



The Upper Triad Material

Topical Issue 6.5

Qualifications

The Practical Means for Growth in Consciousness



The Upper Triad Material

Topical Issue 6.5

Qualifications

Fourth Edition, October 2006

Published by

The Upper Triad Association

P.O. Box 1306

Victoria, Virginia 23974 (USA)

The Upper Triad Association is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit educational organization established in 1974 and devoted to the study and practice of various principles leading to personal and spiritual growth.

www.uppertriad.org

Contents

		Page
Chapter 6.5	<u>Qualifications</u>	1
Qualifications 1	C 419	2
Qualifications 2	C 420	3
Section 6.51	<u>Virtue</u>	6
Virtue	C 31	7
Rightness	C 211	8
Seven Supreme Virtues	C 225	10
Section 6.511	<u>Virtues 1</u>	12
Stability	C 4	13
Cheerfulness	C 25	14
Inclusiveness	C 62	16
Confidence	C 75	18
Spiritual Poise	C 91	19
Charity	C 100	21
Gentleness	C 121	23
Compassion	C 137	24

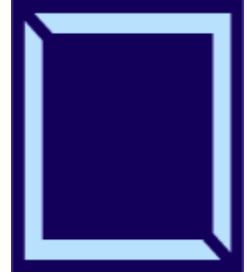
		Page
Section 6.512	<u>Virtues 2</u>	27
Composure	C 181	28
Moderation	C 188	29
Prudence	C 193	31
Courage	C 206	33
Accuracy	C 216	34
Respect 1	C 231	36
Peacefulness	C 245	38
Simplicity	C 313	39
Section 6.513	<u>Virtues 3</u>	42
Goodwill	C 356	43
Consistency	C 393	44
Responsiveness	C 444	46
Sacrifice	C 445	48
Altruism	C 717	49
Respect 2	C 1110	51
Modesty	C 1150	53

		Page
Section 6.52	<u>Special Virtues</u>	55
Three Gates	C 1293	56
Section 6.521	<u>Humility</u>	58
Humility	C 106	59
Humility and the Soul	C 637	60
Active Humility	C 638	62
Humility and Graciousness	C 1453	64
Section 6.522	<u>Honesty</u>	66
Honesty	C 156	67
Intellectual Honesty	C 914	68
Section 6.523	<u>Harmlessness</u>	71
Harmlessness	A 1	72
Harmlessness	C 19	73
Harmlessness and Truth 1	C 561	74
Harmlessness and Truth 2	C 687	76
Ahimsa	C 1324	78



Chapter 6.5

Qualifications



The Practical Means for Growth in Consciousness

There are many qualifications for advancement, including altruism, charity, cheerfulness, compassion, composure, confidence, considerateness, consistency, courage, discretion, gentleness, goodwill, harmlessness, honesty, humility, inclusiveness, moderation, peacefulness, poise, prudence, respectfulness, responsiveness, reverence, sacrifice, simplicity, and stability.

Through the course of developing or unfolding various qualities and qualifications the student naturally tempers the lower nature, becoming more and more refined in consciousness, ultimately transcending all sense of ego, intellect, separateness, etc.

Qualifications 1

Of the entire human being, it is the soul that (eventually) makes the commitment to the spiritual path. The personality follows by making a corresponding commitment, which is, in effect, a conscious acknowledgement of the soul's commitment. But the personality can effect such a commitment to the path only where the soul has realized a certain degree of development (quality and level of consciousness) (and has therefore made its commitment and has begun to qualify the personality), and where the individual (personality) consciousness has risen sufficiently above (beyond) the mass (average) human consciousness. Initially, the personality may be resistant (reluctant) (hesitant), but the soul eventually prevails.

In essence, the personality cannot make a commitment to the path until it is sufficiently developed and qualified. In the same sense, a person cannot receive any (proper) occult training, at any particular level, until that person has sufficient preparatory experience and has met the qualifications for training at that particular level. Due to the dynamic (progressive) nature of the path (evolution), the basic qualifications at any particular level (and on any particular path) are generally increasing, as humanity as a whole progresses.

For the preliminary training, however, there are essentially no qualifications, as any who are interested can generally find a source of basic teachings. In fact, at times, the basic (metaphysical) teachings are widely available. But at some point, interest (curiosity) (glamour) is not sufficient to merit further training. For a commitment (on some level) must be made and consequently some responsibility embraced for further training to be meaningful (the preliminary training is a simple matter of exposure to principles (concepts) (ideas) and a natural selection process based on responsiveness and ability). For advanced training (at various levels), the abilities and qualifications of the student are continually tested (stressed), while for preliminary training there are no (substantive) obligations.

Besides the obvious need for responsiveness to training, a spiritual student (candidate for occult training) must be deserving (must not have any preclusive

karma), must have an obvious potential to contribute to the path (or to some particular aspect or need), and must be capable of functioning occultly (must not be absorbed in any mundane or personal sense) (must be free from personal distraction and free from any substantive inertia). Of particular concern (from an occult or esoteric point of view) are polarization of consciousness, the degree of integration (of the personality), and the degree of alignment (of the personality with the soul).

No occult (spiritual) (esoteric) (metaphysical) training is ever (properly) imparted for its own sake. It is necessarily predicated on the needs of the path, the needs of the group within the context of the path (and the needs of humanity in the context of the evolutionary scheme), and the qualifications of the student, not upon the apparent needs or interests of the student. Qualifications are necessary for a number of reasons. If a person is not properly prepared (qualified), the (occult) training will be ineffective or counterproductive. The advanced training often requires adjustments in the student's aura (adjustments in the various energy centers), which require a considerable quality (purity) and stability in order to be effective. Thus, a student's progress in character, quality, and temperament are necessary prerequisites for each succeeding stage of training and expression (service).

« Commentary No. 420

Qualifications 2

The essential qualifications for admittance to a proper esoteric group (metaphysical (occult) (esoteric) training beyond the preliminaries) are an earnest commitment to the spiritual path (to the soul) and an appropriate quality of consciousness. A wide range of experience, developed abilities, and specific qualifications contribute to that appropriate quality of consciousness. All of humanity are potentially qualified, but few have sufficiently developed that potential. The weight (relative importance) of specific qualifications varies somewhat depending on the particular group and circumstances, but a number of factors are generally necessary prerequisites.

These include being reasonably well-educated (not necessarily formally so), being reasonably intelligent, having a polarization of consciousness above the

physical and emotional levels (a physically or emotionally polarized individual simply cannot effectively integrate the personality or achieve alignment (of personality and the soul)), having a reasonably pure (refined) (qualified) and stable (coherent) aura (and consciousness), and being reasonably strong (in the mental and spiritual sense) (in order to weather the many trials and adjustments implied (evoked) in (by) the path).

Though many specific qualifications are essential to some extent (development) or another, the list of qualifications to be fulfilled in relation to the path is virtually endless, as the specific qualifications are in effect both characteristics to achieve or abilities (capabilities) to develop, and the results of quality in consciousness. In essence, it is the quality of consciousness that matters, yet that (appropriate) quality of consciousness (and associated abilities) is virtually inseparable from the many attributes (abilities) and the potential of the student. Principal considerations include mental ability (the ability to focus the mind coherently and the ability to consciously program (qualify) the personality), mental discipline, objectivity, telepathic ability (potential), meditation ability, meditation discipline, meditation quality, a lack of personality-centeredness (self-centeredness) (ego), freedom from absorption (glamour) (illusion) (self-deception), objective awareness, subjective awareness, rapport (potential), etc.

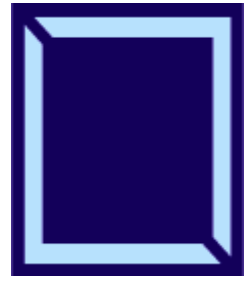
Specific qualifications (for consideration) include the ability to communicate effectively, acceptance of responsibility, administrative ability, freedom from attachments, balance (moderation), charity (compassion) (kindness), commitment (to the group (the path) (humanity) (life)), conscientiousness (dependability), considerateness, detachment, devotion to duty, an appropriate diet, discretion (common sense) (carefulness), flexibility (adaptability) (reasonableness), gentleness (harmony), honesty (accuracy), respect for (right) human relations, humility, impersonality (in the spiritual sense), freedom from independence (an independent attitude is separative and counterproductive), neatness (cleanliness), and freedom from mundane and personal absorption.

Specific qualifications also include a healthy body (emotions) (mind), openmindedness, personal discipline, personal ethics, practical ability, problem-solving ability, freedom from professional absorption, professional ethics, freedom from reactivity, responsiveness, scholarship and attention to detail, a sincere service motive, spiritual character and strength, spiritual poise, stability

(consistency) (coherence), freedom from glamour (illusion) (self-deception), a positive temperament, capacity for understanding (discernment), and respect for the natural order (all of life and the place of lives within the scheme of evolution) (reverence).



Section 6.51



Virtue

Many and varied are the intended attributes and virtues of the spiritual student. Each contributes to and is an indication of progress in evolution in consciousness, which reflects into character, temperament, and values.

Virtue

In every sphere of evolutionary development there are three distinct stages. The first stage is life, the quality of beingness. The second stage is intelligence, a quality built upon the foundation of life, a quality that is the result of experience. The third stage is virtue, a quality that is built upon the prerequisites of life and intelligence. Virtue is a quality that is the result of consciousness. Virtue is a principle of right relationships.

Since the soul is the consciousness aspect of the human life, it is the soul that is the center of virtue. It is through the soul that the human mind becomes aware of the needed qualities for continued progress along the path of enlightenment. It is through soul contact that the spiritual student begins to demonstrate or express virtue in the daily life. It is through experience and soul contact that the student's values are changed and improved.

Virtue is rightness (appropriateness) in action, feeling, and thought. Virtue is a spiritual strength that demonstrates as moral and ethical excellence. To the student of theology, virtue is living according to the laws and doctrines of his religion. To the rationalist, virtue is reason. To the hedonist, virtue is pleasure. To the scientist, virtue is living in harmony with natural law (nature). To the spiritual student, virtue is wisdom in relationships. Virtue is morality, character, and goodness in wise expression; but true virtue is also a natural unconscious disposition that is the result of developed consciousness. Virtue is the living of the life of wisdom, the practice of truth. Virtue may be manifested through various qualities and actions, depending on the appropriateness (merit) of the situation.

The qualities to be considered by the spiritual student are many and varied. According to the environment and purpose of the student, some qualities may find a greater appropriateness, emphasis, and application than others. Some of the more obvious qualities are love, truthfulness, cheerfulness, ease, happiness, timeliness, honesty, compassion, awareness, selflessness, stability, serenity, strength, moderation, goodwill, reasonableness, practicality, common sense, consistency, adaptability, perception, harmony, aspiration, devotion, reliability,

accuracy, availability, understanding, confidence, self-reliance, freedom, appreciation, intuition, conscience, humanitarianism, kindness, silence, cooperation, unity, humility (magnanimity), unimportance, illumination, wisdom, dharma, responsibility, thoughtfulness, progress, harmlessness, friendliness, impersonality, detachment, balance, self-realization, purity, self-discipline, determination, endurance, sacrifice, helpfulness, usefulness, interdependence (realization of oneness), cleanliness, calmness, clarity, courage, brotherhood, inclusiveness, and carefulness. Many are the meaningful qualities and conditions to be pondered upon and clarified.

As a student and his values grow, the living of the life of rightness is more and more guided by the inner self. Lower values, realizations, and truths are replaced by or transformed into higher values, realizations, and truths. Limitations and weaknesses are transmuted into freedoms and strengths, adding to and enhancing the capacities and qualities, and leading to the expression of virtue. Through ever increasing and expanding consciousness, virtue becomes an active part of the individuality that is the soul expressing itself through objective manifestation. Life is the energy of the soul; intelligence is the organization of the soul; and virtue is the cooperative existence of the soul. As man the microcosm becomes man the macrocosm, the cycle of life, intelligence, and virtue is repeated on a new and greater (higher) level.

« Commentary No. 211

Rightness

Rightness is defined as the state or degree of being right, in accordance with what is just, good, or proper. Rightness is concerned with correctness, suitability, appropriateness, truth, and wisdom (discretion).

As a servant of truth and evolutionary purpose (love), the spiritual student should be consciously concerned with rightness in regard to each aspect of waking activity; but the student should not be attached to any sense of rightness, nor should he be concerned with the rightness of others' behavior or motives in the three worlds (of physical, emotional, and mental experience).

