



The Upper Triad Material

Topical Issue 4.4

Experience

Opportunity for Growth in Consciousness



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Chapter 4.4

Experience



Opportunity for Growth in Consciousness

- The immediate purpose of life on earth is experience leading to evolutionary development. That purpose is implied in the karma which ultimately draws the soul into incarnation and provides the appropriate environment and circumstances (particulars) for experience. Though karma provides the opportunity and though the momentum of the individual plays a significant role, it is the responsiveness and consciousness (awareness) of the individual that determines the relative success (progress) of any particular experience.
- Experience is merited as a consequence of action, through attitudes and behavior, through feelings and their expression, and through thoughts and their expression. Karma thereby provides evolutionary pressure. But it is really up to the individual to develop responsiveness to these opportunities.

Experience

The immediate purpose of life on earth is experience leading to evolutionary development. That purpose is implied in the karma which ultimately draws the soul into incarnation and provides the appropriate environment and circumstances (particulars) for experience. Though karma provides the opportunity and though the momentum of the individual plays a significant role, it is the responsiveness and consciousness (awareness) of the individual that determines the relative success (progress) of any particular experience or duration.

Experience can be realized on conscious and/or unconscious levels. In the early stages of human evolution, experience on physical and emotional levels is designed to lead the individual toward mastery of the physical and emotional environment (and instruments). That preliminary experience is intended to set the stage for later, higher experience. In the middle and later stages of human evolution, physical and emotional experience is designed to invoke consciousness by providing a framework for mental assessment and intuitive experience. Through the application of consciousness, the individual learns to perceive, interpret, and evaluate the afforded experience, taking into consideration the various levels upon which it occurs. The more substantial experience (and its assimilation) is realized almost entirely on mental and intuitive levels. Consequently, and quite naturally, the student becomes less involved in physical and emotional experience and more involved in mental and intuitive experience.

The student should learn to discern real (substantive) opportunities from incidental (relatively needless or less substantive) experience. An apparent opportunity may be afforded as a test of discretion, and that test may well hold more value than apparent experience. As the student progresses, the cumulative experience is assimilated and transformed into wisdom (quality), the more so as experience is consciously contemplated and assessed. Merit (karma) will draw whatever experience and conditions are needed; opportunities that remain unfulfilled may slow the individual's progress, depending on the circumstances.

Mental experience may be objective or subjective, and may involve observation, analysis, association (correlation), and contemplation. Intuitive experience (realization) is entirely subjective, but often relates to more objective (mental, rational) experience. Observation is a particularly potent instrument for experience, provided the student makes a conscious effort to assess and evaluate the observed information. It is far easier for the student to progress through observation and analysis than through direct experience (i.e., as an active participant); as an impersonal observer, the student is not entangled in the forces of the experience. Where the student is not responsive to indirect experience, then direct experience may be necessary.

Though individual (and direct) experience is important in the early stages of human evolution, collective (interactive) experience is more important during the later stages. Collective experience includes the assessment of group experience and the experience of the individual in relation to the group (i.e., provided by the interaction). Interactive experience depends on communication, perception, and consciousness. Perception and consciousness are relatively simple factors, at least in the sense that they can (hopefully) be controlled or qualified. Communication (the transference of meaning) is more complicated because the student has only limited control (qualification) of the process and is dependent on the perception and consciousness of the other participants. Interactive experience offers the greater challenge and opportunity for growth, particularly as the process is raised to predominantly mental levels.

† Commentary No. 295

Meaning

One of the challenges of the esoteric philosophy is the cultivation of wisdom (understanding) (quality) through the presentation of ideas for consideration and application. The philosophy tends to address the more significant concepts (ideas) (principles) (teachings), which coincidentally tend to be more abstract and less easily conveyed than the relatively mundane (familiar) (more objective) (less significant) aspects. The problem of meaning can arise wherever attempts are made to communicate ideas. It can also arise with respect to the significance of life (experience) (philosophy).

In the communicative process, meaning refers to the idea intended to be conveyed and to the idea actually conveyed or received (understood). Problems arise from limitation, as the intended idea is translated into some symbolic form or message (language) and as the received message is translated into some idea or understanding that the recipient correlates with the intended message. Problems are compounded by perception, prejudiced thinking (narrow-minded or premature assumptions), and selective interpretation based on disposition or habit. Consequently, the student should exercise considerable care (insight) in communication to ensure (to the extent that it is possible or reasonable) accuracy and proper significance. The student should also evaluate the possible interpretations of the message and consider the responsiveness and background of the recipient. As a recipient, the student should seek clarification of the meaning conveyed and evaluate the message or communication in context.

Context is important because it provides information which may clarify the intended meaning. Character and psychology both contribute to the context or framework of the communication. The words themselves are normally insufficient, because most words have several or more meanings (definitions) (denotations), some common, some not so common. The attachment that people tend to have with regard to particular definitions also contributes to the problem. Misunderstanding often arises from a failure to respect or understand the definitions of others, particularly where the individual (utilizing the concrete mind) associates only his own limited definitions of words (concepts) (actions). This is particularly a problem for spiritual students and for relatively subjective concepts. The concept of impersonality, for example, is frequently misunderstood by spiritual students, and communication often fails to impart the proper meaning. This is due to the limitations of language as well as to common preconceptions and predispositions (based on limited experience or ability).

The esoteric philosophy in a sense embraces a very particular terminology, where ordinary words take on both academic definitions and connotations as well as special (subtle) associations and correspondences, making far greater use of the available language than ordinary communication. Consequently, the student must learn to recognize the context and implications of philosophical writing and pertinent communication. A broad vocabulary and an open mind

are essential to the understanding of the various aspects of the esoteric philosophy.

The meaning of any idea (concept) (thought) can be properly conveyed, but only where the proper energy (qualification) is present and only where the recipient is responsive. Where serious philosophical writing is read casually (and where ordinary or common meanings are presumed) a great deal of the meaning may not be conveyed. Interactive communication (where feedback is permitted) is preferred, particularly where the interaction is simultaneous. The esoteric student should ultimately be in touch with the energy of the communication so that the entire meaning can be embraced with insight and confidence.

† Commentary No. 297

Meaning and Experience

There are two ways in which an individual evolves through the assimilation (integration) (correlation) of experience. The first method is common to all and involves primarily unconscious, after the fact, assimilation of particular experience. The bulk of humanity assimilate experience at a far slower rate than the rate of experience accrual. The volume of information is usually too large for consciousness to process during the lifetime, so a period between incarnations is needed for proper review (assimilation).

The second method is far less common, and is the method used by the esoteric student (and to some extent by anyone who is reasonably intelligent and consciously aware of his experience) to consciously and deliberately assimilate experience (simultaneously as experience is being realized). This second method requires some degree of awareness of the situation (context) of the experience and the relationship of the individual to the experience (i.e., an honest assessment of one's own motivation and ability), and the ability to correlate information and discern significance. It is a relatively difficult task for the untrained to discern the meaning of any experience, because (usually) a large number of factors (forces) must be considered, correlated, and evaluated, and that can only properly be accomplished via the abstract mind and the intuition.

One of the problems of discernment occurs when the student makes a judgment (assessment) based on superficial factors and reasoning. Such an oversimplification can easily lead to more erroneous (misleading) conclusions. The other extreme can also be a problem, where the student unnecessarily complicates his assessment by relying too heavily on the rational (concrete) mind. The student is encouraged to remain relatively detached from his experience and his assessment of meaning, thus precluding either complication. With a balanced (moderate) approach, the student can consider various possibilities and implications without drawing rigid (limiting) conclusions (which impair further understanding). This balanced approach is important because meaning can only be properly realized in breadth. The forces which combine to produce experience (and which further produce the disposition of the individual with respect to the experience) are necessarily related to other non-apparent factors.

No experience is altogether isolated or independent. Any experience is related to the continuity of the individual (with past, present and future relationships) (and even to preceding and succeeding lifetimes) and to the world context (the relationship of the individual to group karma). Thus, the forces of any experience are related to numerous other factors. It is however possible to understand some of the meaning intended to be conveyed by experience, particularly as the student is able to correlate diverse factors over a period of time (continual evaluation and reconsideration (meaning that all conclusions are tentative and subject to further experience and consideration)).

In the first method (unconscious assimilation), the student learns more or less unconsciously as more and more experience is considered. Unconsciously, the mind is able to correlate considerable amounts and diverse threads of information, relating them to the consciousness of the individual. The second method (conscious and deliberate assimilation) does not replace the former method entirely; it simply complements the first method as the conscious mind interacts with the normal (and paranormal) abilities of the unconscious (and super-conscious) mind. Through deliberate observation, conscious evaluation, contemplation, and alignment with the higher self, the individual can hasten the process of assimilation of experience and interact with new experience.

Recursive Experience 1

Every intended lesson (for any human being and for humanity as a whole) is a precursive force that results in recursive experience until eventually that force is resolved (fulfilled) in the assimilation of that experience (lesson). The primary or precursive force is imbedded in the teleological (evolutionary) framework for life and consciousness. The secondary or recursive (induced, recurring, consequential) forces are directly related to the primary, yet fully imbedded in the karmic manifold of action and consequence.

All significant (non-incident) experience is thus both karmic and recursive, and generally requires many cycles of application (manifestation) (affordance) (insistence) to insure assimilation (fulfillment). Although particular experience is recurring, it is not redundant (as redundancy implies needlessness, while recursion implies needfulness). If it appears to be redundant, that implies either a more subtle dimension to the intended lesson or lack of true embrace (assimilation). It is not enough to merely recognize a lesson (intellectually); in fact such recognition may not even be necessary; but fulfillment does require true assimilation, which means the lesson is so embraced that a change or adjustment in consciousness (realization) (conscious or otherwise) results. That change (growth) must be enduring, not merely transient (albeit ever subject to further growth and adjustment). Consequently, every intended lesson must be assimilated, retained, and periodically reinforced (in accordance with its nature and relationships to subsequent growth in (depth, breadth, and quality of) consciousness.

