principles. Thus worldliness is transcended, gradually and painfully, through experience, through spiritual practice, through struggling to go beyond the ways of the world. And eventually, through not-struggling (for struggling is ultimately an artifact of the ways of the world).

One of the challenges of the sincere spiritual student in becoming less worldly is in the domain of action. As the heart unfolds, as the light is embraced more so, the student is naturally drawn more and more to humanitarian and (eventually to) spiritual service. Of course one learns and progresses even more readily through service, but service can also be a path to re-absorption in the ways of the world, if the student is not sufficiently wary. Thus one needs to serve without proselyting, without being so caught up in the (ego-judgment) "worthiness" of what one is "doing" that one loses the inner context. The most effective servant is one who remains spiritually poised.

Another challenge in the arena of worldliness is characterization. A person, even a spiritual student, naturally identifies with the body (personality) (ego) rather than the soul, usually mistaking the semblance of spiritual "impression" for the real thing, often proceeding according to (subtle) ego-motivation rather than remaining in harmony (character) with the God within. Thus "work" (action) may seem justified and worthy (and indeed it may be so), while being

largely ego-based. The cure comes from striving (and eventually from not-striving) to embrace the character and quality of the soul, bringing that character and quality as best as one can to the personality levels. Thus, a (truly) spiritually-poised (non-worldly) person cannot be loud, or coarse, or personality-centered. Of course all spiritual students are, to some extent, but the momentum is toward embracing higher character.



Section 4.35



Human Sexuality

- The human being is in one sense sexless (at the soul level), in another sense bi-sexual or androgynous (in the sense of the human personality archetype or matrix from which the personality is formed), and in some (lowest) sense either male or female.

Sexual Sublimation

Sexual sublimation is the effort to refine and uplift the lower creative forces into their higher correspondences. The goal is the attainment of certain freedoms: freedom from sexual need, freedom from distracting physical and emotional sensation, freedom from the waste of propagative (creative) energy, and freedom to use such energy constructively according to spiritual purpose. The attainment of sexual freedom is one of the most difficult, for the way to success is a delicate and gradual balancing of internal forces.

The way of sexual frustration or suppression is definitely to be avoided, as that tends to create serious psychological problems. The proper way is based upon common sense and the alignment of the lower self with natural and higher forces. Sexual sublimation is actually more natural (though difficult) than the sexual activity of most of humanity. But the way of sexual sublimation requires understanding as well as preparation and complementary spiritual efforts.

Sexual force is essentially spiritual (creative) force that has been passed through the sacral center (chakra) (one of the seven primary psychic or energy centers within the human form) and released through physical (sexual) activity. The proper and natural intention of such activity is procreation (not sense gratification), to provide opportunities for incarnation to souls who are magnetically attracted to the union. But many have been misled by sensation (entanglement), so that sexual activity is applied to personal and temporary ends. Many have become absorbed (mentally and otherwise) by such activity and have acquired (artificial) sexual dependence. But it is that same spiritual force that is the true creative force, required by the higher self for greater purposes. The spiritual student cannot properly develop and apply the creative mind when so much of the spiritual force is indiscriminately released.

The way of sexual sublimation is one with expansion of the human creative potential. Beginning with moderation and with the placing of greater emphasis upon spiritual matters, the spiritual student can gradually and quite naturally withdraw the spiritual force from nonessential or wasteful purposes and apply that force creatively and constructively. The key to success in this endeavor is

mental discipline (balance) and the proper release of accumulated energies. Instead of lacking control of the creative force, the soul can then control and safely intensify the creative potential. This does not mean that the spiritual student must become and remain celibate, for the activity of controlled procreation even for highly evolved (and married) disciples can be appropriate. But it does mean that the student must eventually free himself from sexual need and personal sensation (distraction).

The student who is naturally and comfortably celibate may have attained sexual freedom in an earlier incarnation. The way of sexual sublimation is relatively easy where two (married) spiritual students, expressing themselves through opposite sexes, are able to uplift their love for each other, gradually from physical and emotional (personal) levels to mental and intuitive (impersonal) levels, ever concerning themselves with constructive and creative humanitarian and spiritual work. It is more difficult, but not impossible, for the single student to attain sexual freedom. The results of sexual sublimation include an expanded spiritual potential (and consciousness) as well as opportunities to attract highly evolved souls into incarnation through the marriage relationship. The student who has been able to properly devitalize (control) the lower psychic centers should have far greater control of the higher centers, resulting in greater opportunities and spiritual responsibility.



Commentary No. 299

Human Sexuality

Sexuality refers to the quality (condition) of being sexual (or bisexual) in contrast to being nonsexual, and in the human sense, refers to the condition of the personality instrument. The soul is nonsexual, without regard to either sex, but able to integrate both male and female forces (principles). Consequently, the human personality matrix (from which the human personality is created or evoked into incarnation) is bisexual (hermaphroditic) (androgynous).