One of the eternal problems of rightness is its inherent relativity. It would be easy to classify all moral, ethical, and behavioral activity (and all decisions and conclusions) into one or the other of two extremes (right or wrong). If truth were absolute, then rightness would be a simple matter of logical and analytical reasoning. But truth is relative, dealing more with universals than absolutes, and treating rightness in absolute terms is a considerable limitation. Some well-defined standards may be established and adhered to, but with openmindedness and respect for the relative nature of truth. But the concrete mind (and human nature) prefers certainties and the exclusiveness (separateness) of clearly defined dualities. And human nature (with its vanity) tends to polarize forces and considerations so that the spectrum of consciousness is difficult to realize. But nonetheless, the student should moderate his relative understanding of experience and activity, so that the stumbling blocks of polarized or extreme conclusions are overcome.

The principles of rightness are the same for behavior (activity) as well as belief (truth). Rather than trying to discern the extremes of what is right or wrong, the spiritual student should discern what is relatively right. Of all the known alternatives, the student should endeavor to recognize the one that is (or seems) best, keeping in mind the relativity of his life and decisions in the three worlds. The spiritual student is simply urged to do what seems best (after due consideration or intuition), knowing full well the futility of absolutes and the fallibility of human consciousness. It is rarely a matter of right or wrong; it is more often a matter of right and more right. The student should not be afraid to make his decisions and proceed, for in action and experience come greater understanding. As long as the student is sincere and true to his beliefs and understanding, he should not be ashamed of failure, for all is relative, and the lessons of apparent errors are still fruits of meaningful experience. And the student should also respect the perspective and consciousness of others, for what is (relatively) right for one may not be so for another; such is the greatness of truth and consciousness.

Another problem of rightness is its relationship to levels of personality-centeredness. The student is urged to experience and express himself in the highest possible way, according to his consciousness. The lower form of rightness is righteousness manifested externally (so that it provokes personality effects and reactions from others). Such righteousness (self-righteousness) is

usually a greater hindrance to progress and right human relations than not. The spiritual student may well be concerned with justice in the outer worlds, but he should ever respect with faith and confidence (and humility) the law of karma and the rights and freedom of others. The rightness (righteousness) of the student should be of the higher form, an individual matter of quiet, introspective, and humble righteousness. Such righteousness that is internalized (as a factor in consciousness) is far more meaningful.

« Commentary No. 225

Seven Supreme Virtues

One significant aspect of the seven rays is their contribution to human development through the cultivation and refinement of the human personality. In this human sense, each ray provides a particular domain for human experience. Each ray is a field of energy qualified with a certain (particular) character. Each ray can be described in terms of qualities (virtues) and weaknesses; each ray brings with it certain tendencies and opportunities for evolution. As the various weaknesses of a ray are overcome and transformed into the qualities of the particular ray (which provides its potency), the resultant overall character can be described in terms of a supreme (representative) virtue. Each supreme virtue represents the entire contribution of the ray to human development, and implies the achievement of the entire character and maturity of the ray.

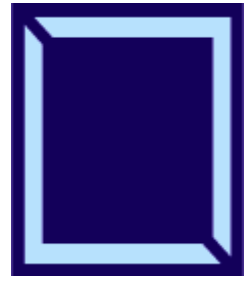
The supreme virtue associated with the first ray is humility. The ray itself leads the spiritual student toward strength and self-reliance, but this tends to inflate the ego and its natural self-centeredness. But through this weakness (and paradox) comes finally the supreme contribution of the first ray to human development: a spiritual humility born of strength and a deep respect for others. Similarly, the supreme virtue associated with the second ray is compassion. The second ray leads the student from the personal to the impersonal, from indifference to others to a compassion born of spiritual maturity, showing the way toward union with the greater life.

The supreme virtue associated with the third ray is goodwill. The third ray develops the intelligence and brings understanding, but with understanding comes a necessary and useful discrimination. That discrimination can lead to separateness. Goodwill is the synthetic quality that overcomes separateness and allows the active energies of the third ray to flow properly and purposefully. The problem of the fourth ray is that of extravagance, glamour (deception), and instability. As this fourth ray works upon human temperament, it offers the ultimate quality (supreme virtue) of moderation, leading to synthesis. In harmony and spiritual poise comes the moderation needed to free the student from the attachments and distractions of the lower life.

The supreme virtue associated with the fifth ray is honesty, leading to truth. Along fifth ray lines is found the pursuit of knowledge, but it tends to be narrow-minded and without realization of higher (broader) purpose. The critical fifth ray nature is ultimately transformed as higher truths are recognized and as self-honesty prevails. And honesty in this higher sense is necessary to the realization of truth. So too, is impersonality necessary to the highest contribution of the sixth ray. The sixth ray teaches aspiration, devotion, reverence, and idealism; but with these qualities comes the tendency toward personality-centeredness (glamour) and decision-making based on appeal rather than merit. But the secret (supreme virtue) of the sixth ray (impersonality) lifts these qualities to more meaningful levels; glamour is overcome, and blind devotion to personalities is replaced by higher realization.

The seventh ray experience leads to organization and effective structure (law and order), yet through that experience it is easy to lose sight of the underlying purpose. The student tends to be absorbed by the means as an end in itself. So the highest (human) contribution of the seventh ray is its supreme virtue: a sense of purpose, which brings understanding to the laws and order of manifestation, leading to unity. Likewise, the seven representative virtues lead to ultimate human synthesis: relative perfection, as the student completes his mastery of all seven streams of qualified energy. May each be fulfilled.

Section 6.511



Virtues 1

Virtues include relative stability, cheerfulness, a strong sense of inclusiveness, confidence with ego, spiritual poise, sensible charity, gentleness, and compassion.

Stability

The aspirant and the disciple are often tested through challenging circumstances and situations that (if the events are handled wisely) will result in greater stability, serenity, strength, and the capacity for effective service. The disciple can hardly afford to be disturbed in the emotional or mental bodies, for there is a great deal of work to be done that requires stability (clarity) of mind and emotion. The spiritual student should recognize the need for stability, that it might be properly incorporated into the daily life. The disciple must remain calm in the face of the most difficult circumstances, maintaining strength and spiritual purpose, not allowing any impairment of usefulness and effectiveness by being out-of-touch with the higher self. The disciple is then one who is dependable in the service of the hierarchy and of humanity.

Crises and points of tension are often the stepping-stones to greater spiritual strength and usefulness, for many weaknesses come to the surface that might otherwise remain unrecognized. And in the points of tension (in the spiritual sense) are to be found the spiritual energies with which the student can overcome and uplift those weaknesses or limitations. The crises that are faced by individuals and by groups are mostly tests and opportunities for spiritual growth through change. The value of each trial depends a great deal upon the frame of mind and the way in which the events of the life are approached.

The stability of the disciple implies the state of being firmly established upon the spiritual path and in rapport with the soul. The serious aspirant cannot afford to have a wildly fluctuating emotional (astral) body; such a state must be properly dealt with (brought under control) if the student is to attain discipleship. Instability feeds glamour and illusion, both potent enemies of the student upon the path. There are also psychic instabilities that are often the result of premature psychic development; that is, the development of certain faculties without requisite spiritual maturity. This often leads to serious instabilities, vulnerabilities, a lack of control, and a lack of understanding of the resulting phenomena. The serious spiritual student does not tamper, nor is he concerned with phenomena; he cultivates stability, serenity, strength, and the capacity to serve effectively.

Stability is also a valuable keyword in the life of humanity, for mankind also faces crises that must be dealt with wisely in order for the race to evolve in accordance with the divine plan. Humanity lives in an age of changes, changes that should bring freedom from the crystallizing forms and glammers that are limitations. But in changes there are also dangers, for man has a tendency to over-react, and there can be no real virtue in any extreme. Stability goes hand in hand with moderation. The aspirants and disciples of the world are expected to continue to play a significant and moderating role in the days to come. In spiritual strength and stability will the light of encouragement shine for those who become emotionally or intellectually unsettled by events, for those who are not yet secure in the sanctity of the higher self.

Man is today creating the crises of tomorrow, both in the individual sense, and in the life of humanity. So it is important for all to behave, feel, and think positively and constructively, for in action today is generated the vast sea of karmic energies that will subsequently visit humanity. May deeds and thoughts of love encourage this day (age) of changes to manifest constructively, that all may be free to grow together, as one humanity.

« Commentary No. 25

Cheerfulness

One of the simplest of virtues, cheerfulness is a quality that significantly enhances the development and the effectiveness of the spiritual student. The attitude of cheerfulness results in a greater flow of spiritual energy from the inner self (and therefore from higher sources) to the outer self and the external objective world. The spiritual student who has properly cultivated a quiet but cheerful disposition interacts much more positively and creatively (constructively) with his environment.

This stream of energy (the precursor of cheerfulness) first irradiates the individual within himself. The inner irradiation encourages spiritual growth, self-healing, understanding, stability, serenity, strength, and the alignment of the personality and soul. Cheerfulness therefore enhances the channel through

which the soul begins to dominate the personality, allowing the birth of the Christ within. Cheerfulness raises the vibration of the personality, brings it closer to the inner self, and protects the outer self from the damaging or discouraging external vibrations that might otherwise impair the inner harmony. It also strengthens the process of purification.

Having achieved the inner radiation, the stream of energy from within then seeks to radiate outwardly into the immediate environment and the external world. It is in this process that the work of discipleship is fulfilled. The student who radiates this energy from within will consciously and/or unconsciously send forth healing energies and the energies of love and light, almost continuously. Cheerfulness tends to remove the resistance of the critical and separative mind, both in the individual himself and in those whom he meets. The energy of goodwill goes a long way toward improving right human relations and restoring (and maintaining) harmony in the daily life. This energy (cheerfulness and its companion, goodwill) is a great energy of encouragement for all concerned.

There are however, several stumbling blocks in the cultivation of the healthy, positive cheerfulness that is a virtue. Two of the stumbling blocks are the extremes of excitement and seriousness. Excitement (extreme enthusiasm) is not a virtue because it leads to a loss of self-control; seriousness (in the extreme) is not a virtue either, because it inhibits the inner irradiation and definitely impairs the outward flow of energy. The spiritual student can take life seriously, provided he has a healthy, complementary attitude of goodwill and cheerfulness. He must not take life (or himself) too seriously, if he is to be useful and effective in the spiritual work. The spiritual student can be somewhat enthusiastic in his work, provided he can overcome (or eliminate) disappointment and maintain the inner and outer harmony.

The key to cheerfulness is simply allowing the energies from the spiritual self to make their presence felt by removing the resistance of the personality toward the soul. When one is irradiated from within, the energy must be allowed to flow into the outer world. No good can result if these energies are imprisoned or hindered. A smile, a warm greeting, cheerful words and attitudes are all examples of the simple demonstration of love that mark the life of the well-rounded spiritual student. The slightest and most trivial of deeds may often have the most potent and far-reaching effects. Cheerfulness is a sharing of the

happiness that should exist in the hearts of all who have found their source, the God within the form. With the resulting self-confidence there comes a peaceful happiness and quiet joy to be shared. May the God within each human form shine with cheerfulness and goodwill.

« Commentary No. 62

Inclusiveness

Much has been said and written concerning the essential unity of all life and all things, and the overshadowing oneness of God. Knowing or believing in such unity may be sufficient for the aspirant, but the disciple is expected to embody that unity and to apply it constructively in his thinking and feeling. The disciple is even expected to project himself in an inclusive manner, in all situations and circumstances that may be found. The unity of all life within one God is very real and quite obvious to anyone who is functioning on the higher levels of human consciousness. On the lower levels, the underlying unity is not so apparent. It is easy for the human mind (complicated and distracted by existence in a physical-emotional body) to perceive separateness from God and separateness from other humans. It is the lower (concrete) mind that is the seat of human personality and exclusiveness. The higher mind is linked to the real individuality (the soul) which recognizes its own self as an extension of the one life (inclusively), and it is the higher mind that realizes the inherent illusion of separated existence.

It is the separateness that is the great sin and heresy of human experience, not individuality. Most human beings in incarnation unconsciously demonstrate their separation from others due to their attachment to physical (material) and emotional (phenomenal) things. Even the aspirant generally separates himself from the masses. The sin (glamour) of exclusiveness can even be found well along the spiritual path; but ultimately, as the aspirant nears discipleship, the superficial (exclusive) love of humanity is transmuted into the greater (inclusive) love of humanity and of all life.