In the case of individual experience, recursion is necessary in order to overcome the natural inertia (resistance to learning) and absorption (attachments) based upon material existence. The physical, emotional, and (lower) mental components of the human form (personality) are all material (formed predominantly by energy in its expression as matter rather than energy in its expression as spirit). Consequently, the material components of the human personality resist progressive motion (learning) and naturally form attachments (and have a strong preference for (physical, emotional, mental) mundane (personal) (material) absorption (depending on the level of polarization of

consciousness, respectively)). Thus in order to learn a particular lesson (necessary for some qualification or growth in consciousness), a person will generally need to experience the forces (circumstances) (situation) associated with that lesson many times (or with considerable intensity) before the lesson is actually registered in consciousness.

The actual circumstances of a particular (recurring) lesson may vary considerably (in part because no particular lesson is faced independently of other experience (karma); in part because variety of circumstances are usually needed to overcome the particularities of inertia), but the underlying forces of a given lesson remain essentially unchanged because they constitute and represent an unfulfilled consequence of a single cause (the higher analogy of the intended lesson). Thus a person may face the same circumstances or different circumstances, over and over again (within a particular incarnation or within several or many successive incarnations), until the lesson is finally (fully) learned (and assimilated in consciousness).

That learning need not be conscious, for it is the assimilation of experience that truly matters, not whether or not the person is fully conscious (unless the particular lesson so requires), but the extent of consciousness and awareness certainly does make a difference in the learning process.

† Commentary No. 610

Recursive Experience 2

In general, as a person evolves in consciousness and is repolarized in consciousness on successively higher levels, learning per se becomes easier with respect to the natural (material) inertia (and more difficult in the sense that lessons become more and more subtle). Thus, in general, an intuitively (mentally) (emotionally) polarized person has a greater capacity (ability) for learning than a mentally (emotionally) (physically) polarized person (respectively), and the extent of recursiveness is generally less for persons of higher polarization (consciousness) (exceptions are due to particular attachments, which constitute greater (particular) resistance). Having (higher) conscious awareness is a great boon to learning and assimilation. If a lesson

can be fully embraced (consciously) (honestly and openly) (with minimal bias or attachments), reinforcement may not be (as) necessary.

In the larger case (of human evolution (as a lifewave)), individual experience contributes to the whole as well as collective experience. Thus tremendous variabilities in the particulars of experience exist throughout the depth and breadth of experience for the human race as a whole. Diversity of experience within humanity (and to a lesser extent for an individual) is simply insurance toward the eventual (incremental) assimilation of experience and the overall evolution of human consciousness.

For humanity as a whole and for each individual (soul) within humanity, recursive experience is not merely recurring or repetitious; it is, rather, a matter of reinforcement and convergence. Each lesson is generally multidimensional (i.e., having a number of aspects, dimensions, or implications). With some variability in circumstances, the whole of a lesson is gradually and eventually afforded. The basic content is repeated nonetheless, but with each affordance comes an opportunity to realize the lesson in a different manner or aspect. This variability also helps to overcome the inherent inertia (selective blindness). Convergence may be afforded as the various aspects are realized and related (in the case of relatively subtle experience) or as the intensity and directness of the experience is increased in order to overcome more concerted resistance and to bring about the needed fulfillment.

Recursive experience implies considerable qualification based upon wisdom, in the sense that each recursive cycle is modified by the results of the previous affordance and subsequent (intervening) experience. In this sense, recursion (karma) is quite dynamic in bringing about fulfillment (closure) (resolution) (and release of the recursive (precursive) forces).

If a particular approach does not register successfully or appropriately in consciousness, then another (somewhat different or more intense) approach will generally result. Recursive experience is linked also to recapitulation (progressive periodic reinforcement) and conscience (the accumulated assimilated experience residing in the personality matrix as reflection (indication) of the accumulated wisdom of the soul (the actual unit of evolution (consciousness) (of which the personality is merely an instrument of experience

and (eventually) expression))). Since the personality must be progressively reconstituted (and recapitulated) in each incarnation, recursive experience serves as refreshing reinforcement. Each incarnation poses new dangers of absorption and distraction (attachment), with an underlying balance of recursive forces to impel and encourage the individual (and humanity) onward and upward (as absorption and attachments are progressively (and repeatedly) overcome).

† Commentary No. 1493

Being and Experience

There is a considerable difference between being and experience. Experience is necessarily superficial; it pertains to the personality, to the mind and the feelings and the body. It is the relationship of a person (personality) to the world (lifetime) (incarnation). Being is something much less superficial, something much deeper, much more real. But most people do not care to realize that their main focus in life is superficial and based largely on illusion and self-deception.

Many people thus confuse being with experience. Most people consciously or unconsciously identify themselves primarily or even exclusively with the personality and/or the experience of the personality in the world, without any conscious realization that it is so, and are therefore entangled in these (false) identifications. Most people cannot even sense the presence of their own being, because they wrongly identify themselves with their own transience (transient projections), and because they are so entangled in the superficial dimension of life. And even when eventually there is an intellectual realization of these distinctions, there is no real apprehension of their own condition (entanglement) (illusion).

Experience is important. It is the means by which people learn. The assimilation of experience and the assimilation of knowledge leads to understanding (and growth in consciousness). And being entangled in experience is okay, for a while, as there is much to be learned from being so entangled. But being entangled in experience leads or strengthens being entangled in false identification, of perceiving of oneself as one's experiential

consciousness, without realizing that one is truly something much greater, much deeper, and much more real (enduring). Thus much of experience is entangling, but eventually leads through pain and suffering to greater realization. Then the student is able to begin the process of disentanglement, of learning to distinguish between the surface layers of their person and their real being. The body, the emotions, and the mind, are all part of the superficial aspect that engages experience, the personality which is immersed in the material world, in the senses, in the mind and ego.

Eventually there comes a time when the (now) spiritual student has experienced pretty much all that needs to be experienced, and the focus shifts to assimilation and (true) development (deepening). Of course assimilation generally accompanies experience, but conscious assimilation requires much more effort, and much more insightfulness, than is possible living superficially in the world. It is through assimilation of experience that the spiritual student eventually becomes aware of being, and not simply in the intellectual sense. Once a person senses the higher presence (being) and can distinguish between the lower and higher selves, one can begin to embrace being. One can begin to move beyond experience, beyond having things and doing things, to simply being.

Being is not at all a passive or inactive state. Neither is it at all an active state, though it may evoke activity at times. Being is simply a non-active place (presence), where there is both higher and lower awareness, both objectively and subjectively. If one is living at the being place, then one is not entangled in experience or even the mind, but one is able to assimilate experience without being entangled. Experience is thereby substantially enhanced. But from the being place, experience tends to be more subtle. Embracing the learning, growing, and serving process in gentle and subtle (and more meaningful) ways.

Section 4.41



Aspects of Experience

- The potential and eventual human experience is quite diverse. It takes many lifetimes of experience and expression in the lower worlds before the human being is able to transcend the limitations of material existence and go beyond the personality. In the meantime, there are many opportunities for experience.

Opportunity and Limitation

One of the most potent and rewarding of energies for the evolving man is the karma of limitation and opportunity. The karma of limitation deals with physical, emotional, and mental impairment, defect, or limitation. The karma of opportunity deals with the availability of (or lack of) opportunities in the light of (or lack of) talents, abilities, and capacities. Limitation and opportunity are very much interrelated.

Limitations and opportunities are earned, as are talents and capacities. If through learning, service, and the application of consciousness, the individual earns opportunities for further learning or work or service, then that opportunity must be utilized constructively and wisely. If the opportunity is ignored or neglected or abused, then limitation is highly likely to follow, either presently or in the next lifetime. The nature of the limitation depends a great deal on the circumstances of the opportunity, the response, and the consciousness of the individual. Opportunity is a responsibility. Financial or material wealth, talents and experience, and the situations in which the personality is placed, are all opportunities (responsibilities) to be approached with wisdom. Otherwise, the consequences are stern lessons that encourage the individual in the optimum (proper) direction. The attitude toward an opportunity or experience plays a considerable role in addition to (or in spite of) the talent or wisdom held.

Mental or emotional insanity is often the result of premature psychic development and tampering or the result of mental and emotional abuse. Physical limitation is sometimes the result of the direct application of the personality by the soul seeking to develop the personality in a certain way, in order to accomplish a certain experience or achievement. A physical limitation often leads to increased development and capacity in other areas. The blind person may develop an acute sense of hearing, smell, or touch. The deaf person may develop greater powers of visual observation. And the physically crippled individual may develop greater mental powers. Physical limitation with little pain or suffering strongly suggests the need for such experience.

The keys to such a life are acceptance and determination, to accept the condition and to make the best (most) of the experience and wherever possible, determination to overcome the limitation by all (internal) means. The person experiencing limitation may otherwise waste a lifetime of unsuspected opportunity. Guardians and teachers of such persons should strive to encourage the concerned individuals toward self-confidence and determination to live a useful, constructive life. There need be no dwelling on false hopes which may negate or actually discourage self-development.

The understanding of the karma of limitation and opportunity leads to considerable encouragement to make the best of this life (spiritually), in spite of limitations, imperfections, or the lack of opportunities; and encouragement to recognize and utilize opportunities as constructively and as unselfishly as possible. There is a great deal of work that needs to be done that does not require well-defined opportunities for service. The spiritual student who fails to respond to an opportunity for service may well be denied another chance in the present lifetime. In the face of the karma of limitation and opportunity (as in all karma) one should seek understanding. The spiritual student should seek to improve his consciousness and to learn the lessons of life, that limitation might be ultimately removed (as the lessons are learned) and that freedom to serve humanity might be returned or improved.

† Commentary No. 360

The External Environment

The external environment is the more-or-less objective world that an incarnated individual faces in the day-to-day life. For most of humanity, the daily life is relatively self-centered (personality-centered) in the sense that the immediate (external) environment is related (through perspective) directly to the personality. Consequently, for most of humanity, it is the immediate, mundane environment which largely determines (influences) the direction and focus of consciousness. Thus most of humanity are vulnerable to external conditions and their consciousness is largely absorbed in that environment.