Though the personality matrix (archetype) is bisexual, the actual (manifested) personality (form) (body) is either male or female, as one or the other of the two sexual principles dominates the form. When a soul incarnates (as it is drawn

into incarnation by karmic forces), it chooses the sex of its physical instrument depending on cultural conditions (opportunities), the need for particular experience (male or female), and proper karmic consideration. The soul incarnates (alternately or as needed) a sufficient number of times as a male personality to properly develop the male principles (and male character) and a sufficient number of times as a female personality to properly develop the female principles (and female character), in a balanced way so that ultimately the male and female principles can be fully integrated within the personality.

Every human form has both a male and female potentiality within itself, but (generally) only one or the other is developed in any one lifetime. A male personality is designed for the male experience (and conversely, the female personality is designed for the female experience), even though female (male) characteristics (principles) are potentially available. The soul, being impersonal with respect to the personality, does not identify with either male or female, but the personality that is properly formed and balanced will naturally identify with the (physical) sexual nature, male or female as the case may be. With regard to consciousness, however, the spiritual student should accept the basic male or female personality as an instrument (of the soul) and identify with the soul nature rather than the nature of the personality form.

The natural (normal) human (personality) condition (orientation) is heterosexual, but due to the complicated (bisexual) nature of the personality matrix, the personality form may acquire (potentially) homosexual preferences. This can result from a lack of balance between the intended predominant male (female) nature and its subtle counterpart, or simply from strong personal affections (with regard to particular persons (due to previous experiences (in earlier lifetimes) where the sexual orientation (relationships) may have been quite different)). It is quite natural for individuals to experience a deep affection (brotherhood) for others without regard to sexual orientation, but the spiritual student should not be confused or distracted by any (strong) identification with the physical form, regardless of sexual orientation.

Any substantial sexual urge (desire), heterosexual or otherwise, is an indication of identification with the physical and emotional nature of the (lower self) personality rather than with the mental and spiritual nature. When the student is mentally or spiritually polarized (and where the lower nature has been

properly qualified, the student is no longer vulnerable to physical and/or emotional distraction. Human sexual distinction is designed for the purpose of creation, both procreation (propagation) and upliftment of creative (sexual) force into mental and spiritual abilities (creative potential on mental and spiritual levels). As male and female creative forces are properly uplifted and balanced, the individual becomes a potent creator in mental, astral, and etheric matter (without regard to the particular sexual nature of the personality form).

† Commentary No. 963

Homosexual Basis

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

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

Another way involves simply coming across someone from a previous incarnation with whom one has a strong affinity (potentially sexual attraction) and that person happens to be of the same sex (if opposite sex, then there is

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

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

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

Sexual Relations

For human beings in incarnation, sexual relations cover a fairly wide range of sensual and sexual experience and expression, with various import, from the level of the primitive (human) animal to the basic (ordinary) human, to beyond the ordinary (human) levels.

At the level of the human animal there are instinctive (almost involuntary) sexual urges based on the underlying animal qualification (procreation). At the basic human level there is a range from sexual experience and expression based on self-centered pleasure (sensual (sexual) gratification) and/or conscious procreation to an expression of love through pleasure and mutual sexual fulfillment. Beyond these relatively superficial (sensual) levels there is also the possibility of real intimacy and partnership (bonding), with or without physical intercourse, based on the underlying metaphysical reality (real relationship).

It is inherently a matter of consciousness. Sexual relations (propensities) are generally a reflection of consciousness. Those who are physically-polarized are operating predominantly at the level of the (primitive) human animal. For the emotionally-polarized, there is both an animal and a human dimension, and a range of quality of consciousness, from being self-centered and self-absorbed to being relatively selfless (albeit with emotional propensity). For the mentally-polarized there is the possibility of detachment and sexual relations are generally a matter of balance. A head-centered approach is more detached, less intimate. A heart-centered approach is much more effective, with the possibility of real connection. Those who are intuitively-polarized are naturally heart-centered (without losing any emotional or mental abilities). The proper sexual relationship (for the spiritual student) would seem to be wholly uncontrived and a matter of committed partnership.

There is also a not inconsiderable dilemma for some spiritual students, as most people are not naturally celibate, and sexual relations become much more profound at the (higher) spiritual levels (not with regard to sensual experience and expression, but with regard to real (multi-dimensional) (etheric, emotional, mental, spiritual, and telepathic) intimacy). For the spiritual student there are

considerable advantages to being celibate, provided it is a natural consequence and not merely self-imposed. Yet there are also considerable advantages to being not celibate, provided there is a committed partnership and provided that partnership is in the context of the spiritual path (spiritual growth and spiritual service) and not merely a matter of sensual experience and expression. There is nothing inherently wrong with sensual (sexual) experience and expression, but the spiritual student needs to be, at some level, relatively free from entanglement in the senses.

In the highest sense, a man and a woman who are properly partnered in the context of the path, i.e., who form a properly qualified and coherent marriage aura, also form (evoke) a creative (gentle) magnetic vortex that facilitates spiritual growth and spiritual service. In such a context, sexual relations are much more subtle and much more meaningful. There is a balancing of energy. There is coherence. There is a sharing of energy that extends beyond the marriage aura. One can achieve some of this without a proper partnership, but there is some consolation (broader safety) in proper partnership. Ultimately, there is meaningful (subtle) sexual relationship even without physical contact, once the connection (partnership) is achieved and once that connection is properly qualified.