Though the disciple must live within the masses, he should not (must not) become attached or vulnerable to the glammers and illusions of the masses. Remaining detached, and projecting himself as one with God and humanity, the

disciple should feel and think inclusively, yet function simultaneously and constructively as an individual within the sea of humanity. The leaders and spiritual pioneers of the human lifewave are ever en rapport with the masses, identifying themselves with the one life that pervades all. The classification or separation of humanity into distinct individuals and groups of individuals may be a useful instrument of learning and clarification, as long as it remains academic. In the practical (operational) sense, however, such a separation is usually a serious limitation.

The greater consciousness is increasingly more inclusive than the lesser human consciousness. A difficulty of the aspirant with respect to higher consciousness is for the aspirant to think and feel the inclusiveness of the soul within the greater soul which is the human evolutionary lifewave. The critical mind (often as much a hindrance as a helpful instrument) must be purged of its separative tendencies and disciplined to constantly consider the continuity of life throughout the human kingdom and the evolutionary spiral.

Overshadowing subjective similarities must displace the superficial objective differences that are so often the rule of thinking and unconscious awareness. That which appears different, foreign, or alien must be recognized in a more inclusive (greater) light. Bias and prejudice are only extreme forms of exclusiveness and separateness. To think and feel inclusively toward all people and lifeforms is to embody the universal harmony and continuity (oneness) of life. The disciple who projects himself inclusively is the disciple who has the greater impact upon the evolving humanity. A life of example is then enhanced through the power of inclusiveness.

Confidence

Just as confidence is a necessary ingredient in the completion of any project in the mundane world, so it is that confidence is a required component for both the individual and humanity in relationship to the spiritual path of conscious (projected) evolution. For a sentient being to so act (with confidence) invokes or appropriates (not necessarily consciously) the same fundamental aspect of first causes inherent in the first ray of will or power. It is the same invoked energy (confidence along first ray lines) that a solar logos posits in the creation and maintenance of a solar system. On a lesser scale the word of power (of the soul) employed by the disciple on the mental plane rests upon the same relationship (of thought to the thinker). Thus confidence is an associated keyword for almost any first ray activity.

The aspirant is called upon to reorient the basis of his confidence to successively more abstract and idealistic frames of reference. Gradually the energy of the concrete mental plane (spirit-thought) is utilized rather than the lesser forms of astral energy or the etheric energy (matter-form) of the physical plane. As this occurs, the artificial confidence and independence of the lower self is replaced by a more secure confidence that is a manifestation of the higher self (linked to the first cause of being).

Confidence on any level is an integral part of the successful progression along the path. The aspirant must remain steady in those crises of which the path is composed. It may appear that the indicated adjustments in lifestyle exact an unreasonable price, yet the intensity of the struggle is largely determined by the individual in the speed with which the technique of adjustment is learned (and as confidence is achieved). The endless problems which the bodies of emotion and concrete mind present must eventually be reconciled and left behind. This is related (in time and space) to personal initiative (not ambition) and progress in group work.

The source of strength and confidence in responding to the plan is the soul, for the (one) soul is the plan. Once alignment is attained through meditation and service, the superficial displays of the personality are dampened and eliminated

by the emerging spiritual poise (confidence). Such a place of mind is characterized by an imperturbable but flexible quality of being which is concerned only with the framework of an incarnation, not that which is framed. It is this master-within which supports the spiritual warrior during the age-long contest and emerges the victor. But before the aspirant can respond to or manifest the confidence of the higher self, he must first believe in himself (the soul) and in the greater purpose of which the soul is a part. The confident and flexible aspirant can then begin to draw on the strength-aspect of his being. This will occur as other tests are fulfilled, for the spiritual student must also have proven his trustworthiness and ability to function properly under pressure. Power (strength) is easily misused, so even confidence must be a qualified virtue.

A lack of self-confidence is a weakness which, if allowed to persist, may undermine progress made in other areas. With proper motive and proper purpose, the confident student can achieve progress where others would fail. The confidence of greater lives in the lesser is the real reason why the lesser lives (humanity) will succeed and fulfill the purpose of this stage in evolution. That greater confidence tends to encourage and guide the minds of men on earth toward coherent group progress. And as each individual aligns himself with his soul, that greater confidence is further manifested through spiritual progress.

« Commentary No. 91

Spiritual Poise

Spiritual poise is a synthetic (composite) quality that eventually comes to the spiritual student as a consequence of character and consciousness. Spiritual poise is an indication of the uncompromised manifestation of the soul through its lower self. The implacable (inner) self (soul) brings upon the personality the quality and disposition of spiritual poise, provided that the proper foundation of character and consciousness has been accomplished.

As a synthetic quality, spiritual poise cannot be cultivated directly, as it is a consequence of being more so than of becoming. There are many essential ingredients that must be attained before the synthesis of composure and

spiritual disposition of the higher self can be evident. Much of the lower life must first be tamed, else the necessary ingredients (virtues) (qualities) shall remain elusive. Where the lower self remains undisciplined, the higher life cannot be achieved. So with some progress in the self-control of the senses and with the impression of higher purpose upon the lower self, the spiritual student can begin to cultivate the character and consciousness required.

The ingredients are interdependent, as each quality has its prerequisites as well as a bearing upon other characteristics. Three essential ingredients are stability, serenity, and strength. Without stability there is distraction; and where there is distraction there can be no dependability or responsibility, and no consistency in the spiritual life. Without serenity there can be no selfless love, no peacefulness in humility, no clear vision of the needs of humanity and the work to be done. And without the unselfish love can there be true serenity? Without stability or serenity can there be spiritual strength? Without spiritual strength can the stoic ethic (insensitivity to pain or pleasure, and the quality of detachment) be maintained? Since the pertinent virtues and ingredients are so interdependent, it is the overall quality of the spiritual life (as it overshadows the objective existence) that is so much more relevant. To seek spiritual poise directly serves only to undermine (through desire) the spiritual effort. To work quietly to improve the quality and consistency of the spiritual life, serves indirectly to bring about the soul-infusion implied in spiritual poise, by creating the foundation (fertile ground) for such manifestation. The motive is ever significant, since it is only with right (unselfish) motives that the work can be properly performed.

The confident and tranquil repose of mind, bearing, and appearance, even in the most trying of circumstances, implies an acceptance of the consequence of action and being, and the reliance upon the inner self for assurance. The balance and equilibrium of the poised (comfortable yet flexible) spiritual student rest upon the alignment of soul and personality, for the personality (mind) cannot be permitted to reason independently of the higher self, nor can the desire-nature (emotions) be permitted excitement or distraction, if the true self is to properly guide the lesser life.

Spiritual poise is a quality of balance between the head and the heart, between the soul and its reflection, between the inner life and the outer. Without such

balance the esoteric path cannot be realized. The path ultimately requires the continual attention of the waking-consciousness. The part-time aspirant is not the esoteric student. The full-time student (in consciousness) is the disciple who lives in the spiritual disposition, (nearly) perfectly balanced between the inner contemplative life and the life of action (service) in the outer world. Through such outer life the spiritual poise (the quality of the spiritual life) is transmitted (induced) (shared) as encouragement.

« Commentary No. 100

Charity

One of the most characteristic aspects of love-wisdom is charity, which implies love, kindness, and benevolence. The spirit of charity leads to kindness in thoughts, feelings, and activities. Charitable gifts may be gifts of time and interest, thought or energy, or money and material sources. Charity also calls for responsibility and efficiency, for the wise and economical utilization of talent and resources in or to a charitable effort (individual or otherwise) is (spiritually) inherent in the opportunity to express kindness through benevolent work.

Charity can be a spirit of participation in the welfare of humanity. In relatively mundane terms, that can include the relief of (apparent) human suffering and the fulfillment of the basic material needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. It can also mean educational opportunities for self-improvement. In spiritual terms, it means the encouragement of progress in human consciousness, both individual and collective. The humanitarian (and philanthropic) efforts are probably as important as spiritual tasks. Humanitarian work generally deals with effects rather than causes, whereas spiritual work generally deals with consciousness (which is closer to the causes of human problems); but both types of effort are needed, and even in the humanitarian work there is a sharing of charitable energy (love and kindness) that ultimately leads to consciousness. Humanitarian gifts normally come from the large numbers of persons who are concerned or interested in humanity and humanitarian work, while gifts for spiritual work normally come from the small numbers of persons who realize the benefits (in consciousness) (for humanity) of spiritual work. Spiritual effort (especially in group formation) contributes substantially to the consciousness of

humanity (through induction and stimulation), complementing and supplementing the humanitarian work.

One of the aspects of charitable giving is ownership. The concept of ownership is a worldly one, for philosophically (spiritually) no one can own or possess anything. But the individual or group may be given the guardianship and responsibility for that which is said to be owned. Such responsibility must (by cosmic law) be earned, either karmically attracted as a learning experience or attracted as a consequence of effectiveness (having suitable consciousness). The responsibility of the individual or group can be quite considerable. Failure to (reasonably) efficiently utilize resources for the common good often results in limitation and a lack of such opportunity in succeeding lives.

Another aspect of charitable work is the manner of participation with respect to the opportunity. Discernment is required in addition to a sense of responsibility, to insure usefulness. The existence (and recognition) of the opportunity (having the resources and realizing the need to be filled) should be accompanied by the discernment of alternatives and the relative usefulness of each. The specific areas or tasks that the spiritual student prefers to support are not as important as the purity (reasonableness) of the motives behind the assistance or gift and the relative value of the task. Above all needs to be the charitable interest in humanity and the spirit of participation through the meditative life (constructive thoughts are often as valuable as deeds).

In any event, the student should realize that under spiritual law, that which is given is not lost, but shared within the one life; that all is energy to be used as wisely as consciousness permits; and that all within the one life is interdependent. With such realization and with charitable intent, the student can invest his time and resources wisely, for the good of humanity.

Gentleness

One of the most important aspects of life on Earth is the improvement of right human relations. And one of the more helpful qualities in this respect is gentleness. Gentleness implies kindness and moderation, especially as far as manners and disposition are concerned. A gentle disposition discourages conflict and encourages cooperation in a peaceful and constructive environment. As the individual begins and sustains a life of enlightened living, so is it easier to induce the implied qualities of such a life within humanity as a whole. The improved quality of individual relationships is the beginning and foundation of right human relations for all of mankind.

Related to the quality of gentleness is the phenomenon of offense. Implied within the gentle disposition is the refusal to be offended, at anyone or anything. This is admittedly a high standard, but one that is eventually expected of each spiritual student. The refusal to be offended requires patience and self-discipline. It is virtually impossible (philosophically) to change another's disposition, so it is essential that the student concern himself with his own disposition. It is with a sense of rapport with the greater life (which overshadows any sense of separation from others) that the disciple views other persons while refusing to be offended. This requires a healthy appreciation of justice (karma) beyond that which is apparent, without any sense of self-righteousness or judgment with respect to the actions of others. It means accepting others as they are, with respect and appreciation for the greater life which lives through them (however imperfectly it appears).

With the refusal to be offended comes harmlessness (the refusal to be offensive). Though in the absolute sense it is impossible to offend another, it is possible to contribute to another's offense. A sense of responsibility and the cultivation of a gentle disposition should minimize the possibility of others being offended. Though the student is expected to do what has to be done, the manner in which it is done goes a long way toward encouraging or discouraging proper relationships and cooperation. With a gentle disposition, communication is usually enhanced as reasonableness and receptivity (respect) replace resistance and resentment. Though what is done may be right, it is how it is done that

determines appropriateness (and corresponding karma). Apparent justice (rationalization) notwithstanding, the spiritual student can ill afford to be either offensive or defensive.

A defensive disposition tends to sustain a conflict rather than encourage harmony. Defensiveness implies insecurity and self-centeredness (a difficult combination). What need does a spiritual student ever have to be defensive? Gentleness in all matters transforms an offensive or defensive disposition into a harmonious one. Constructive change and progress pose no practical conflict for a gentle disposition. The gentle disposition makes for more effective communication (words and thoughts) and more effective silence (meditation).