The external environment offers a broad spectrum of opportunity for experience (lessons to be learned) and individual growth by virtue of that experience, albeit

largely an unconscious learning process. Nevertheless, the (local) external environment that an individual faces is largely a reflection or indication of that individual's consciousness or an indication of a needed interaction between the individual consciousness and the local environment (circumstances) (situations) (adversity). Karmic forces generally provide the interaction of personalities in the local environment as well as the conditions and circumstances. But the response or reaction to those conditions and circumstances is largely (entirely) the responsibility of the individual.

One of the problems associated with individuals relating to their external environment (and associated people and circumstances) is the degree of attachment experienced (or the sense of significance). Individual experience is greatly complicated where the individual becomes attached to the immediate (mundane) environment and to people or circumstances therein. The lessons to be learned are usually much more difficult to achieve where such attachment or absorption exists. Though there are lessons to be learned, and though the experience and circumstances (and people) faced are significant, the individual (spiritual student) should not take these matters too seriously (or too casually). The student should be responsive (open-minded) to the learning opportunities, but should not be absorbed in (or attached to) that experience.

Many of the lessons of life afforded by the external environment involve relationships with other people. One of the associated lessons is the realization that an individual (spiritual student) has no business judging others or trying to change others to that individual's perspective (point of view) (values) (standards). Another lesson is the realization that an individual should be able to remain poised (reasonable) in facing other people who are different or who have different values (behavior). Problems with people can usually be properly overcome, not by changing people, but by changing oneself, by improving attitudes, by allowing others to learn whatever lessons are needed according to their perspective, without interference or judgmental energy. By learning to relax, while remaining responsive to whatever lessons are afforded, the student can induce a positive contribution to the external environment (by virtue of presence) (rather than activity or involvement).

Real freedom from external conditions comes when the student broadens the perspective from self-centered (personal) attachments to reasonably detached,

relatively impersonal consideration of inclusive experience (the experience of a life wave as a life wave). Individual lessons can still be learned (indeed more easily), but the focus is no longer on individual experience (or upon closely identified groups (races) (nations) within a life wave). The final freedom comes only when the illusion of the external environment is fully realized, and the reality of internal (inclusive) consciousness is fully embraced.

† Commentary No. 737

Retrospective Opportunity

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

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

If the process is approached openly (willingly) (receptively) (from a higher perspective), with no undue expectation (of the personality), it can be useful for both short-term and long-term consideration (i.e., much of value may be otherwise lost). However, if the process is heavily involved with the personality, any potential benefits can (will) be negated (at best). In addition, the student should not be apprehensive about the opportunity, due to misgivings about what will be learned (uncovered from the repressed past) (hidden secrets of the past, painful to relive), because for a spiritual student, such experience (opportunity) is neither positive nor negative, merely a recapitulation of the past from which to better the present (future). The truth must always (eventually) be faced.

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

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

Horizons 1

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

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

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

The focus of the bulk of humanity is upon experience and expression, of seeking, experimenting, growing, etc. through physical and emotional (and to some extent mental) experience and expression (i.e., via sense impression and sense expression). Thus, the horizons for the bulk of humanity are relatively limited to that context of experience and expression (and are broadened (superficially and appropriately) to accommodate more (apparently) needed experience and expression) while taking advantage of the pace of human complexity and

diversity. Yet much (all) (limitation and opportunity) is driven by karma in the sense that the (apparent) needs and opportunities afforded are merely created by (generally) previous actions (behavior, feelings, thoughts). Thus the apparent diversity is not so significant, but simply within the bounds of karmic limitations.

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



Horizons 2

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

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

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

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

This willingness (ability) to pass beyond one's roots is possible, because the individual has gone (is striving to go) beyond the limiting, constraining, exclusive personality. Under these circumstances, no matter the location, the

spiritual student is at home, at peace, at one. While it may seem like a big step (i.e., the willingness to broaden one's horizons), it will only seem so depending on one's depth of personality involvement. If the immersion is great, then the step will (seem to) be considerable, but as one becomes more at one with the soul, the step will be of little (less) significance, as are all steps, once proper preparation (qualification) is in effect (complete).

† Commentary No. 762

Horizons 3

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

The willingness to move (relocate) based on soul qualification (rather than (often capricious) personality mandate) can be a considerable incentive to accomplish endeavors not possible with the old personality-centered constraints (limitations). In essence, it is a chance (opportunity) to leave the past behind, and start out with a fresh, non-limiting perspective based on current (soul-colored) understanding, which is likely to be quite different than the old, if the individual has been practicing a reasonable spiritual life (i.e., meditation, retrospection, contemplative study, quiet demeanor, vegetarian diet, etc.). The spiritual student can immediately form (create) (reshape) a lifestyle at a (hopefully) higher level of awareness, which (at worst) may not have been possible in the previous circumstances (old surroundings), due to the (natural) apathy (of the personality) that existed when the old (previous) lifestyle was created.

When such opportunities are presented (occur) (more often than is (usually) recognized), the student will find it much easier to start out new (with a fresh perspective), than it would have been possible to change the old, for well-

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

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

Another advantage of relocating based on soul-suggestion, is that such opportunities offer (an almost) immediate (or at least more rapid) chance to maintain the momentum of soul-fulfillment and expand the service opportunity. Such opportunity is made available as often as necessary (more often than we normally realize) for the self-fulfilling spiritual student, the only limitation being the individual involved. Taking advantage of these opportunities is only limited by how much (how little) the individual is in contact with the soul (out of contact with the personality). For the personality wants to (must) maintain the status quo to remain in control, but the soul must be in concert with the plan (God), which is by definition, movement, change, progress, evolution, etc.

Connectedness

In the highest sense all lives are interconnected, all souls are one within the broad context of the soul on its level. At the level of the monad even the distinction of "souls" is rather vague. At the soul level there is realization of both oneness and distinctions within that oneness. But on the level of the human personality, there is the almost complete illusion of separateness, of individuality. Yet, one can feel connected in any one or more of a number of ways (real or otherwise) (physically, emotionally, mentally, personally, spiritually).

Intellectually, one can embrace this sense of oneness, one can understand oneness and feel oneness (but not "really" feel oneness). An intellectual understanding is merely conceptual, not actual. But that intellectual understanding may serve as a precursor for actual understanding. One can, however, embrace oneness mentally (not merely intellectually), and that is a connectedness on the (abstract) mental level. In this sense, one projects mentally, embracing all lives and simultaneously letting go of one's own sense or perception of individuality. As energy follows thought, this results in a linking or connecting of lives on the mental plane. Yet this is still not connectedness in the higher (actual) sense.

Similarly, emotionally, one can embrace this sense of oneness, one can understand oneness and feel oneness in the sense of connectivity with some "other" life or lives. But that connectedness is generally either instinctive or etheric or astral (i.e., in some psychic or non-physical manner), and in no case is this connectedness "real" in the higher (actual) sense. Emotional embrace of or feeling oneness derived from etheric or instinctive or psychic levels is still operative in the (illusory) world of separateness. It is a connectivity between particular elements rather than an all-embracing connectivity. Yes, we are all connected, in various ways. The etheric and astral realms provide connectivity for all lives. But as long as the feeling of connectedness occurs at the personality (ego) level, it is only a distant echo of the real thing.

Any sense of connectedness on these lower (personality) levels implies or conveys an energy (sympathetic) relationship, rapport on some one or more levels, that can be activated or sensed almost at will. The basis may be real or superficial, relatively superficial in some sense on physical, etheric, emotional (astral), or intellectual (mental) levels, or relatively real on intuitional (buddhic) levels (of course most people confuse emotional and intuitional experience).

Thus neither of these senses (intellectual, emotional) are connectedness in the higher context. Connectedness (interconnectedness) in the higher sense occurs on levels above and beyond the personality (above the physical-emotional-intellectual levels), but induces or evokes realization on the lower, more objective levels. Personality-centeredness (personality strength) (egoism) (any sense of independence) precludes this higher sense of connectedness. Real connectedness is intuitive and selfless. Real connectedness does not discriminate between lives. In real connectedness there is no sense of separateness, no sense of connecting "between" but only a sense of "being" connected. Thus in real connectivity there is nothing personal or involving the personality consciousness except as that personality consciousness serves as an (unobtrusive) (subtle) observer or witness. Thus the personality must become spiritually strong, i.e., very, very subtle.



Section 4.42



Learning

- Learning in the sense of assimilation of experience is a fourth ray consideration, while learning in the more formal sense of acquiring knowledge through education and training, and assimilating that knowledge is properly a fifth ray consideration. What really matters are the attitude toward learning and learning how to learn.

Learning 1

Though every incarnation is dedicated in one way or another to the evolution of consciousness, the two principal activities within incarnation might properly be called learning (experience) and service (expression). The relatively unevolved are almost entirely concerned with experience (albeit not necessarily consciously), while the relatively evolved of humanity are much more concerned with service (constructive evolutionary expression (encouragement)). But even though a spiritual student is concerned primarily with service, continued learning is still an important part of the student's life, for evolution (and learning) is an unending process of expansion of consciousness based upon the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge (understanding).

There are essentially two reasons for learning. The real reason is to live in accordance with evolutionary law (to live otherwise to any extent proceeds from folly (illusion) (ego)). The superficial reason is to become more effective in consciousness (i.e., to grow), to be able to contribute (serve) more effectively to (in) group (human) consciousness, through purification, experience, and assimilation, leading to understanding, wisdom, discretion, and improved quality (and capacity) of consciousness. The superficial reason, albeit not as real, is still significant and worthy of consideration.

Learning is defined as the process of gaining knowledge or understanding or skill by study, instruction, or experience. Since learning is such an inherent part of evolution, the opportunity for learning is quite considerable, encompassing (potentially) every moment of incarnation. The opportunity for learning is essentially boundless, but effective learning is limited by a person's ability or capacity for learning, a person's disposition or attitude toward learning (receptivity), a person's character, temperament, and quality of consciousness, and a person's natural personality inertia (the resistance of the material aspect of the personality).