In human courtesy and gentleness there is also a potent factor of healing quality. Emotional and mental wounds can lie beneath the waking-consciousness, but in gentleness there is the offering of love (respect) and light (encouragement) that is difficult for even human nature to refuse. In harsh words there is no healing, but in gentle words (and thoughts) of encouragement (rather than criticism) can come healing. The power for good of the spoken word is often forgotten among the noise and selfishness of mundane life. But with a gentle disposition (without imposition) can the spoken word and enlightened living help to restore the plan of God within the human fraternity.

« Commentary No.137

Compassion

Compassion is a quality that has to be experienced directly in order to understand. For the spiritual student, the experience of compassion can bring about (or result from) the unfoldment of the heart; it can place the waking-consciousness in touch with humanity (and life itself) and the consequent realization of the common thread (which is unity).

Compassion is defined as a sympathetic consciousness of others' distress coupled with a desire to alleviate that distress. But any emphasis upon pain or suffering is somewhat inappropriate for the spiritual student; the spiritual student is expected to concern himself mostly with positive matters, in thought

and in deed. But the student must, at the same time, be realistic; besides, it is the rapport with humanity that should be the real emphasis in compassion.

For the heart-centered student, compassion can be a problem if it is offered or experienced on emotional levels without control or without detachment. For compassion to be meaningful and useful (in the sharing of energy and in understanding) it must be experienced in a mature manner, with love, but without distraction or undue involvement. One cannot afford to become entangled in pain or distress; yet one can hardly afford to forego a sharing of the feeling of humanity, if union with the soul of humanity is to be achieved (as it must). A compassionate appreciation of the problems of life (which appear to produce pain or suffering) is a way to understand the causes (or at least the intermediate causes) and possible solutions in consciousness. Through participation is revealed a means of healing and progress, as consciousness is gradually changed (raised) (both in the individual sense and in the sense of humanity). And this comes about through the heart and the prize of the heart which is compassion.

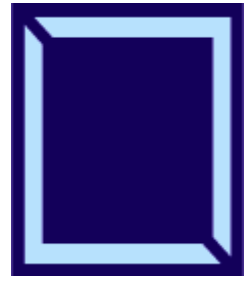
For the head is an altogether different approach. Compassion cannot be experienced in a purely rational or head-centered manner. Therefore, there are no problems relating to compassion in the head-centered student, except for the lack of compassion. Therein lies the real problem of the head-centered student: the undeveloped heart and the great difficulty in opening the heart in a reasonable manner. For the head-centered student to become compassionate, a great deal of work is involved. Some of the protective mental barriers must be deliberately lowered so that the feelings of sympathy, compassion, and even others' pain can be experienced, by degrees. Compassion comes easily to the heart. But it does not really come at all to the head. The head must be brought into the heart; that is the difficulty, for the head must yield to the heart (not to the emotions, but to the unfolding and stabilized heart center).

The complementary approach of the head and the heart to the feelings of other persons (or humanity) involves both compassion and impersonality. Controlled (impersonal) emotion (via the stabilized heart center) is the key to (meaningful) sympathetic, compassionate, and even empathetic expression. Though the evolving student is expected to cultivate increasing impersonality, that impersonality needs to be balanced with the experience (and the identification

with the experience) of humanity, through the instrument (and quality) of compassion. Evolution is mutual and interdependent; the student must not only understand the lifewave to which he belongs, but the student must also contribute to that lifewave. The understanding can be found and the contribution can be made, with intelligent participation through the head and the heart linked inseparably. Compassion is a primary theme for that experience and expression, compassion that is a dynamic expression of love (the heart quality), leading to atonement and to harmlessness.



Section 6.512



Virtues 2

Virtues also composure, moderation, prudence, courage without ego, accuracy or objectivity, respect for all lives, peacefulness, and simplicity.

Composure

The composure of the spiritual student (disciple) is characterized by an aura of serenity and tranquility. That aura is an interactive energy field that reflects (transmits) the quality of thought and feeling. In the case of the spiritual student, that aura is to be cultivated as an instrument of composure, a means for maintaining a spiritual orientation in the waking-consciousness, and a means of maintaining a moderate temperament (as to the personality).

The student achieves the proper composure through intelligent meditation, spiritual discipline and refinement, and through the careful programming of suitable energies. The methods of programming for composure may vary widely according to the talents and temperament of the student, but inevitably the aura is properly qualified by light and love and potency. Such an aura must be properly stabilized and balanced, for the energies utilized can be quite distracting if not entirely manageable. It is very important for the student to maintain his spiritual composure at all times (if at all possible), for the student is held responsible and accountable for the energy which is evoked and released through his presence in incarnation. If the composure is lost, even momentarily, some energy is also lost or wasted (not lost in any absolute sense, but scattered and removed from effective utilization).

From time to time, even the most dedicated and cultivated of disciples may become ruffled or distracted or unsettled, slightly or otherwise. In such a case, the student must make a conscious (and semi-automatic, pre-programmed) effort to recompose (regain the proper composure) as soon as the out-of-balance state is realized. In fact, the mind should be programmed (cultivated) to trigger an immediate awareness or recognition of the situation for the benefit of the waking-consciousness. This allows the student to recover almost immediately, and minimize the scattered energy. In due course, the student learns to recognize his vulnerabilities (in time and situations) and actually learns to overcome the possibility of lack of composure. The potent tranquility and equability of the dedicated student is quite a contrast when compared with the condition of the aura of ordinary consciousness.

The opposite of composure is confusion. Confusion is characterized by a lack of clarity or distinctiveness, perplexity, bewilderment, even vagueness. In a deeper sense, the state of the aura during a period of confusion is actually a clouding of consciousness. Confusion may be a slight or simple matter of indecisiveness, but whatever the degree or extent, confusion (lack of composure) suggests a scattering of energy (a scattering of consciousness) and an impure mixture of energy (a mixture of impurities). By impurities it is meant inconsistencies, two or more energies of dissimilar vibration (tone) (quality) that are not harmonious. These can be quite subtle in nature and arise even from simple contrast or conflict. The inconsistency between what is done and what should be done (according to conscience), for example, creates an energy conflict (confusion of energies) within the aura.

Consistency and composure are quite related, objectively and subjectively. The spiritual student should intelligently resolve inconsistencies, that he might remain quietly composed throughout whatever experiences and situations may need to be faced. If the student is not easily disturbed (bothered) (upset), he may be trusted with more (highly qualified) energies to be properly released into the environment (through the radiation of the aura). But the implacable student must also be spiritually responsive (easily impressed by the quality of the soul), if his composure is to be properly utilized and remain meaningful.

« Commentary No. 188

Moderation

One of the more meaningful keywords in the everyday life of the spiritual student is moderation. Moderation is the prevention of extremes in behavior or expression (on physical, emotional, and mental levels), the observation of (adherence to) reasonable self-imposed limits, the maintenance of a calm and temperate disposition. Moderation implies a measure of conscious self-control and a degree of unconscious (programmed) self-control.

The problems of excess (extreme behavior or indulgence) are manifold for the spiritual student (who naturally and intentionally strives for clarity of consciousness and purity of disposition). Extreme behavior (indulgence) is a

considerable distraction of the personality from the serenity required for rapport with the soul. The lack of moderation suggests a high degree of absorption in mundane affairs and in personality matters. Extreme behavior and exaggeration in any form breed absorption (glamour and illusion). On the other hand, moderation strengthens the spiritual disposition and helps the individual to be more aware of truth and reality. The extremes breed distortion; the point of balance (moderation) between the extremes cultivates accuracy and truth.

Both the unrestrained head and the unrestrained heart (emotions) are formidable problems. The head (concrete mind) (intellect) is naturally critical and separative, exclusive and individualistic, rational and irrational. Opinions rigidly adhered to, and the closed mind in general, are indications of the head unrestrained. Where the head is restrained (moderated) (cultivated), it becomes more reasonable and more responsive to the intuition and realization of the soul. Moderation in thinking should be cultivated in order to achieve the dynamic, creative, and contemplative mentality needed of the spiritual student. The unrestrained emotions distort and distract the focus of waking-consciousness from the clarity of emotion required of the spiritual student. Extreme emotions are highly disruptive and absorbing, in either extreme.

Actually, moderation is very much a relative concept. Many aspects of behavior that are considered ordinary and reasonable by mundane (worldly) standards would be considered extreme by spiritual and esoteric standards. Conversely, many practices and disciplines considered to be moderate by spiritual standards may be considered extreme by worldly standards. Moderation is quite dependent on the individual circumstances and the progress of the student upon the path. Much depends on the point of view and the degree of cultivation achieved in the personality. The instabilities of worldly focus and experience cannot be tolerated in the highly organized (vitalized) (natural) and spirituality responsive instruments of the esoteric student. The standards that are natural and comforting to the spiritual student should be viewed in context and in relation to the spiritual path and the demands of higher consciousness.

The moderation of worldly distractions (physical, emotional, and mental excesses) is actually part of the process of the purification and preparation of the personality of the spiritual student. The student who commits himself to the

spiritual path endeavors to transform the personality, to an instrument highly responsive to the purposes of evolution, to the soul, to life and consciousness (awareness) (rather than to material or phenomenal existence). As the student progresses, what is considered moderate also progresses. The degree of self-control (and inherent freedom) is enhanced, and the moderation of temperament and behavior is more easily inspired. The secret of moderation rests within the concept of reasonable and self-imposed limits (which results in greater freedom and truth (reality)).

« Commentary No. 193

Prudence

Prudence is defined as the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason (and intuition). It suggests discretion in the management of experience, providence in the use of resources, and caution as to danger or risk. Ordinary prudence is a function of the personality, where through reasoning the individual may determine the relative appropriateness of action in the lower worlds. As the student progresses and as the intuition begins to shine through the responsive mind and waking-consciousness, prudence is realized (manifested) as a natural function of the soul.

Ordinary prudence is limited to (by) the personality and the degree of integration and stability achieved by the personality. Through observation and experience, common-sense, and the practical understanding of cause and effect, the student is able to consciously reason through any given situation to determine the (apparent) appropriate course of action or disposition. Continence (self-restraint) based upon reason (rather than emotion or glamour) is the first real step along the path. Such prudence is a matter of individual discretion, based upon limited knowledge and understanding (and further limited by experience and mental capacity). Nevertheless, ordinary prudence (centered in the personality) is sufficient to carry the spiritual student through all of the preliminary stages of the spiritual path. As the student recognizes consciously the needed work, it can be more easily accomplished. The various aspects of preparation can then be accomplished with practical wisdom.

But as the student progresses, a greater sense of appropriateness (and timeliness) is realized. Instead of being limited by the efforts of the intelligent personality, the student begins to realize the vast resources of the soul. The energies and clarification of the soul then guide the student (by degrees) both consciously and unconsciously. The intuition of the soul, coupled with the practical experience of the personality, provides even greater insight into life and the situations and circumstances faced. Unlimited by the personality, the enlightened student can correlate the world of causes with the world of effects. Self-realization and the deeper (inclusive) understanding of experience then provide the individual with a real sense of appropriateness.

This sense of appropriateness is simply a sense of realization (intuitive discernment) of the most suitable course of action (especially with respect to conduct and disposition). The sense of appropriateness is a subjective, intuitive, inner feeling sometimes (as appropriate) accompanied by a detailed and comprehensive understanding, but always accompanied by a knowing (recognition) of appropriateness. One simply knows (automatically and intuitively) what to do, when to do it, and how to do it properly. With increasing mindfulness (concern for the purpose of life), the sense of prudence (appropriateness) of the student becomes quite dependable and highly inclusive.

But this natural prudence must be earned, through the proper cultivation of the personality, through humility and spiritual maturity, through the practical experience of the objective life, and through the conscious correlation of experience with the esoteric (theosophical) (metaphysical) teachings. A strong (dominant) mind untempered by the soul is a formidable barrier to the natural sense of appropriateness that offers the deep but subtle encouragement of the spiritual path. Emotional weakness as well as vulnerability to glamour and illusion also serve to block the manifestation of the natural wisdom of the soul. Though prudence in its natural (intuitive) form is subtle and valuable, like all other spiritual qualities and experience, the price must be paid.

Courage

Courage has been defined as the mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty. It implies firmness of mind and a degree of confidence. In the spiritual context, courage is an important virtue to be cultivated by the student, for the path can be quite difficult at times, and living a delicate balance between the inner world of the soul and the outer world of the mundane personality can be especially trying.

First of all, the soul itself must have courage to incarnate. Many (souls) incarnate easily, and quickly adjust to the external world (by absorption) because they identify more with the lower life than the higher one. Many incarnate with varying degrees of difficulty, due to the foreign nature of life in the lower worlds (foreign to the poise and consciousness of the soul) or due to various karmic phenomena. Few souls incarnate easily (without reservation) and carefully refuse to be absorbed by life in the lower worlds. Some are able to incarnate easily with an implied (but temporary) period of absorption and adjustments followed by a necessarily courageous struggle (later on) (as the personality completes the preliminary (preparatory) work) to regain control of the mind (and the personality) and draw the lower life out of the dilemma (predicament) of mundane absorption.

The spiritual student (being somewhat enlightened and reasonably well integrated) must have the courage to face adverse or unknown conditions throughout the lifetime, for the path is filled with tests and trials of spiritual strength and character, and the karmic workload of one relatively new to the path can be quite a burden (not to mention the intense and almost instantaneous karmic workload of one who has made substantial progress along the path). If the student is to maintain (and increase) his usefulness, and if the student is to progress along the path, he must conquer all events and circumstances (and the lessons found therein). He must remain true to himself, and he must remain true to the work (dharma) (and karma) that has been assigned.

Simultaneously, the spiritual student must have (should develop) the courage to be different (as needed), to adjust his approach to life in the lower world of human events and to be flexible (and reasonable) in his relationships with others. The student must ultimately have the courage to live consistently according to the principles of life along the way (the spiritual path). He must have courage to believe according to the reality of inner knowledge and understanding (in spite of disbelief or misunderstanding in the outer world), and he must inevitably have the courage to live according to the dictates of his philosophy (or suffer the consequences of disharmony between what is believed and what is practiced). The student can ill afford hypocrisy.

Perhaps above all, the spiritual student must have the courage of honesty and truthfulness. He must (should) be honest with himself and with others (the wise person speaks little, but what is said is ever honest and sincere (appropriate)). He must not be afraid to face the truth about himself or about life itself. The student whose self-image approaches reality will have no difficulty in receiving truth, but courage is required for the majority who are unprepared to face the truth. The student must ultimately have the courage to be humble, in a world whose members are traditionally egocentric. For in the deepest and most meaningful humility is found the greatest and most profound truth and realization. With courage and fearlessness the student must guard ever against foolishness and conceit, for courage does not justify recklessness or carelessness, and fearlessness is no substitute for humility.

« Commentary No. 216

Accuracy

The spiritual student is urged to be as accurate as possible (reasonable) in all aspects of life in the lower worlds; in the spoken word, in the written word, in thinking (consciously and unconsciously), and in all belief. The reasons for this are to encourage and sustain greater clarity of communication, greater understanding, and closer recognition of truth. Truth (humility) (honesty) (reality) is paramount in the evolution of consciousness; with greater accuracy, some of the problems of illusionary (mundane) existence are overcome.

Accuracy is defined as relative freedom from mistake or error. It suggests (relative) correctness and conformity to truth. Accuracy also implies carefulness and deliberation in realization, thinking, and expression. Naturally disciplined (inspired) thinking and expression (verbal or written) is a boon to the spiritual student, especially in the sense of manifesting the internal energies (of the silence). Carelessness in thinking, especially when reinforced by carelessness in speech leads to greater dishonesty and continued self-deception. Many persons are so accustomed to the petty, casual lies of mundane experience and expression that they cannot properly discern truth or reality. Thus the illusions of personality-centered existence are sustained and reinforced. But the relatively enlightened student must be careful to realize the relative truth and accuracy of all thoughts and statements generated and thereby contribute more to the cause of good (truth).

One of the real problems of inaccuracy is its tendency to increase in momentum. Small distortions in truth lead to larger distortions. The communication of inaccuracy coupled with the inherent limitations of communication (perception) (interpretation) leads to greater inaccuracy and exaggeration. But what is worse is the effect of inaccuracy, untruth, and exaggeration on unconscious levels. The apparent (superficial) (assumed) validity of all thoughts and statements is absorbed on unconscious levels, so that even a statement known to be false will, usually on unconscious levels, be assumed true by the unconscious. This process of self-deception is only one of many problems associated with the habits of illusionary existence, habits which breed continued complication through glamour and illusion.

So the spiritual student should ever seek to be as accurate as possible in all matters. The senses should be trained for clarity and accuracy, as should the entire temperament and personality. Truth should be valued as highly as possible, and honesty and humility should be valued (highly) as aids to the recognition of truth. Since (realized) truth is affected by perception, the mind and the emotions should be clarified. Habits should be examined for their usefulness, and anything that leads to distortion or inaccuracy should be properly transformed. With persistence, the awareness of the student on mundane levels is heightened and the relative glamour and illusion will be accurately perceived for what it is. The possibility for deception and self-deception will be minimized and the temperament (tendency) toward truth will

be encouraged. And the inherent disharmony of inaccuracy will be effectively eliminated.

But all this does not mean that accuracy should be carried to unreasonable extreme. There are few certainties or absolutes in life, and the limitation of words (and perceptions) is considerable; so the student should be as accurate as possible (reasonable) but not needlessly so. One can be quite accurate and still be subject to interpretation and problems of perception. Accuracy should not be considered as an end in itself, but as a reasonable aid toward the identification of (with) truth and the liberation of humanity from its inertia.

« Commentary No. 231

Respect 1

The spiritual student (and especially the disciple) is expected to demonstrate (at least subjectively, if not outwardly) respect and consideration toward all other lives. Any form of disrespect or discourtesy is an indication of failure to achieve or exercise that natural disposition of poise and equilibrium intended for all whose lives belong on the path of unification. And yet the cultivation of respect (consideration) is usually quite difficult because it involves a measure of humility and a dampening (refinement) of the ego. It is especially difficult for those upon the first ray, the fifth ray, and the sixth ray, and for the strong head-centered individual in general.

The concept of respect (in its metaphysical or spiritual context) is quite broad, but basically it refers to the recognition of the worth of a person (or life), regardless of appearance. This is justly due on the basis of the soul itself which is common to all lives and indicates the inherent nobility and divinity present within all, however manifest (or lacking in appearance or expression). This concept indicates the need for respect for others' values, methods, consciousness, experience, preferences, and perspectives. In short, it means the acceptance of others and the recognition of their divine right to self-determination. It means the elimination of imposition (not to mention self-centeredness).

The spiritual student who has developed the mental abilities and who has gained some (possibly considerable) insight into the nature of life, may also develop the tendency to view his own perspective as superior to that of others, but that kind of determination is invalid at best, since his perspective is only meaningful to his own consciousness. It cannot be completely valid for any other, and to suppose that it is a matter of disrespect (narrow-mindedness) (self-centeredness). If even the enlightened student feels he knows what is best for another, then he has overextended himself and has constituted a violation of rights. For others necessarily have different needs, different values, different standards, different experiences, even different paths.

So it is well for the student to mind his own business, to help where help is called for (in the form of discreet encouragement), but to refrain from imposition or interference, even mentally. It is not the role of the student (enlightened or otherwise) to judge others or their actions and experience. The spiritual student needs to express sincere compassion and understanding and respect for the life, disposition, and experience of all others. This respect does not necessarily mean admiration or even liking (the student might do well not to like or dislike), but it does mean the expression of love in a very mature, impersonal form. In fact, respect might even be considered (in some ways) the head-centered analogue to love, or at least a manifestation thereof.

This concept of respect has other implications, including self-respect and respect in a group context. Self-respect is a necessary and proper respect for oneself as a human being (as a soul) and a modest regard for one's own position. Respect in a group context is broader, more complicated, but nevertheless a vital parallel to the respect of one life for another. Groups frequently acquire characteristics analogous to those of people, and therefore due respect should be afforded by the spiritual student in the regard of any group of people. Groups likewise need to exercise consideration for individuals, whether or not present in the group. And groups need to exercise a healthy regard (reticence) for other groups, regardless of temperament, methods, or values; for each contributes to the whole in its own (meaningful) way.

Peacefulness

One of the accomplishments expected of the spiritual student (aspirant) from the probationary (preliminary spiritual) work is the attainment of peacefulness, both in the sense of inner peace and in the sense of outer peace. This moderate characteristic of peacefulness implies a state of tranquility or quiet, freedom from disturbance (disorder), freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions, and harmony in personal relations. This peacefulness also suggests a disposition (temperament) characterized as calm, friendly, moderate, and pacific; devoid of violence or force, and disposed naturally toward peace. But this peacefulness should also be a dynamic, though moderate characteristic, allowing qualified progress and avoiding the inertial peacefulness (inactivity).

The need for peacefulness (and especially with respect to dynamic peacefulness) is derived from the nature of objective existence and the natural, human tendency of response to that objective environment. One of the most basic aspects of objective existence (manifestation) is pressure. There is pressure implied in the very framework of existence; there is the pressure of physical manifestation (were the pressure removed the objective universe would cease to exist); there is the ever-present atmospheric pressure (and all that that implies); there is the pressure of population; and there is the overall (substantial) pressure of evolution itself. In each case, pressure is a natural condition that leads to tension; and tension is a state (experience) that leads ultimately to a release of pressure (force). And in that release of pressure is intended the progress (learning) (development) (experience) needed. That release of tension implies adjustment (response) to the particular circumstances (as well as an overall disposition which supplies the response).

The release of tension may occur in any number of ways, with effects (apparently) ill or good as the case may be. The human (personality) tendency is to react to pressure (tension) (confrontation) in an extreme (uncontrolled) (excessive) fashion, with considerable mental or emotional force (and in some cases even physical force). The extreme of violence (whether it be on physical, emotional, or mental levels) is the most uncontrolled (undisciplined) (unworthy) response. The reactionary (personal) (extreme) tendencies of the personality

should be transformed into intelligent (moderate) (controllable) responses, where the lesson of the experience can be learned more effectively, and where the independence of the lower self can be uplifted (transformed) into alignment with the spiritual self. The attainment of peacefulness is one of the steps leading to a balanced and spiritually responsive personality. With the proper (natural) disposition (peacefulness), pressure (tension) can be faced in a mature fashion, and the tension can be released quite constructively.

Outer peace should embrace harmony in human relations, or at least (since the response or repose of others cannot necessarily be determined) a sincere and healthy goodwill toward all persons, regardless of their disposition or feelings. This moderate and dynamic peacefulness should be an encouragement to others and contribute (externally) to the working out of the evolutionary plan.

In rejecting the use of force can be found a considerable (spiritual) strength for human progress, but that pacific realization includes sublimation of mental and emotional forcefulness as well as physical patience. The accomplishment of outer peace (peacefulness) complements the simultaneous accomplishment of inner peace. In inner peace is found the spiritual self (reality) and the spiritual potency needed for self-transformation, leading to the latter stages of the path and increased (effective) service to humanity.

« Commentary No. 313

Simplicity

Simplicity characterizes the beginning (the source) and completion of all life (manifestation) and everything of any true significance in between that source and its fulfillment. Simplicity characterizes the entire framework or pattern (fabric) (field) (basis) of manifestation, to the extent that all of the multitudinous elements (at the greatest extent of differentiated manifestation) can be related to that fundamental pattern in relatively simple terms (through a system of analogy and correspondence). Consequently, the basic tenets of the esoteric philosophy are relatively simple, and those basic tenets are the keys to understanding (resolution) that are sufficient to address any worthy question (assuming sufficient quality of consciousness). The greatest truths are the simple truths (masked), from which all (lesser) (applied) philosophy is derived.

Complexity arises from the objective, differentiated experience (existence) (perspective) where the waking-consciousness is distracted by the (almost overwhelming) (petty) details of manifestation. But the soul (higher consciousness) is more concerned with subjective energy (integrated experience) (general quality). As the waking-consciousness (mind) becomes more responsive to the integrating (unifying) influence of the soul, that waking-consciousness begins to recognize and realize (understand) the general principles that underlie all of manifestation. Those general principles form a self-consistent, relatively simple philosophy (perspective); in the understanding comes the ability to perceive the truth (reality) that is masked by appearance (glamour) (illusion) in the lower worlds. The key to truth (realization) (simplicity) is a detached and correlative broad-mindedness (freedom).