Some souls progress (learn) (evolve) much more rapidly than others, not due to greater inherent opportunity (although the evolved soul is more able to take advantage of the learning opportunities and therefore progress progressively

more expeditiously), but due to a better (different) fabric (texture) (quality) (tenor) of consciousness (better in the sense of being able to learn more effectively, not better in any absolute sense, for those who do not progress as rapidly also contribute, albeit in different ways (being an essential part of a necessary, overall balance)). The fabric of the soul necessarily contributes to the corresponding fabric of the soul's personality, as the nature of the soul qualifies the personality to the extent that it is responsive (the responsiveness of the personality being related to the progressed quality of the soul and the consequent (concomitant) earned (developed) (induced) (progressed) quality of the personality (the soul being a higher quality of consciousness, but there being a correspondence between the quality of one and the relative quality of the other)).

Even though the fabric of the soul may be more or less conducive to learning, that texture can and does change (improve) in the normal course of evolution, and, more importantly, the individual in incarnation can consciously (or otherwise) qualify the personality to actually improve the capacity for learning and overcome many of the limitations of the personality which impede learning. In essence, part of the charter of the spiritual student is to progressively improve the capacity for learning, to learn and grow (and refine the consciousness) continuously, and to ever serve more effectively.

† Commentary No. 432

Learning 2

One of the basic differences between the relatively unevolved human being and the relatively evolved human being, is that the latter has learned how to learn effectively and has cultivated a proper attitude and disposition toward learning. The spiritual student is (properly) one who also seeks intelligently (and consciously) to learn and understand in order to improve consciousness and contribute (participate) more effectively in dharma. All who are either upon the spiritual path (at any level) or approaching the path are properly considered students (of the esoteric philosophy (life) (wisdom)) and servants of humanity (God) (the path) (vice aspirants, probationers, disciples, initiates, and masters (although the term "disciple" connotes the student/servant balance and suffices for all succeeding grades)).

Besides the innate ability relating to the fabric of individual consciousness, of central significance to learning is the student's attitude toward learning. The person who looks at every experience and activity as a potential learning experience (opportunity), who seeks to discern the significance of the experience (and therefore minimize unworthy or absorbing experiences) will more likely learn from experience as not. One who is absorbed on personality levels (being self-indulgent) will learn indirectly, over the course of many repeated experiences (opportunities). One who is not absorbed in mundane (trivial) (personality) matters (details) who actually welcomes learning, is more likely to learn directly (more effectively) from the initial experience or from observation, and therefore progress more readily.

The attitude of the spiritual student toward learning is quite positive; the attitude of the esoteric scholar is even more deliberate. The scholar specializes in learning and contributes to the progress of humanity by establishing the learning patterns, understanding, and resulting wisdom within the immediate potential of humanity. To a larger, broader extent, the spiritual path plays this role, with the true scholar acquiring, correlating, assessing, and providing (sharing) knowledge and (understanding) within the context of the path. Knowledge is never sufficient for true progress; there must also be the correlation of knowledge (discerning the relatedness of things and their correspondences) leading to assimilation and understanding.

In addition to the inherent intelligence (capacity for learning) and the proper attitudes, a student must also cultivate a balanced receptivity and responsiveness to learning and experience (the resistance and bias of the ego must be properly overcome) in order to be effective. The student should be receptive to the potential for learning implied in every experience, observation, activity, communication, etc. To be open-minded and receptive to the potential for learning is one matter (inherently positive); to be reactive, passive, or accepting indiscriminately is another matter altogether (and inherently negative and not conducive to proper learning). Thus the spiritual student must exercise discretion in the consideration of all experience. There should not be any blind or passive acceptance, but intelligent (thoughtful or intuitive) acceptance where merited, or a deferral of that which is not yet properly discernable.

A final and perhaps most significant contributing (positive) factor in learning is humility, for the ego tends to distort the truth in self-accommodation and to absorb the whole personality in more personal energies. But with proper, spiritual (balanced) humility, the student is free to learn and grow and share, most effectively.

† Commentary No. 589

Awareness and Learning 1

The entire human experience is intended to contribute to the evolution of consciousness and the extent of that contribution depends necessarily upon the learning process and the relative awareness of the individual. Thus learning is a central focus of individual and group experience, particularly so in the context of the spiritual path of accelerated evolution in consciousness.

There are a number of factors and relationships that affect learning. The principal impediments to learning are a relative lack of awareness, a lack of interest in learning, and the preclusive ego. Conversely, where awareness is properly cultivated, where a positive (open, honest, active) attitude toward learning prevails, and where the ego is properly qualified for learning, the individual (student) is able to learn much more effectively (with greater depth (correlation), breadth (integration), and relative ease (expedience)).

The bulk of humanity are asleep in the mundane (personal) drivel of self-centered (material) existence. For the bulk of humanity, real learning (assimilated experience (wisdom)) is an indirect, relatively unconscious (sleepy) process whereby the soul gradually integrates and assimilates the experience of the personality, with little feedback (qualification) during incarnation and the bulk of assimilation occurring between incarnations. That learning process is enhanced and accelerated where the individual mind is properly developed and trained for learning, where the student earnestly seeks to learn, and where the ego is not a significant impediment. Such a person naturally (unconsciously) (indirectly) cultivates the requisite awareness.

On the spiritual path, learning is further accelerated and the individual becomes more active (more conscious, more aware) in learning, with more and more of the

assimilation occurring within the incarnation (and ultimately in real or near real time). This is a direct result of the consequences of commitment to the path (those consequences being accelerated and intensified karmic pressure (more rapid evocation of karmic consequences) and increasing qualification of the (responsive) personality by the soul (which includes direct stimulation of consciousness and expansion (depth and breadth) of awareness)). But even on the path, there are impediments to learning that must be (systematically or otherwise) overcome, by degrees (else considerable conflict (in consciousness between the ego and the path) will ensue).

The more obvious impediments to learning include preclusive habits (attachments and distractions) (absorption in personal or mundane matters) (which require deliberation (persistence) (self-discipline) for overcoming), lack of observational training (proper mental focus) (which simply requires training in observation and analysis), closed mindedness (the preclusive habits (rigidity) (linearity) of the concrete mind) (which require some intensity (determination) to overcome), and lack of earnestness (which simply requires realization of need). The less obvious, more subtle impediments to learning involve the ego and relative awareness, and include concerted (unconscious) resistance to learning, personal bias (in perception and interpretation) (compounded by inertia and lack of awareness of that bias and inertia), and limited (relatively narrow) perception (awareness) (again without realization of same). All of these things and more preclude or inhibit effective learning, and all of these things and more must be faced and overcome (eventually), by the earnest spiritual student. One who actively (honestly) approaches these issues with some determination (will to succeed) will indeed progress in improving the disposition toward and capability for effective learning.

Awareness and Learning 2

The principal key to effective learning and to improving the capability for effective learning is awareness. In general, the greater (broader) (deeper) (less personal) the awareness, the more effective will be the learning process. Awareness is related to the path in the sense that (extent of) awareness is a broad consequence of evolution in consciousness and in the sense that the awareness of the student is stimulated to the extent of the student's relationship to the spiritual path.

To complement (supplement) (integrate) the relative awareness evoked (or potentially evoked) by (upon) the path, the student must endeavor to utilize that awareness (or potential) or suffer degradation in awareness (a dulling of the capabilities through lack of exercise and consequent absorption). Properly exercised (energized) awareness will deepen and broaden naturally, and enable the student to learn (and serve) more effectively.

The real key to overcoming all of the various (obvious and subtle) impediments to learning (preclusive habits) is the application of awareness to those various impediments (i.e., to be aware of a particular impediment (in the sense of conscious realization of that impediment and its effects) as an impediment to learning (or to consciousness (awareness)) is to evoke energies inherently qualified to overcome that impediment (energy follows thought)). As awareness is properly applied (i.e., as the conscious mind and its subconscious correspondence are programmed to trigger conscious realization of any impedimental process in real or near real time), then the energy (and associated forces (applied energies)) of the soul is brought to bear on the problem (impediment) and the problem (weakness) is gradually transformed into strength.

The first step to proper conscious awareness (in this context) is conscious realization (knowledge) of all the various habits and preclusive tendencies. The second step is the conscious realization (recognition) (assessment) of the magnitude (depth) (breadth) (presence) of particular impediments. The third step is periodic self-analysis in which each such habit or preclusive tendency is

evaluated in terms of how it manifests (i.e., under what conditions in consciousness) and what are its effects or consequences. The fourth step is periodic (e.g., daily) qualification for learning (i.e., impersonal (individual) meditation, philosophic and psychological study, and continued self-assessment). The fifth step is the simple realization that the fourth step continues indefinitely, as the active resistance of the personality (ego) becomes more and more passive (more subtle) and less obvious.

Dealing with attachments (distraction) (absorption) (closed or narrow mindedness) (lack of earnestness) (personal bias) (limited perception) is relatively easy (at least straightforward) as long as the student (waking-consciousness) is aware of their existence and operation. Dealing with the various subtleties of the ego (i.e., concerted resistance to learning and other inherent inertia) is another matter altogether, since layer upon layer and aspect upon aspect of dynamic self-deception must be faced, realized, and overcome. The ego is fully capable of pretending to cooperate while deliberately undermining the various noble attempts of the conscious mind. This capability is further complicated by the personal nature of the conscious mind (and feelings) which tends to see (hear) (feel) (believe) whatever it wishes, often regardless of contradictive indications. Thus the only real solution to dynamic self-deception is the cultivation of proper humility (that cultivation being a necessarily indefinite process (never fully achieved)).

† Commentary No. 877

Learning and Experience 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

† Commentary No. 878

Learning and Experience 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 4.43



Human Culture

- The various glammers and illusions inherent in the conventional, traditional world view and various cultural perspectives provide a rich field of opportunity for meaningful experience and expression. But as one matures spiritually, as one comes to realize the relatively more true underlying nature of the human being in consciousness and the context of the field of manifestation, then one must transcend all of these various glammers and illusions.