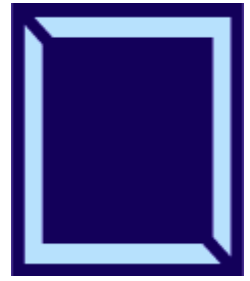
The details (specifics) of life (manifestation) are not in themselves particularly significant, but as those details are integrated (correlated) (synthesized) (simplified) the results are relatively more significant. Details do not lead to realization (directly). Narrow-mindedness impairs correlation and integration. Attachment (to anything) impairs the ability of mind to think freely (without bias) and recognize truth. A detached broad-mindedness allows the whole to be perceived rather than (some of the) individual parts and, thus, leads to understanding. Simplicity in knowledge and understanding refers to the whole and can be applied or related to the parts (though an open-minded (correlative) study of the parts can lead to an understanding of the whole).

As a virtue, simplicity (for the spiritual student) can relate both to the individual temperament and to relationships with others. Simplicity in consciousness implies a well-integrated (simple) (coherent) (stable) personality and an uncomplicated lifestyle (and value system), relatively free from attachments and distractions (glamour) (illusion) (self-centeredness) (personal energy). It implies straight-forwardness (honesty) in relationships and communication. It implies moderation and a lack of extravagance or extreme experience (behavior). Simplicity implies a freedom from vanity and a freedom from personal complication. It implies a fundamental confidence in life and a reasonable (honest) self-assessment. And it suggests a state of quiet clarity and the expression of a relatively simple philosophy.

Simplicity does not imply a withdrawal from ordinary life, but suggests an uncomplicated discretion in dealing with mundane life. Over-simplification (in lifestyle or in reasoning) should be prevented (by intention), as over-simplification can be quite misleading. In simplicity can be found real joy (beauty) of life in the lower worlds, even more so as the soul (the simplifying aspect) comes to bear upon the personality (the aspect of complication).



Section 6.513



Virtues 3

Virtues also include goodwill, consistency, responsiveness, sacrifice, altruism, and modesty.

Goodwill

Ordinary goodwill, without ulterior motive and without expectation, is one of the most practical and effective means of evolutionary encouragement (service) available. Goodwill is a practical application of love energy, related to understanding and to brotherhood (the inherent unity of humanity). It draws upon the nature of good within the personality (which in turn draws upon the more subjective (general) nature of good (wisdom) (love) within the soul) (which is to draw upon the nature of good within the higher, spiritual qualification of humanity), as the individual shares that nature or character (without depletion). Thus goodwill is an application (sharing) of kind feelings and benevolence, leading to improved (right) human relations and group progress.

Goodwill is the natural result (application) of the inner understanding of the intrinsic unity of humankind, and on a broader level, of all life. That understanding may be conscious or unconscious, and the application (goodwill) may be transient (occasional) or a continual predisposition based upon proper temperament (good energy). Transient or personal (selective) goodwill is nonetheless an indication of beginning (progress), while goodwill as a disposition is an indication of (spiritual) health that is itself a consequence of progress (experience) (understanding). Being a positive, qualified energy, goodwill tends to grow and expand by manifestation. Where goodwill is generalized (as a disposition and/or directed toward all of humanity rather than some portion) then its potency for good is enhanced.

One of the reasons for the potency of goodwill lies in the inherent human nature (which is good, albeit often masked by the complexities of personality) and the natural responsiveness of an individual to goodwill. Goodwill actually engenders responsiveness (and cooperation) and calls upon the good nature (within) that is potentially common to all. The manifestation (externalization) of goodwill is the sharing of positive (inherently non-manipulative) energy (light) (love) on more objective levels, a non-compelling encouragement for good. Goodwill (right disposition) fosters harmony and peace (ultimately reflected in a fully integrated humanity). Thus goodwill leads to constructive progress

(non-threatening encouragement) on every practical level (individual and group, particularly for humanity as a whole).

The problem of goodwill lies not in the responsiveness of the human being, but rather in the natural resistance of the personality to sustained progressive energy. Though goodwill is a positive energy, easily shared, and one that is easily sustained in the case of one with understanding, for those who lack such understanding (temperament) goodwill is sub-critical (transient). Goodwill certainly encourages further sharing (with considerably more potent effect), but there really needs to be engendered the understanding that will permit continued responsiveness and the beginning of self-generated goodwill (in addition to that which is externally induced). Self-generated goodwill is of course only another form of that greater energy, as it flows from within, but it is more significant because such an (self-generated) individual becomes an active participant.

The will-to-good is in a sense a higher correspondence to goodwill, a more general form but nonetheless practical, effective, and worthy of application. Where goodwill is a natural energy for the personality, the will-to-good is a natural energy for the soul, and is naturally reflected in the responsive personality. Like goodwill, the will-to-good is rooted in the evolutionary intention of the higher group organism (humanity as a subjective lifewave), and the recognition that one life lives (flows) through all of humanity.

« Commentary No. 393

Consistency

One of the features or characteristics of the underlying unity that pervades all of manifestation is the self-consistency that operates at every level of manifestation. That self-consistency is itself the result of qualification, and in turn qualifies the elements within its purview. Wherever intention is impressed upon some field of manifestation, there will necessarily be an integrating force that relates all of the various aspects and elements together on some level.

This pervasive, consisting force provides a number of further characteristics: an overall coherence, adherence or conformity to the plan (purpose) (underlying unity), a harmony of parts one to another (and to the whole), resistance to separation (disintegration) (diffusion), some responsiveness to higher impression, a firmness of character (reflecting to some extent the impression of character from the (higher) qualifying force). Each of the elements or aspects of some, self-consistent field (construct) (expression) (manifestation) are compatible one to another, without contradiction. A self-consistent field (expression) is a balanced, integrated field, and within that field there will usually be manifested coincident, balanced forces (i.e., contrasting forces which provide some (meaningful) (purposive) tension).

All-in-all, there are no significant anomalies, anywhere within (universal) manifestation. Even apparent anomalies are consistent with both the imposed qualification and underlying balance (unity). Karma (on every level and for every application (life)) further (inseparably) contributes to the consistency of every field (element) of manifestation, from cosmic (solar) (planetary) levels to microcosmic (human) (elemental) levels. In a sense, karma is the consisting force, for in the final analysis, all of manifestation (and all of its qualification) is a karmic consequence (including karmic force) of macrocosmic intention (causation) (purposive creation). Even without significant anomalies, there are still varying degrees of coherence within a self-consistent field (element).

The further removed an element is in character and consciousness (and differentiation) from its major source, the less consistent will it be relative to that source. It will still be wholly consistent with the overall balance of forces, and may remain wholly self-consistent (on its level), but not necessarily wholly consistent with the source. In a sense, this means that there is a practical (effective) limit to every qualifying force (field). Anything manifested at or near the edge of that field will be affected to some extent by the proximity of the ring-pass-not (a considerable tension) and the (chaos) beyond. This is particularly true of the limits of differentiated existence (e.g., the physical plane of consciousness compared to soul levels).

In a sense, successive differentiation implies a degradation in character, consciousness, and consistency. The overall balance (consistency) persists, but karmic (restoring) forces are increasingly active at the edge of any

manifestation. Of course, the realm of experience at the edge of manifestation provides considerable and diverse opportunities for progress, and that experience is potentially assimilated in turn by the precursive (higher) life (which engendered the successively differentiated life (consciousness) in the first place). One of the obligations of conscious life at the limits of manifestation is to seek a greater rapport with its higher correspondence, so that experience and expression are more meaningful (qualified) and more relatable to the higher consciousness.

« Commentary No. 444

Responsiveness

The principal objective of the preliminary work of the spiritual (probationary) student is the cultivation (discipline) (purification) (qualification) (training) of the personality such that the personality becomes intelligently responsive to the soul and thereby a much more effective instrument of service. That responsiveness is more properly three-fold: to the soul (the God within), the spiritual path (and all that that implies), and truth (reality). Service to humanity (and all life) is implied in all three respects: the soul of the individual is more in fact one with all souls, the spiritual path embraces all of humanity in the broadest evolutionary sense, and truth (reality) embraces all aspects of manifestation as well as the unmanifest.

In order to be intelligently responsive, the student must overcome both the passive aspect and the separative nature of the personality. The student must be able to properly discern between relative truth and that which is self-centered or personality-centered or otherwise bound by the great objective illusion (glamour) (maya). The student must be relatively free from personal bias (desire) and attachments (opinions). The beliefs of the spiritual student should be moderately (tentatively) held, without attachment or superficiality. Thus the student should be free to expand (broaden) the beliefs to be more relative (relevant) (inclusive) (universal).

In order to be properly and intelligently responsive, the spiritual student must adhere to the preliminary (probationary) discipline (at least), for otherwise the student would be burdened by personality coarseness and lack of discipline

sufficient to block the spiritual intuition and prevent an intelligent (meaningful) interpretation of higher impressions. The spiritual student must also be committed both to the soul and the path as well as to truth. And the student must be ever willing to face the truth. Without these commitments and willingness, the student would be half-hearted and sufficiently resistant to prevent self-realization (the personality generally seeks to maintain its status (relative importance) and prevent or undermine any revelation that would threaten its significance (the status quo) or interests).

In short, the responsive student is one who is committed, dedicated, disciplined, purified, qualified, trained, and relatively without fear, having an integrated personality and some measure of alignment of soul and personality, being an active thinker (vice passive) and intelligently disposed to challenge, test, and evaluate all experience and impressions (yet sufficiently qualified to discern and accept the relative truth). In a higher sense, the responsive student (disciple) is one who can hold the mind steady in the light, who recognizes the value of the silence and is able to conform to that energy and quality. Any (substantive) personality-centeredness or self-centeredness prevents responsiveness by separating the individual from the source of truth (wisdom) (the soul) (in practice, not in the greater sense).

To be responsive to the soul (the path) (truth) means that the student is relatively free from external forces. The student may very well seem to conform to most (but not all) of the world's expectations, but such conformation is deliberate and not passive, and the student conforms even more so to the dictates of the soul (the path) (truth), even where such conformity is not in accordance with worldly expectations. Responsiveness is ultimately the antithesis of reactivity, for a reactive (exceptive) (separative) personality is neither objective nor impersonal, and therefore unable to be inclusive and unable to achieve the necessary rapport.

Sacrifice

In the orthodox (conventional) sense, sacrifice means to give up or renounce something for some ideal, belief, or purpose (end). It can also mean the offering or devotion of one's life in dedication to some (presumed noble) task. Much of the preliminary discipline and endeavors of the spiritual path involves sacrifice in various ways, and generally in the sense of dedication to the path and its nature. But this sacrifice in the context of the spiritual path should not have the popular connotation of giving up or losing something that is worth something, for in fact, what is "sacrificed" is precisely that which is not worth keeping, in the context of the soul, the spiritual path, and evolution.

Of course it is the self-centered, self-indulgent ego that does indeed value (superficially) that which the spiritual student is expected to forego. The attachments of the ego (personality-centeredness) tend to be many and varied, and potentially strong. But to the spiritual student (and in the context of the path) those attachments and indulgences are limitations that prevent or limit the deepening and expanding of the quality of consciousness. The inertia (resistance) of the ego (personality) may be quite considerable. That resistance is born of habit (attachment) directly, or indirectly in the sense of fear (i.e., the ego's fear of loss of independence and centrality). That fear is well-grounded, for the independence and centrality of the personality (ego) is indeed "sacrificed" by the successful spiritual student, yet the new (reformed) (refined) personality rejoices in newfound qualification and purpose. The spiritual student has then won the cooperation intended.

It is the nature of the personality, being material (relatively gross), to react, directly or indirectly. The glamour of sacrifice is also a potential problem for the spiritual student. Sacrifice in the context of the path is simply necessary and expected. One cannot progress and contribute sufficiently while bound by personality attachments and poor, counterproductive (from the perspective of the soul) habits. The spiritual student should simply do that which is appropriate to do. And this means adherence to the preliminary discipline and preliminary endeavors, not for reason of glamour, not on the basis of some authority, but by reason of appropriateness.

The standards for (of) the bulk of humanity are distinctly different than those for (of) the spiritual path. For ordinary humanity there is no particular need for the discipline and endeavors of the path. For aspirants and disciples however it is a different matter altogether (i.e., the spiritual student should not judge others by spiritual standards (or yet judge others at all), but, rather, should evaluate himself by the standards appropriate to his place upon the path). That which the spiritual student is called upon (by the path) to do is appropriate; the same calling for others within humanity (who are not responsive to the path (as souls)) is not appropriate.