Humanity

Humanity is the lifewave which inhabits the human kingdom of nature. There is a natural tendency to identify the lifewave with the particular kingdom which it happens to be passing through, but the student should be careful to distinguish between them. The lifewave is a thread of life (consciousness) which evolves progressively through the various kingdoms of nature. Each kingdom provides special conditions for the lifewave to experience. The lifewave evolves through experience, and the various kingdoms change (very slowly) to provide the proper conditions for each (successive) lifewave.

The lifewave (life) (lives) which presently constitutes (inhabits) the human kingdom will someday pass on (collectively) into the next kingdom, just as the life which is presently passing through the conditions of consciousness and experience which characterize the animal kingdom will someday pass into the human kingdom (though that kingdom will necessarily be quite unlike it is today). People (in this human experience) tend to identify with the human form and the human kingdom, but this is only a temporary stage in experience (lasting millions of years perhaps, but nevertheless temporary). The reality of the soul transcends the human experience.

One of the major characteristics of the human experience is self-consciousness. Even the most highly evolved animal lives are lacking this essential ingredient. The birth of self-consciousness suggests the temporary illusion of separateness through multiplicity. The human being is usually very much aware (unconsciously) of his separateness (in form and apparent consciousness) from other human lives. Even when the student begins to appreciate the existence of the soul, it is thought of as a particular, individualized soul. And it is a uniquely individualized entity related to its reflection as an incarnated personality. But it is also much more. The soul is an integral part of humanity, but all of humanity is an integral part of each soul, for through each soul lives the one life which is humanity (the lifewave).

As the consciousness of the student is raised, it becomes possible to live through all lives simultaneously, to identify with the lifewave itself primarily,

and with the individualized soul only in a secondary sense. The pulse (life) and consciousness of the lifewave are realized and the student is then able to appreciate more fully the duality and contrast of human existence. Humanity can then be seen as a single life which experiences a timeframe vastly different from that of the localized (individual) consciousness. The quality of human consciousness is improved as the various focal points of experience are improved in quality. Each extension of the whole (to the individualized soul) contributes to the consciousness of humanity, and the lessons of humanity are likewise contributed to the consciousness of the individual, especially as the individual participates directly in the consciousness of the lifewave.

The contrast of humanity, between self-consciousness and creative group-consciousness (between separateness and unity) is part of the necessary experience of human evolution. The lifewave evolves in many ways, through various perspectives, and the interaction between various facets of human experience provides the means for progressing beyond the realm of contrast. The spiritual student should endeavor to enter into the life and consciousness of humanity (on soul levels), for it is humanity (in the intermediate sense) which provides the basis for existence in individualized form. No human being can live independently of the lifewave, and every human being has an inner obligation to that lifewave of which he is a reflection.



Commentary No. 355

Problems and Humanity

As a collective organism, humanity is an evolutionary unit (lifewave) within this planetary (evolutionary) scheme. Evolution proceeds as a consequence of experience and expression, as the individuals and groups within humanity evolve, thereby contributing to the progress of the collective organism. Evolutionary experience in the form of crises, problems, challenges, etc. generally produces more substantial progress than casual experience (in the absence of innovation and self-generated motivation). Because of the interrelatedness of consciousness, experience in consciousness, and evolution, and because of the interrelatedness of individuals and groups within humanity, the various crises, problems, and challenges that individuals and groups

experience are actually a part of a greater manifestation, experience, and progress.

Individual and group experience is determined by karmic forces inextricably related to greater evolutionary intention. Many of the crises (problems) (challenges) are engendered within humanity (the collective consciousness) as a consequence of earlier activity and are intended on some higher, collective level (albeit quite subjective and generalized). All crises (problems) are learning opportunities. As the generalized problems (conditioned energies) are sent forth (demanded by conditions in human consciousness), they are manifested in various ways, sometimes through isolated (responsive) individuals, sometimes through isolated groups, sometimes through large related segments of humanity.

Some problems may appear grave and widespread, but more often problems are manifested in subtle ways, relating more to human psychology and consciousness than to more obvious values and experience. The various personality problems (self-centeredness, concrete-mindedness, lack of integration) are meaningful both in terms of the individual concerned and in terms of group consciousness and experience. As the individual addresses his or her own problems, the individual is also contributing to the resolution of collective correspondence (the same problem in collective consciousness). Even such problems as specific diseases are largely collective as well as individual in nature.

As an individual achieves understanding on some level (conscious or otherwise), so is the generalized (collective) understanding also improved (albeit nominally). But where that understanding is shared by some larger portion of humanity (again, more subjectively, through consciousness), so is the impact or influence on human (collective) consciousness the more considerable. This is true on several levels, for humanity as a whole, and for groups of pioneering consciousness within humanity who, by virtue of their presence (consciousness, understanding, ideas, character), influence the collective consciousness. Even though the collective consciousness is largely lacking in awareness, it responds in proper measure to all of the contributed ideas or understanding in individual or group consciousness. Where the pioneering consciousness is strong (stable),

that consciousness provides a considerable (subtle) leadership (path) for humanity as a whole.

The problems of humanity are many and varied, each with its message for all who can respond to its evolutionary intention. The appearance may be misleading in purely objective terms, but with a subjective appreciation for the karmic forces involved, the appearance is easily resolved. As humanity evolves further, the various opportunities of crises and problems will be elevated from the material and emotional domains to recognizable challenges in consciousness, to be faced consciously and intelligently, cooperatively and collectively, with intrinsic (group) self-motivation replacing personal resistance.

† Commentary No. 363

History and Perspective

The past cannot be accurately known via personal, (merely) psychical, or (merely) rational means, due to the bias or prejudice inherent in the human mind, its personality, and the mass (human) consciousness. That bias is the bias of personal energy (opinions) (emotional distortion) (mental temperament) and the bias of limited capability (the narrow, concrete mind) (limited experience) (partiality) (limited vision). The problem is compounded by the illusion of objective reality, the tendency of generally accepted opinions to become considered as facts (i.e., limited discretion), and the naiveté of ordinary humanity (who are enchanted by mass consciousness and tend to believe whatever is presented to them without any self-realization or discretion). The means exist, however, for humanity to overcome these limitations and achieve a (relatively) unbiased perspective on the past, present, and future.

Orthodox methods of historical research are generally quite limited (though potentially useful, as threads of truth appear throughout the historical records). Historical records reflect the bias of the individual or group recording the history, as well as the bias of the prevailing mass consciousness (at least to the extent to which the recorder is enchanted by that environmental consciousness (public opinion). Human bias is largely unconscious (subconscious) and the individual (and the group) is (generally) unaware of the entrained bias. The

view (perspective) on a given history tends to change in time due to the changing perspective of the individual (which may even be at variance with others) and the changing perspectives of mass consciousness.

These changes may include some improvements, but history is still considerably distorted by perspective (both in present view and in the past (recorded) view), even though it may be reasonably objective. Where the past is not judged by prevailing (current) standards (bias), and where the limitations inherent in historical records and the limitations inherent in the researchers are properly considered, then the orthodox methods can be quite useful.

Psychical methods are largely subject to the same basic limitations of more orthodox, more rational methods (e.g., personal bias and human limitations). Thus psychical methods (like the orthodox methods) are only of value where the consciousness and training of the individual is appropriate to the task. Psychic methods that rely on the (unqualified) personality are quite unreliable. But where the individual has achieved a properly qualified personality and where the individual has received the proper occult (esoteric) training, then the "memory" of nature can be viewed in a much more objective (reliable) manner than any orthodox, psychical, or rational means. But the price is impersonality and freedom from entanglement (freedom from opinions).

Where the memory of nature is properly accessed, the (unbiased) actuality of the past can be perceived to the extent that the individual can comprehend the panorama and properly relate that vision to the whole. This requires considerable training and self-discipline, and a broadening of the mind. With an esoteric posture, the past is not enchanting (neither is the present or the future) (the past may provide some insight, but the esoteric student is not dependent upon history; he is, rather, dependent on quality (consciousness)). The esoteric student tends to focus (broadly) more upon the present, (usually) relating to the "timestream" only in terms of purposive and causal (impersonal) relationships. The temporal perspective is not reliable; so the esoteric posture embraces an integral perspective which treats the past, present, and future as a single entity, being much more meaningful than any partial vision.

Section 4.431



Aspects of Human Culture 1

- There are many and the various worldly aspects of human life, and a higher, spiritual context for each. Every lower experience or cultural condition serves a purpose, eventually leading to evolution in consciousness.

Conformity

Commitment to the spiritual path brings with it a number of problems to be realized and dealt with, problems that may mean little to ordinary humanity. The spiritual student, however, faces the delicate problem of living in the world in a meaningful way without being compromised by worldly values or expectations. The problem of conformity is one which the student must face if he is to succeed in his two-fold mission (to serve humanity and to progress spiritually).

The spiritual student is expected to conform to prevailing standards or customs wherever possible, but not to the extent that the student becomes absorbed by the mundane experience and not to the extent that the spiritual path (values) (lifestyle) is needlessly compromised. The student should respect the laws (rules) of his government (society) wherever possible (i.e., to violate a law only where conformity would cause a serious spiritual (ethical or moral) compromise). The student may or may not honor the various social conventions, but he should at least be aware of the consequences, and the action (inaction) should have some merit (and be accomplished in a reasonable fashion) (how a student exercises his values is often more important (significant) than the values themselves).

The spiritual student should not conform passively; but the student should conform deliberately and intelligently, with an understanding of any inherent conflict or contrast with spiritual (ideal) values. Furthermore, the student should have the courage to live openly (but quietly) in accordance with spiritual values, so that any effects (subtle or otherwise) may be both meaningful and constructive. The spiritual student cannot help being a nonconformist in some respects, but much of his nonconformity may remain in consciousness and in the quality of his experience. Nonconformity creates its own set of problems; but in any event, the spiritual student should be moderate and avoid the needless perils of radical nonconformity.

Though the spiritual student supports constructive change (humanitarian and evolutionary progress), his role may vary widely in both place and method.

Spiritual students can be found in (virtually) all aspects of society. Many students on the path of approach as well as many aspirants (probationers) (disciples) are actively involved in constructive change (improvement) (guidance), working effectively within the system according to the opportunities afforded. But the more potent spiritual students are less actively involved, and much more involved in terms of consciousness. These (more potent) members are effective by virtue of their presence and consciousness; they blend so well within the orthodox framework that the unenlightened cannot even recognize them; yet with their considerable consciousness they are neither absorbed in their mundane work nor are they compromised spiritually.

In conformation there is an implied agreement (acceptance) (endorsement) (respect) with (for) the customs conformed to (and the values implied thereby), so the student is encouraged to exercise considerable (intuitive) discretion in all aspects of his relationships with the mundane world. There is an element of patience (tolerance) in conformity with values that are not wholly acceptable to the enlightened student. But what matters is the understanding (wisdom) of the student and his proper interaction with society. The enlightened student is neither radical nor highly vocal; the enlightened student is (rather) a potent (quiet) (humble) (intelligent) instrument of consciousness, committed to effective progress (from within).

† Commentary No. 259

Autism

The problem of autism is one of misunderstanding. Though orthodox medical science is filled with good intentions and a thorough understanding of physical phenomena (effects), there remains a considerable lack of knowledge and understanding when it comes to causes (and purpose). Consequently, in dealing with effects, medical science often overlooks inner causes and intentions, and bases treatment on invalid assumptions and values; such is the case with autism. Autism is considered by medical science to be a severe mental disorder that impairs the victim's ability to adapt to his (objective) environment and relate to other people. The supposed disorder is characterized by an apparently daydreaming, self-involved personality that is virtually

oblivious to its surroundings. Autistic children are identified and treated in an attempt to bring them into normal society and objective, extroverted experience.

From a metaphysical perspective, autism is in no sense a disorder or illness. Autism is a natural, intentional condition which occurs in the case of certain souls who experience transition into the alien world of ordinary, objective human experience. Guardians (devas) (angelic beings) on subtle levels are assigned to autistic children for protection, to help each individual to maintain the intended subjective rapport while each very gradually adapts to the objective world. The object is to cushion the shock of the objective world, giving the individual (soul) sufficient time to adjust, without losing the subjective (and particularly meaningful (valuable)) contacts. The guardians are devas of a fairly high order who work directly with the aura of the autistic individual, seeking to maintain the natural harmony of subjective awareness. But so often, well-meaning humans interfere in that natural process and actually cause serious problems in their attempts to force their values on the newcomers.

Highly sensitive souls (in the mature, subjective sense) have a great difficulty finding suitable parents, especially where those souls have little human experience and consequently where those souls have little karma in human terms. Thus, many of these individuals are forced to incarnate into families where misunderstanding (of subtle matters) prevails. The orthodox (personality-centered) human presence (of the spiritually insensitive individual) is usually so strong (extroverted) (obnoxious) (with respect to the peace of spiritual existence) that the devas guarding the autistic children are literally driven away, leaving the children to face a difficult situation with only limited subjective contacts. This happens because devas are relatively passive beings, and these deva-guardians in particular are only potent on subtle levels, and unable to deal with the objective intensity of ordinary self-centered humans.

Autistic children should be respected (accepted) and allowed the peace and serenity of their natural subjective environment. In their own time-frame, as they become more accustomed to human experience, they can adjust and accomplish the transition in accordance with their own needs and intentions. But some of these children are forced to transition prematurely, albeit by well-meaning (insensitive) (ignorant) human beings. Where this occurs, the experience may be needlessly painful; the spiritual integrity (potency) of the

children is compromised (impaired); and incarnation may be far less useful than intended.

Though these children may appear incommunicable and without self-identity, they are nevertheless very active (potent) (creative) (communicable) on subjective levels. The natural responsiveness of these (true, autistic) children to inner impression is normally considerable, and this provides the real potency of their incarnation (and their gifts to humanity).

† Commentary No. 319

Money

Money represents economic opportunity, the opportunity to acquire and utilize material goods and/or services. Though money is not energy, per se, as an opportunity (and responsibility) money does represent energy, and can therefore be considered (representatively) as a form of energy. Like all forms of energy (things, opportunities, experience) money (wealth) is governed by karma (merit) and must be earned (though the cause and effect relationship is not necessarily immediate or direct, as it is interrelated with intended lessons). The energies (and their forces) associated with money (or its relative lack) are quite similar in nature to those associated with health (or its relative absence), in the sense that the dynamics of such energy are relatively easily influenced by the state of mind (disposition) (character) of the individual and the corresponding mental projections (qualifications).

The overriding factor with regard to money is karma and associated responsibility. Money can be attracted or discouraged mentally, directly (via concentrated thought) (objectively) or indirectly (via quality or qualification) (subjectively), depending on karma (freedom). But money (in any form) brings with it not only opportunity and responsibility, but other, associated (subtle) energies (implications) (conditions and burdens) that must also (ultimately) be faced. The circumstances (honest effort, theft, windfall, inheritance, mental projection) of its acquisition play an important role in the associated karma, as do the circumstances (selfish, unselfish; wise, unwise; careful, careless; responsible, irresponsible) of its utilization (fulfillment) (release). Economic karma thus depends largely on motive and discretion (sound judgment).

Accumulated money (like accumulated tension) carries with it considerable consequences, depending on motive (intention) and its ultimate disposition. Since karma is involved inseparably with all events and circumstances, responsibility for the disposition (application) of financial (economic) (material) resources (how money (wealth) is used) should be a major consideration of the individual having such an opportunity. In particular, the spiritual student should exercise discretion in attracting, accumulating, and applying economic resources. Such resources should be utilized reasonably and principally for constructive and worthwhile purposes. Naturally, the student will utilize some funds in maintaining an appropriate (modest) standard of living, without extravagance (which itself breeds interesting consequences).

In the broadest sense, money is a cooperative energy (more so than health). All energy (money included) is tendered by the greater life (indirectly) along with the (group) responsibility for its effective use. Neither individuals nor groups actually own or possess money (economic opportunity); the various individuals and groups are merely custodians of fiscal resources, responsible as individuals, as groups, and collectively for its intelligent and constructive (humanitarian) use. Like energy, money can be utilized effectively or otherwise with corresponding effects for the lifewave (humanity) (and allied lifewaves).

Though money is usually considered in material terms rather than in terms of opportunity and responsibility, money can nonetheless represent a potent force for the evolution of human consciousness, as that money is properly and wisely used to support efforts which encourage human (spiritual) progress. But even so, money should not be considered too important (via attachment) or unimportant (via carelessness); money should rather be considered in a moderate, practical sense, with the welfare of the whole (in terms of consciousness, not material surroundings) taking precedence over the welfare of the individual.

Abortion

Conception occurs as a result of the combination of the opportunity provided by the partners to sexual intercourse and the presence of a soul preparing to incarnate. Incoming souls are either obligated to incarnate due to karmic pressures, or are obliged to incarnate by virtue of their own intention (attraction). The vast majority are obligated to incarnate periodically, by karma, for needed experience. But in both cases, the responsibility for conception must be shared (consciously or otherwise) by the participants.

Abortion is the expulsion of a human fetus, naturally or otherwise, the premature termination of the process of incarnation for some inbound soul(s). Natural (spontaneous) (non-deliberate) abortion occurs as a consequence of the karma of the incoming soul and as a consequence of the karma (temperament) (consciousness) of the parent(s). In some cases the soul is just not ready to incarnate (e.g., its personality may be too weak or simply incomplete). In other cases the mother (or parents) may be ill-prepared for one reason or another. But in any such event (natural abortion) the responsibility is shared by the incoming soul and the parents (all is a matter of consciousness and the forces (consequences) of consciousness).

Unnatural abortion (deliberate abortion or abortion as a result of carelessness) is a karmic event of considerable magnitude, both for the inbound soul and for those directly involved in the abortion process. Motives obviously qualify every action, as does the overall consciousness (and circumstances), but abortion is nonetheless a traumatic experience for the inbound soul (whose momentum to incarnate is terminated) and a karmic event with (qualified) consequences for all concerned. It is not so much a question of right or wrong as it is a question of responsibility, of maturity, of facing the consequences in form and consciousness of every action.

The rights of an individual are reasonably well-defined in a social context, to the extent that one's actions do not impose upon another (the problem being how to define the balance). The rights of a man or woman are one thing, and the rights of a pregnant woman (parents) are another, for sexual intercourse carries

responsibility, and subsequent conception carries further responsibility. Conception means that the partners have extended an invitation (consciously and deliberately or otherwise) for some soul(s) to incarnate and that some soul(s) has accepted that invitation. From that point on, the rights of the inbound soul (via its personality and fetus) balance the rights of the mother (parents). In a metaphysical context, the soul (and its personality (matrix)) is alive before, during, and after incarnation. For as long as a soul is committed to incarnation (from the decision to incarnate in specific circumstances, through conception, birth, life (manifestation as a physical personality), death, etc.), there is a life force associated with every aspect. Only when the soul withdraws is the "life" of a form (fetus) (child) (person) no longer present. Thus the presence of a fetus (almost always) means the presence of an obligated life-force (soul). Any abortion constitutes (potentially grave) interference with a life-form, with consequences for all concerned.

A person should live according to his or her beliefs, to whatever extent is practicable, but be willing to face the implications and consequences of every action or condition in consciousness. Citing karma is never an acceptable excuse; responsibility cannot be evaded; the failure to realize and accept the implications and consequences of any act necessarily results in complications and additional karma (constrained experience).

† Commentary No. 511

Peace and Progress

Progress (evolution in consciousness) comes about (1) in part due to the inner potential (qualification) of each element of a lifewave (and of the lifewave itself), that potential being a force for progress, (2) in part due to the manifestation of various primary and secondary evolutionary (external) forces through the field (environment) of experience and expression, and (3) in part due to the working out of karma (karmic force) (at the various individual and group levels). In each case, progress involves the assimilation of experience or understanding in response to one or more of these forces.

The primary evolutionary forces and basic evolutionary qualification involve a gentle evolutionary encouragement. The secondary forces which are evoked as a

consequence of the primary forces (or as a consequence of the response (or lack of response) of the individual (and/or group) consciousness to those primaries (and secondaries, as all are interrelated) and the various karmic forces are all basically restorative, that is, they are evoked in order to restore the basic equilibrium of life, which is the proper place of individual (group) consciousness in the context of the evolutionary plan (and in the case of spiritual students, in the context of the spiritual path).