The dharma of the spiritual student should be clear: the sacrificing of all of those things within the personality nature (habits) (attachments) that are inappropriate to the path (which limit or constrain spiritual progress) (excepting those which are necessary to worthy obligations or practical necessity). But the spiritual student in this endeavor must remain wary of the cowardice and subtlety of the ego and personality nature. The personality may resist by many and varied means, fabricating reasons and excuses to resist and delay the inevitable progress. But with proper dedication and upliftment of the waking-consciousness in the light of the path, all of these lesser things and matters are overcome, and the personality is properly transformed and refined.

« Commentary No. 717

Altruism

Altruism is the unselfish regard for the welfare of others and behavior that is not necessarily (apparently) beneficial to oneself but that primarily benefits others. Key aspects are unselfishness and the welfare of others.

People of character and quality of consciousness are naturally unselfish, for with refined consciousness comes a transition from the basically selfish, self-centered, egoistic temperament to the basically unselfish, soul-responsive temperament. As one becomes more refined (from spiritual discipline and practice), the ego is gradually subsumed by the higher calling (the soul). Material things and the various glammers and self-interests are all passed over

as objects of personal attachment or deception, being replaced by emphasis on quality of consciousness, the process of the spiritual path, and the altruistic service implied by that quality and implied by (in) the path.

The (proper) spiritual student (and anyone who can respond in some measure to the soul) cannot ask the question “what is there here to benefit me?,” for such a question is antagonistic to the soul. The spiritual student by virtue of his place upon (within) the path is continually being tested in terms of his motives (and degree of ego or self-centeredness). The path is designed to refine the motives of students until they can stand forth in service to humanity (and all of life). Thus, one who would ask such a question, nonetheless sincerely, is not really very refined. It matters not that the coarser, more selfish people presume (self-deceptively) to “take advantage” of those who are altruistic, for in time all of the needed lessons will be learned by all concerned (and in sincere giving there is never any loss). And yet, although the proper motives are unselfish there are necessarily benefits to those who so serve (altruistically). The giving of one’s time and energy to noble (worthy) (primarily spiritual or consciousness-related) endeavors helps us all, in the sense that it is the evolution of the whole that matters, much more so than the development or evolutionary contribution of any unit. Any activity that encourages growth or refinement or realization in consciousness is a positive (noble) (worthy) endeavor. The individual contributes to and benefits by the growth (quality) of the whole. And of course there are the ever-present aspects of karma and dharma.

But what constitutes the welfare of others? Certainly growth and refinement and realization in consciousness, to the extent that it can be effected. Any sincere and selfless endeavor has value, if only from the expression of sincerity and selflessness. But unselfish endeavors that serve primarily materialistic or glamouristic objectives are limited in value. Or in other words, kindness and consideration are greater gifts than any material or personality-oriented incidentals. It is the sharing of energy (love, encouragement, goodwill) that matters (although material gifts can play a constructive role). Altruistic people should not be naive or serve without discretion or wisdom, for they are still accountable for their endeavors.

Altruism is more fundamentally a matter of being true to oneself (in the higher sense). Truth and selflessness (and soul responsiveness (God-centeredness)) go

hand in hand. Conversely, dishonesty and selfishness (self-centeredness) go hand in hand and tend to block the flow of truth (realization). Self-centered people are more or less oblivious to the truth. Altruistic, relatively selfless people are more receptive and responsive to the truth. But more significantly, altruism is “living the truth” of spiritual service, without self-regard (those who (truly) serve are protected by virtue of their service).

« Commentary No. 1110

Respect 2

Respect is a matter of consideration and considerateness, for oneself (self-respect) and for others. In the worldly sense, respect is based upon cultural conditioning, but more properly on the (mutual) equality of (all) human beings, regardless of respective circumstances, regardless of attitude, behavior, consciousness, cultural conditioning, personality, position, role, etc. Thus respect is not (properly) a matter of deference or non-deference, but a matter of expression (acknowledgement) of that underlying equality. It is a matter of appreciation of the lack of (real) distinction between the various cultures, races, sexes, etc.

In the more metaphysical (mystical) sense, respect goes well beyond the worldly sense and is based upon the reality of the unity of all life. In this sense, it is the God within one, expressed through the personality, that appreciates and respects the God within all other lives, and acknowledges that each life is a divine manifestation, however imperfect that expression may seem to be at the personality level. To respect another human being is to respect oneself. To respect another lifeform (mineral, vegetable, animal, deva) is likewise to respect oneself. Ultimately, all sense of separation or separateness is transcended, and one lives through all lives.

It is not (properly) ever a matter of demanding respect from others, for only the ego (false self) can demand anything. It is not (properly) a matter of expecting others to conform to our sense of propriety (e.g., respecting us), for any form of expectation of others, or imposition upon others, is an expression of lack of respect. Thus respect is a matter of how one treats others (not how others treat

us or how others treat themselves or even how others treat others). It is not a matter of judgment. It is a matter of reality and truth.

Respect also includes the sense of not interfering with or imposing upon others, i.e., respecting others' rights to self-determination. This means accepting people as they are, allowing people to be themselves and to express themselves as they care to or need to. This does not mean, necessarily, allowing others to impose upon oneself (depending on the circumstances, one may or may not have any choice in the matter). And this does not preclude being responsible for our children or others who are placed in our care. But it does mean treating everyone with respect, with consideration for their humanity, with appreciation for their divinity, with acknowledgement that God lives equally through all lives.

Respect is also not merely a matter of human relationships. There is also (properly) respect (consideration) (considerateness) with regard to other lifewaves. Humanity is not the primary lifewave nor the "highest" lifeform on this planet. There is no unqualified "right" to appropriation of resources from the other kingdoms (mineral, vegetable, animal). Thus one needs to respect that each lifewave is self-determined (within the context of the evolutionary plan) and that each contributes to the overall balance of this world. One needs to respect the evolutionary plan for life and consciousness as much as possible within the sense of one's understanding (e.g., respect for mineral resources and the health of the planet as a whole, respect for the role of vegetable matter (including food), respect for the role of animals (which role does not include provision of flesh food for human consumption)). Thus one should utilize "resources" of other lifewaves respectfully, gently, considerately, appropriately (not according to rationalization or appropriation) (but according to the flow of consciousness that places all lives in concert (context)).

Modesty

Modesty is defined as freedom from conceit or vanity (and from egoism), particularly in the view of having a moderate and realistic sense of one's abilities and value and in being unpretentious. The real value of modesty is the clarity (insight) (balance) afforded in the absence of conceit (vanity) (glamour) (self-delusion).

Modesty does not imply that a person has little value, or that a person is of less value than anyone else. Nor does it imply that a person has great value, or that any person has greater value than anyone else, even despite appearances. What it does imply, is that every person has value, but that no one has any greater (or any lesser) value than anyone else. Modesty is about a lack of comparison (lack of judging) (lack of egoism), and consequently, it does not matter how other people may appear to be, or how they may lack modesty. Modesty is about realism, about one's own realistic view, in placing oneself in the proper perspective, of having value but lacking self-importance (glamour). It simply does not matter (to one) how realistically (or unrealistically) other people view themselves. In realistically accepting one's own abilities and limitations, one is able to better and more clearly perceive the truth about other things. If one is unrealistic, either by immodestly perceiving oneself as superior (or inferior) to another human being (or any other lifeform), then that constitutes a bias that compromises whatever clarity of vision would normally (otherwise) be present.

Modesty, in this context of the spiritual student, does not imply diffidence or shyness or timidity, but it does imply poise (equilibrium) (balance) (harmony), and it does imply more so a reliance on inner strength rather than the strength of personality (ego). The spiritual student has no need to be assertive, for in discretion and modesty and poise, the spiritual student draws upon that inner strength and thereby discourages the evocation (role) (rule) of ego. Modesty implies that the student has no need to call attention to himself (herself) or to wear false appearance, although in living in accordance with one's values one may express moderate non-conformity (but without need for demonstrativeness). Real modesty implies a lack of false modesty (which is a

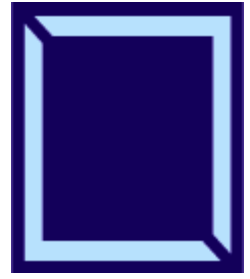
another form of self-deception). Real modesty cannot be contrived, but it can be cultivated.

Modesty implies that a student will speak according to need (sense of appropriateness) rather than by virtue of wanting to speak. Modesty implies a lack of claims-making. Modesty is about one's own nature, only. What and how other people may be is simply not important (and the spiritual student is encouraged not to judge or make comparisons). If others lack modesty, that is okay. What matters is how one remains true to one's own sense of higher consciousness and values. Modesty is part of the means of transcending the ego (egoism). Modesty (honesty) (realistic perspective) evokes clarity. Without modesty, one suffers more so from the bias of the senses and from having opinions (all opinions, however realistic, are attachments and therefore constitute bias). With modesty it is easier to not have opinions. With modesty it is easier to see clearly.

Thus, the spiritual student is encouraged to be modest (realistic) in self-perception, and in so being, the student discourages (minimizes) the presence and effects of ego. Eventually, modesty leads to or facilitates transcending self-centeredness and personality-centeredness. Ultimately, modesty leads to the student being able to embrace the truth about oneself.



Section 6.52



Special Virtues

All of the virtues are relatively important, but there are three special virtues of particular importance to the spiritual student in achieving communion. These are humility, honesty, and harmlessness.

Three Gates

One of the more potent concisions is based on the framework of three primary rays (i.e., in realization that there are three fundamental rays or energies in the universe and that all things belong to one or another of the three (seven) rays). The concision called “three gates” acknowledges and demonstrates what is ultimately necessary and sufficient to reach self-realization and communion (with the God-Christ (soul) within). Of course it is concise and simple only (and truly) in principle. In practice there is a lot of work (undertaking) to be realized within the three gates.

In a sense, all paths of evolution in consciousness lead ultimately to the same place, by various means and passages (methods and experiences), but generally embrace one or another of the three gates, for a while sufficient to achieve progress in that dimension, and ultimately through all three. Thus the three gates are in fact three dimensions or aspects, to be embraced sufficiently individually and (ultimately) collectively. It hardly matters in which order these are embraced or undertaken, as long as they are embraced and undertaken conscientiously and sufficiently. One must be earnest. Otherwise there will be only the appearance of progress and no real substance to the progress achieved. And while a student may resonate with one or another of the three rays (gates), the student must necessarily ultimately master all three.

The first gate is humility and refers to the conquering of the ego. This process (effort) takes many lifetimes and is not even undertaken until the ego and intellect have been developed sufficiently to become a hindrance to further development. So while it is the first gate it is generally the last practice to be mastered. It is relatively more subtle than the other two gates, and much more difficult in undertaking. Generally one must first have some considerable insight into the nature of ego and the courage (and ability) to be honest with oneself about one’s own nature.

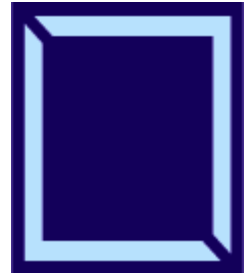
The second gate is honesty and refers to the commitment to truth that is necessary for self-realization. This too takes many lifetimes, and is complicated by the (self-interest of the) ego and the various deceptions and self-deceptions

inherent in experience and expression in the lower worlds. It is not so easy for people to appreciate that being dishonest at any level is actually harmful, to oneself and to others. And that embracing honesty conscientiously is necessary in order to be able to comprehend the truth (in its deeper aspects). Not being honest places and sustains barriers to learning and comprehension of lessons. If a person is not wholly open and honest, then there are substantial limitations.

The third gate is harmlessness and refers to the fundamental behavioral dimension (precept) (ideal) of not harming anyone or any living creature. While it is the third gate it is generally the first practice to be undertaken and mastered, because it is the more readily straightforward to understand and embrace. Therefore most “religions” readily incorporate principles of harmlessness (e.g., the golden rule) and various associated ethics and morals. But the fundamental lesson (intended to be) conveyed is that hurting anyone else is hurting oneself. It is moderately helpful for one to embrace harmlessness. But it is especially helpful for one to embrace harmlessness with the depth and breadth of understanding that this dimension actually represents. Thus the process is developmental and the understanding is progressive. And many lives are required as one finally restores the balance (individually and collectively) (through fulfillment of karma).