Peace is defined as freedom from war or hostilities, meaning, in this context, a condition or state of dynamic equilibrium (within certain limits) that affords experience and expression (and assimilation of that experience) (resulting in relative progress) without recourse to the extremes of warfare, hostility, or other natural disasters. A lack of peace comes about where the natural conflicts are not properly resolved in consciousness (understanding), where the individual (or group) is simply not responsive to evolutionary encouragement and the evolutionary pressure has built up over a period of time, eventually resulting in a karmic explosion (war) (accident) (natural disaster). The relatively extreme consequences may be painful or unpleasant (or fatal), but sufficiently dramatic (intense) to register in consciousness on some meaningful level. If the lesson is not then learned on the proper level (scale) (i.e., if the adjustments in consciousness are not made), then the cycle (of gradual intensification and karmic release) will repeat, albeit in another manner.

Peace is obviously preferable and the dynamic equilibrium of peace is (potentially) the more productive (leading to considerable progress), provided the individual (and group) consciousness is responsive. So to insure peace (and effective (continuous (gradual)) progress) there must be a considerable degree of responsiveness, meaning an atmosphere of open-mindedness, a positive attitude toward learning, some degree of humility, etc. Unfortunately (fortunately) (if anything is fortunate or unfortunate), progress is complicated by the non-uniform response across the collective group consciousness (unfortunately because that complication makes matters more difficult to resolve) (fortunately because in that complication is found the potential for even greater understanding).

As a lifewave evolves an intelligent (coherent) group consciousness the tendency is toward more subtle conflict (i.e., without hostility or coarseness)

and more meaningful consideration of the circumstances and lessons afforded. The tendency is also toward greater integration of experience and understanding, in the sense of an individual learning by virtue of his or her own experience as well as (directly more so than indirectly) the group experience. Fourth ray energy (harmony through conflict) is a basic qualification for the human race (lifewave) and the present world environment, but within that energy is much opportunity and encouragement for peace and progress.

† Commentary No. 595

Humanism

Humanism is a doctrine (attitude) (way of life) (value system) (perspective) (aspect of philosophy) centered or focused on human interests and values, that stresses an individual's dignity and worth and capacity for development and expression. There are two aspects or distinctions within the field of this focus on humanism. The secular and the God-centered or religious.

Secular humanism is concerned almost entirely with human worth as an end in itself, without regard for God or religious (spiritual) considerations. In one extreme secular humanism is entirely self-centered (self-indulgent). In the other extreme secular humanism is focused on the worth of humanity, being largely humanitarian (but without recognition or acceptance of religious or spiritual considerations). Central to secular humanism is the belief (value) that man exists for the sake of man (or similarly that humanity exists for the sake of humanity), that the glory (accomplishments) of an individual (or humanity) is particularly significant. The evolution of human consciousness is not inconsistent with secular humanism (from the secular humanist perspective), but limited essentially to human accomplishments for the sake of the individual or for the sake of the human race. Secular humanism affords a focus for ego development and expression (at one extreme) and compassion and consideration for others (at the other extreme).

But secular humanism is not consistent with the spiritual path proper, for it detracts (distracts) from the essential human purpose (for which we have evolved), which is the service of (to) God and the divine plan for evolution.

Thus God-centered humanism is much preferable to secular humanism (from the standpoint of the spiritual path (and the soul)). Religious or spiritual humanism can still focus on human interests and human values; it can still stress an individual's dignity and worth and capacity for development and expression, but in the context of a teleological (purposive) universe, where human values are subordinated to the value (respect) (worship) of God (through the soul). Thus God-centered humanism affords a forum for the development of qualified human character (integrity) and a balance between the heart-centered nature and the head-centered nature, between human interests and the overshadowing (indwelling) presence of God.

Thus the proper spiritual student is (among other things) a God-centered humanist, living in the world of man and the world of God, without being absorbed by ego or extreme human values (attachments). The spiritual student is properly concerned with human welfare, but in the context of human experience leading to the evolution of consciousness (and in the sense of service to God through serving humanity (as an expression of God)). The God-centered humanist recognizes the God within all people, regardless of appearance to the contrary, and by recognizing (acknowledging) that God within encourages the development of responsiveness to that God-self. Where God-centeredness replaces self-centeredness (in the student's value system), then the student can overcome the separative and self-serving ego and allow the higher energies and spiritual qualification to deepen the place and perspective of the student within the framework of the spiritual path and the evolution of consciousness.

In the final analysis, the experience (reasoning) of the humanist must be replaced by the inspiration (intuition) (God realization) of one firmly placed upon the spiritual path. The mature spiritual student utilizes the personality instrument (and reasoning), but ever subordinates that lower self and capabilities to (being qualified by) the light and love and power of the soul.

Special Interest Groups

Special interest groups are groups of people associated by virtue of some particular common interest, who seek to (1) benefit by association, (2) promote the special interest that others might also benefit, and/or (3) influence legislation or government policy to further that special interest.

The particular interests being embraced, the overall character, quality, and temperament of the group, and the manner in which the group operates all influence and determine the extent to which the group has an overall net positive effect. Special interest groups which are organized merely to benefit some membership or constituency (not at the expense of or detriment to non-members) are relatively neutral (harmless) (except to the extent of attachment or degree of (mundane) absorption). Special interest groups which promote some cause may be relatively constructive or destructive (separative) depending on the extent to which (1) the cause is inherently for the good of all (or the presumed good of the few), (2) the "good of the cause" is sought to be imposed on others, and (3) the issue (cause) is polarized.

Minority interests are special interests. So too are majority interests. Only the interests of the whole are not special interests. For the values of the minority to be imposed on all is as much an injustice as the non-universal values of the majority to be imposed on all, the keys being imposition and non-universality. Of course in practical matters the majority will must (should) determine the rules, with reasonable consideration for all interests. Groups which work quietly (non-politically) and without imposition (or even active promotion) are generally the most effective in the longer term (which matters more than the near term). This effectiveness is due primarily to the extent of non-polarization (and the relative overall quality).

For success (in this spiritual sense) the interests must be relatively broad (embracing all concerned), consistent with the evolutionary plan (not merely consistent with some perception of that evolutionary plan), and sought in a manner (and through means) that allows quality (energy) to be shared (not imposed) and avoids (active) polarization. Active polarization is not necessarily

bad; indeed active polarization is frequently necessary (and karmically inevitable); but the spiritual student should rather work indirectly and inductively (qualitatively), rather than become embroiled in polarized issues (which involve separative or conflictive forces). There is (for now) a place for debate and polarization, but that is not (generally) the place of the spiritual student who should see both (or more) sides of every such polarized issue. No problem (conflict) can be solved on its own level; it is only when a more inclusive approach (on the next higher level) is embraced that such problems are resolved (and more often than not that requires a step forward in consciousness (e.g., compromise (moderation) (recognition of broader, more pertinent issues))). Where an issue is polarized (e.g., abortion), the student should normally see that both (or all) sides are right (wrong) to some extent (e.g., it is generally wrong to kill needlessly, but it is also generally wrong to impose (moral) (ethical) values on others).

The pursuit of (separative or conflictive) special interests should be avoided and tempered by some overall balance in which (spiritual) quality prevails. One need not avoid the relevant issues, just the active (promotional) (political) (separative) pursuit. Let those who are better suited in character, quality, temperament, and values play the more active roles, that the energies of the spiritual student might be more effectively applied.

† Commentary No. 798

World Peace

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

The purpose of human existence and concomitant manifestation is contributive evolution in consciousness, not merely or even primarily the evolution in human

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

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

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

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



Section 4.432



Aspects of Human Culture 2

- Human culture is the worldly context for experience. It provides much in the way of opportunity, but it also provides much in the way of bias and conditioning.

Racial and Cultural Bias 1

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

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

Two of the principal biases are racial and cultural. While racial (hereditary) characteristics provide a conditioned basis for various abilitative aspects and attributes (abilities, characteristics, potential along physical, emotional, and mental lines), cultural (environmental) characteristics provide more of a conditioned basis for various perceptive and interpretive aspects and attributes (tendencies). While racial bias is inherent in the genetic (hereditary) basis for incarnation, cultural bias is acquired more so through the cultural (family) (religious) (personal) environment. Each of the various races within humanity contributes directly to humanity by virtue of its characteristics (physical, emotional, and mental factors) which form a direct and underlying basis.

Each of the various cultures (which may or may not coincide with racial background) contributes directly albeit less obviously, by virtue of its psychological conditioning. In this sense, both family and religious biases are considered to be cultural rather than racial. These racial and cultural biases

serve a definite and constructive purpose in the evolutionary development of humanity, but at some point along the way (the spiritual path) one must rise beyond the lesser conditioning in order to be responsive to the higher.

Consequently, the masses generally identify with and are naturally entangled in their racial and cultural aspects, while the relatively more advanced within humanity have achieved some relative freedom from these biases and perceive and value things in broader, deeper terms (e.g., humanity as a whole, the soul rather than the personality).

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

† Commentary No. 916

Racial and Cultural Bias 2

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

One should not judge another on the basis of one's own racial or cultural biases. One racial or cultural bias is not necessarily (or even generally) better than

another. Some biases convey moral or ethical values and indicate evolutionary accomplishment (or lack thereof) along some line, but in general the various cultures are comparable in overall achievement (evolution), but not uniformly so (some cultures are “advanced” in some ways (but not in other ways) and other cultures are “advanced” in other ways but not in some ways). For example, the “norm” in one cultural setting may be much more emotionally expressive than in another. Thus, one should be very wary of generalization (and stereotyping).

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

Thus while various racial and cultural biases may be helpful, even necessary at some stage, they ultimately limit further growth in consciousness. The objective is to see beyond one’s bias (superficiality and narrowness), thereby overcoming and transforming limitations into strengths (depth and breadth of perception and understanding), passing into the greater fellowship of humanity (and life) as a whole and toward greater reliance on the soul rather than the imbedded (inertial) personality. Freedom from bias (conditioning) generally leads to a measure of (hopefully intelligent) non-conformity.

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

impose on one. Yet ever one must realize the underlying unity of all, so that one's relative freedom from racial and cultural bias is inherently constructive (and not separative). Such is the challenge.

† Commentary No. 946

Oppression

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

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

One does not generally overcome being oppressed until the condition has run its course (and even consciously or unconsciously as the lessons are learned). But

one can and should overcome the feeling or perspective of being oppressed. One learns to accept the conditions somehow merited, even if they are not understood consciously. One learns to refuse to be disturbed or bothered by one's being oppressed, all the while recognizing the wrongness of oppressing. And one learns to work constructively, while only superficially suffering a lack of freedom. In other words one learns to make the best of whatever circumstances there are. That which one can change (for the apparent better) can and should be changed. That which one cannot change can only (effectively) be accepted. Yet one can always change one's attitude, and thus effectively and constructively embrace any and all circumstances.

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

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

Sociality

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

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

The danger of socialization, for the spiritual student, is the tendency of the (generic) human being to make socialization an end in itself, i.e., to "enjoy" social contact without it being part of some greater and more noble endeavor. In other words, if the student socializes as an end in itself, he or she is invariably "lost" or absorbed in the process (experience) and loses awareness by virtue of the personality-centeredness of normal social contact. For this reason alone, spiritual students tend to socialize primarily in the context of spiritual work, and do not generally respond to the cultural demands of (self-centered, even sincere and self-centered) people for social contact. For the serious student, socialization is incidental, neither promoted nor avoided. The serious student is simply not interested in superficial socialization, or in experience that is merely

pleasurable for the personality. In fact, the serious student is generally indifferent to things that are pleasurable to the personality, since the serious student realizes how easily distracted (absorbed in mundane, personal, social matters) the personality tends to be. Socialization, then, is generally a matter of petty (personality) interest, and not a matter of genuine experience.

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

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

† Commentary No. 1056

Zeitgeist

Zeitgeist is defined as “the general intellectual, moral, and cultural state of an era” and means, literally, the spirit (geist) of the time (zeit). In this sense it is the cultural aura in which most people live and work (and think and feel), the medium through which people are conditioned as a race or culture, as changes occur and as life unfolds.

This spirit of the times allows progress to be achieved as ideas and encouragements are introduced (by those who are consciously or unconsciously able to tap into the archetype for humanity (race) (culture)) and become pervasive, and these are generally constructive unless carried through to some extreme. There is generally a pattern or oscillation of trends from one modest extent to another (i.e., in the fashion of a pendulum, to enable changes to be introduced and to prevent or at least to discourage extremes). As the race

(culture) progresses, there is a spiral effect (as the pendulum swings back and forth at the same time as it moves in some central (evolutionary) direction). But sometimes the race (culture) takes some encouragement too far, to some extreme, and the spirit of the times gets carried away in the lower expression (which then evokes more severe compensatory energies (e.g., crisis)). And sometimes, similarly, sincerely-minded individuals (and special-interest groups) are able to introduce ideas of their own which are counter to the evolutionary flow, but through this conditioning process (and free will (karma)) are allowed to be broadly conveyed and manifested.

Thus the spirit of the times as a medium has both a constructive side, affording progress in evolutionary terms, and a negative side in the sense that the medium can be abused and, since most people are relatively passive with regard to subtle influences, evoke reactionary or counter-evolutionary flow. Eventually, however, humanity (race) (culture) evolves to the point where the passivity is replaced with almost-conscious cooperation, and ultimately there is fully-conscious collaboration with evolutionary forces on a rather broad scale. But the overall nature and qualification of the times is nonetheless represented by and through this spirit (aura).

The spirit of the times is related to consensus reality and is therefore definitely not entirely a matter of conveyance of higher energy (encouragement) to humanity, but an interactive process in which humanity (race) (culture) contributes to the progress by modifying the sense of the times along the way. Thus in the final analysis, zeitgeist is a rather dynamic medium for conveyance or expression of external (internal) forces (conditioning) and the contribution of the affected people as a whole in moderating the process through the extent and nature of their relative responsiveness.

But there is another meaning of zeitgeist, and that is the sense of momentary realization of something, when some recognition comes to the conscious mind and a (modest) leap forward in understanding is achieved. This modest realization generally occurs as the mind is unblocked, at least momentarily, from whatever conditioning generally prevails. One may be seeking a solution to a problem, or be perplexed by non-understanding, and suddenly realize the answer, or understanding comes, non-intuitively (intuition is more subtle). This realization generally emerges as a consequence of unconscious activity, as the

mind subconsciously comes to resolution and then awaits the moment at which the conscious (superficial) mind is not absorbed or distracted in its normal patterns of thinking and awareness. In this sense, zeitgeist occurs as grace, of indeliberate and therefore graceful realization of truth in some sense.

† Commentary No. 1229

Acting

Acting is the art or practice of representing a character in some performance either for purposes of education or entertainment and/or through subterfuge. Acting or playing a role is in some ways honest and in some ways dishonest.

Acting is honest in the sense and to the extent that the actor actually evokes the character from within his or her own experience (ability) (consciousness). Really good (effective) actors draw upon their own nature, consciously or otherwise, including that which has been experienced in previous lives. A person who “plays” an evil character effectively is one who can evoke the evil from within his or her own nature. A person who “plays” a noble character effectively is one who can evoke that nobility from within. A bad actor, one who is not convincing or effective in a role, is one who simply does not have or cannot evoke the needed character from within. In this sense, the actor is the character portrayed, to the extent evoked, but the actor is not merely the character portrayed, for there are many lives and many personalities in each person’s past.

Who (what) a person is now is generally cumulative in the sense of incorporating the good (learned) from earlier experience. Most people are therefore merely evoking who (what) they are now. But (good) actors tend to go back in time, albeit unconsciously, and evoke much of what they have been before, bringing it to the surface, for a while, and strengthening whatever that character (characterization) may be. Thus, playing an “evil” person is inherently counter-evolutionary in the sense that that aspect is strengthened (although it may be evolutionary in the sense of finally dealing with it). But in any event, acting is potentially dangerous (counter-evolutionary) and often substantially complicates the (current) personality nature, breeding or

encouraging instability and incoherence (inconsistency) at the personality level and effectively preventing integration. There is also a matter of egoism, but that is not exclusive to acting.

Acting is also inherently dishonest and deceiving. While a person (actor) is in some sense the character portrayed, the actor is not generally really that character, and so the process (acting) is inherently dishonest in this sense. It is compounded by the audience (witnesses) (participants) unconsciously accepting the delusion, even for entertainment purposes. It is still deception and merely fosters the various delusions of the mundane world and encourages further dishonesty. This is not to say there is anything “wrong” with actors or acting, but it is to say that there are aspects of acting that are counter-evolutionary (as there are aspects of much of everything else that transpires in the mundane world).

Acting is not exclusively a matter of professional endeavor, as many people play roles, continually or intermittently, consciously and deliberately for some intended purpose, or unconsciously and incidentally due to conditioning or passivity (meeting others expectations). Some people resort to subterfuge (which is necessarily substantially dishonest). Some people are consciously deceptive, (falsely) believing that the end justifies the means. But anything, any behavior, that encourages delusion or evokes deception, is counter-evolutionary (fostering absorption in the mundane world). The spiritual student is encouraged to be honest in all regards, to avoid playing roles (which are necessarily both deceptive and self-deceptive), to avoid identification with roles or worldly factors.

Diversity and Human Value

The human race has very considerable diversity (dynamic range). There is a tremendous range and diversity in consciousness, experience, opportunities, etc. Some (relatively few) people are physically-polarized, some (most) are emotionally-polarized, some (few) are mentally-polarized, and some (very few) are intuitively-polarized. People tend to evolve at different rates and in different ways, so people are experienced and able to express themselves in different measures and in very different ways. And there is a tremendous range in cultural, individual, national, racial, and religious depth (character) and diversity as well. Although all is determined by (individual and collective) karma, that karmic embrace also has considerable dynamic range. The karmic field is relatively complex.

Thus there are many dimensions to this diversity. And yet, fundamentally, each human being has the same value. Each person is an individual within a group (collective) context and each contributes according to his or her (relative illusion of) individualness (individuality). Each human being contributes to the whole. The problem is that people contribute in different ways according to their consciousness, experience, opportunities, etc., and much of that contribution is more subjective (less apparent to the worldly senses) than objectively realized and appreciated. If one looks at this superficially then there are many inequities and some people (seem to) contribute in (perceived to be) relatively more important ways than others. But if one looks at this in the deeper sense, then the subjective and less obvious contributions are no less important, no less significant (and the whole effort of valuation is transcended in realization of collectiveness).

The problem is that people perceive things and value things according to their own consciousness (without generally realizing that they are doing so (and therefore without realizing that they are biasing their perception)). And the prevailing consciousness is predominantly based on material, sensational, and ego (superficial) values. Money (wealth) (power) (fame and fortune) is (are) inherently artificial as indicative of value (accomplishment). These are artificial measures but very much part of the (conventional) worldly system. But as

consciousness grows and matures, so do the values through which people perceive themselves and their surroundings (societal context). And the various financial (and other) inequities are recognized as artificial (artifacts of materialism and egoism).

Eventually these barriers are gradually removed and the “system” of incentives (based on material and ego values) is replaced by one of more collective value, of people more consciously contributing to society (culture) (human welfare), without regard for measuring that contribution in material or ego terms. If the artificial barriers are removed, if the sense of value is broadened and deepened to embrace the more subjective factors (metaphysical import), then the resulting “system” is necessarily more equitable.

This is not to say that the current system is without value, just that it corresponds to a “phase” of evolutionary experience and expression that must eventually be transcended and replaced with something more conducive to the consciousness (and values) of the next (less materialistic, less egoistic, more spiritual) phase. The current emerging awareness of the value of diversity, provided that individuality is not seen as an end in itself, and provided that diversity is not seen as an end in itself, is really quite constructive (evolutionary).