Section 6.521



Humility

Humility is the first of the three gates or special virtues and refers to the conquering of the ego.

Humility

With every consideration of a virtue come the questions of what it is and how it may be expressed. Humility is perhaps the most difficult of virtues to understand and to manifest, and yet it is one of the most essential of qualities expected of the spiritual student. Humility is a key with which many gates along the path are opened, where otherwise the student would be denied passage. It is indeed an elusive quality; by its very nature there can be nothing artificial or pretentious about it, and even the sense of humility can be quite deceptive. A foundation of selflessness and honesty is without substitute in any quest for humility.

In the popular sense, humility implies virtue and weakness; in the spiritual sense it implies virtue and strength. But is humility a positive quality (virtue) or is it the absence of a negative quality? Can humility be possessed or can it only be expressed? To analyze humility is to entertain complexity; to experience humility is to realize its beauty and its profound simplicity. It seems to be a synthesis of qualities and can only really be defined indirectly. To be humble is to be free from pride, disdain, arrogance, assertion, ostentation, self-centeredness, selfishness, and separateness. As a synthetic quality, humility is closely related to love and wisdom. Humility is, in a sense, a prerequisite for the higher, impersonal love (or is love a prerequisite for humility?), and can be considered an intermediary between love and wisdom. The love and wisdom, courtesy and reverence, of the truly humble person is incomparable. Needing no recognition, and leaving pride and glamour behind, the humble student of life can safely proceed with the work to be done (service without attachment). But where is the source of this synthetic quality? Is it not within the humble nature of the soul itself?

True spiritual humility is a majestic soul quality; with it comes the realization that all selves are equal, regardless of appearance. There is nothing submissive or degrading about the humble state; the humble student is neither lowly nor insignificant, for God is recognized within all (including self). The humility required for salvation eliminates any sense of superiority or inferiority; there is naught but a sense of inner equality as all others are seen in a balanced

perspective. In fact, even the sense of otherness is incompatible with true humility. Through the balancing of head and heart, the spiritual student can experience the reality of identification with all of humanity in a sea of oneness. God is seen to live equally through all things, and any sense of separateness or superiority (or inferiority) is not in harmony with the greater life.

If humility can be realized or achieved in consciousness, how can the depth of humility be extended into the daily life? Is it not a matter of soul and personality and their relative strengths? A degree of humility in personality is required for the union of self, since humility is a natural expression of the spiritual self, and that quality draws the personality unto the soul. And it is the personality that must ultimately bear the expression of that greater self.

As the crowning virtue, humility is an indication of the active presence of the spiritual self (the soul) and its concomitant expression (manifestation) of inner (quiet) strength and confidence. It is the release (purification and upliftment) of the proud and separative lower self and the openness to spiritual quality that paves the way toward active humility. Humility cannot be made; it can only be allowed as the common bond of divine life (love) is realized and as the foundation of spiritual equality is established.

« Commentary No. 637

Humility and the Soul

The nature of the soul is impersonal love. On the level of the soul that sense of love is pure, wholly impersonal, and uncluttered by any of the concerns of the personality or ego. The soul lives reposed, without activity per se, merely assimilating the experience of its reflection (the incarnated personality) and serving (qualitatively and subjectively) (not passively) to receive, qualify, and direct (transmit) (focus) energies of various (appropriate) kinds and measures.

The soul is not humble in the sense of "human" humility, for the soul does not characterize the range of human attributes in any personal sense. But the soul is characterized by what is considered (in the context of spiritual endeavor) the humble state. It is thus called not because the soul is humble (it is not, but neither is it lacking humility in any sense), but because in order for the mind (or

focus of waking-consciousness) of the personality to achieve alignment with the soul, that mind must first achieve “the humble state.” Or in other words, humility is a necessary prerequisite for alignment. The human personality cannot be aligned with the soul unless it has achieved (proper) (active) humility and has achieved (is functioning within) the humble state (the mind needs to approximate the character and quality of the soul).

Humility (in this, positive sense) cannot be achieved and the human personality cannot be aligned with the soul (the God-Christ within) for as long as the mind or personality is relatively coarse. Humility cannot be achieved and the human personality cannot be aligned with the soul for as long as the ego is allowed to persist in any role other than complete subservience to the soul (and the path). Humility cannot be achieved and the human personality cannot be aligned with the soul for as long as there are emotional or (concrete) mental attachments, or for as long as the mind is noisy with its own thoughts and ideas (i.e., unresponsive to the soul qualification).

The soul is neither active nor passive, but reposed in the (true) humility of being. Anything that is false cannot be uplifted into the state of consciousness of the soul. Since the ego is the false (not true) self, the presence of ego effectively prevents or inhibits the alignment of the soul and personality. The soul is not even open (responsive) to the personality (mind) until that mind (personality) is properly integrated and refined, and until the ego is properly subsumed (sublimated) (neutralized). In order for the mind and the soul to be aligned, the ego (concrete mind) must be entirely quiescent. As soon as the ego (separate, concrete mental activity) is resumed, the alignment of mind and soul is dissolved. Almost every aspect of life (discipline) approaching and upon the spiritual path has to do with subsuming the ego and (preparation for or) active service.

Thus humility is the key to approaching the soul and the key to the nature of the soul. In the humble state, the power of the soul can flow unimpeded by the separative mind or personality (because in such state the separative mind is not apparent). It is only when the mind (and heart) routinely (continually) achieve the humble state that the soul begins to respond to the presence (quality) of the personality (until that point, the soul is not aware of the personality (for the focus of the soul does not extend to objective levels of manifestation) and even

when that point is reached, the soul remains indifferent to anything other than the presence (quality) of the mind of the personality). The concerns of the personality simply cannot intrude upon the repose (humility) of the soul.

« Commentary No. 638

Active Humility

It is not enough for the serious spiritual student to be able to (and frequently) achieve the humble state, nor is it sufficient for the serious spiritual student to live in the humble state essentially all of the time (both accomplishments being nonetheless considerable (necessary) achievements and quite (particularly) conducive to spiritual qualification); it is, rather, sufficient for the serious spiritual student to live in the humble state essentially all of the time and simultaneously to apply that (proper) humility (the noiseless humility of spiritual (egoless) strength) to every aspect of the daily life (in both (inner and outer) worlds) of spiritual and (merely apparently) non-spiritual endeavor (no endeavor in the context of the spiritual path is non-spiritual or without some spiritual consideration).

In some very real sense (perspective), life on earth (for the present humanity) has only two objectives: (1) development of the ego (and its integrated personality) and (2) overcoming (sublimating) that ego (both are necessary, in turn, in order for humanity to contribute effectively to the fulfillment of the planetary plan (scheme)). This does not preclude the validity of other perspectives; to the contrary, it means that other (valid) perspectives can be considered nonetheless in relation to these two objectives (e.g., the development and worldwide manifestation of love and compassion (consideration), right human relations, wisdom, etc., is quite consistent with the underlying need for personality integration and continual refinement (humility)); but it does suggest that all other objectives (from this perspective), if real, are intermediate and intended to bring about (directly or otherwise) the fulfillment of the two fundamental objectives, in turn.

Integration (refinement) (synthesis) in the lower (personality) sense is a necessary prerequisite for proper humility and it leads (with proper subsequent

qualification) (eventually) to every day in the life being (an embrace and) an expression of humility, which is not in any sense a passive experience. Proper (true) humility is active humility in the sense that every activity on each plane of (objective and subjective human (personality)) consciousness should be an expression of humility (which implies allowance of higher qualification); every thought, every feeling, every physical expression should be qualified by the consciousness (and associated awareness) and concomitant demeanor of repose (tranquility) (inner peace) (humility) (selflessness), which means in such a manner that the ego plays a strictly subservient role, so that every activity can be qualified by the higher self (spirituality) rather than (predominantly) by the lower self (personality).

Active humility implies a rather fine balance between having the personality refinement and strength to be free from external manipulation (e.g., the peer pressure of mass (lower) consciousness) and having the ability to function constructively and harmoniously in the outer (personality) world without being absorbed (in that outer world). Personality strength tends to encourage the strength, domination, and independent resourcefulness (energy) of the ego, so that additional ego (personality) qualification is necessary to prevent that strength (ego) from being detrimental.

With proper spiritual qualification, the ego (personality strength) can be utilized quite effectively (without attachment or absorption). Thus true personality strength is strength of quality and character (humility) in which the (subservient) ego is effectively neutralized as an independent or self-centered nature, where the soul can effectively qualify personality expression.

Humility and Graciousness

Humility is perhaps the most potent aspect of spirituality, but it is not so easy to understand and practice. Graciousness without condescension provides a focus for beginning to embrace humility, in a way that is perhaps easier to understand and practice for most people.

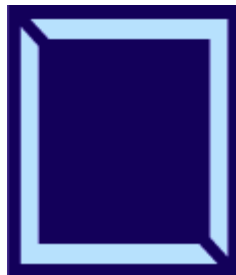
Humility is a matter of being, in relation to God, the transcendence of ego, while graciousness is a matter of practice and relationships with other people. Graciousness is characterized by kindness, warm courtesy, tact, and propriety. Graciousness implies mercy and compassion. Graciousness is “marked by kindness, sympathy, and unaffected politeness.” Inherent graciousness implies or conveys poise under duress, genuine appreciation for others, and a non-judging, non-imposing, non-separative manner. It is not properly about conforming to social standards, but about being kind and gentle. It is not about responding in kind, but responding with kindness. It is a benevolence and affability in relationship that builds or encourages comfort, considerateness, harmony, and respect for one another. The original meaning of the word (graciousness) is godliness, a generosity of spirit.

One might think that love or compassion is the most important quality to be cultivated by the spiritual aspirant, and indeed it is. But love and compassion are rather qualitative and subjective and neither love nor compassion tempers the ego. It is the ego that is the single most formidable barrier to higher consciousness. And it is humility that provides a means of transcending that barrier. So while humility is the quality to be cultivated in approaching and embracing higher consciousness, it is graciousness that is the quality to be cultivated in approaching and embracing humanity. Love is so all-embracing that it tends to lack the focus required for substantive progress. Humility provides a viable (essential) inner focus, while graciousness provides a viable (essential) outer focus.

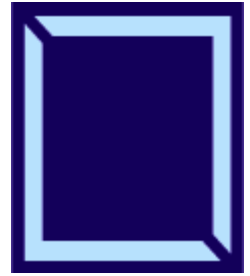
Some think that approaching God is all there is to the mystical journey, but this is not entirely correct. One cannot effectively separate oneself from the world, from humanity, and simply approach God. For God lives as much through the

world, and through humanity, as God lives within. Approaching God through the inner experience needs ultimately to be balanced with approaching God through embracing the world and humanity, gently, graciously, humbly. This is not embracing the world in its worldliness or humanity in its humanness, but embracing the world as a manifestation of God, and embracing humanity in its higher sense. Being gentle and civil toward people engenders harmonious and respectful relationships, and helps to transcend the separative tendencies of the ego. Judging and criticizing are separative. Feeling superior likewise. But seeing or feeling God within every human being, within every lifeform, respecting that divinity within all, is essential. But this cannot be simply an intellectual accomplishment. To be truly effective it must be (made) real, embraced physically and emotionally as well as mentally.

This means living in harmony in the world and with people, without being absorbed by the superficial aspect of the world, without becoming or remaining part of the mundane world and having superficial relationships. It means having genuine, gracious relationships with all peoples. It means remaining awake and aware while embracing people who are asleep, without that distinction being separative. This is a great challenge. But with both graciousness and humility the spiritual student is enabled to proceed much more deeply within the higher consciousness.



Section 6.522



Honesty

Honesty is the second of the three gates or special virtues and refers to the commitment to truth that is necessary for self-realization.

Honesty

One of the most fundamental of qualities to be cultivated by the spiritual student is honesty. It is not enough merely to meet the orthodox standards of honesty; the spiritual student is (ultimately) expected to achieve the very spirit of honesty, the deepest intention and experience that is the realization of truth (reality) that exists at the core of one's being. Honesty is actually a simple quality, but the implications for the student are quite considerable.

Basically (literally), honesty means fairness and straightforwardness of conduct; and adherence to the facts. Honesty is directly related to both integrity and sincerity. Honesty implies a refusal to lie, steal, or deceive in any way. One of the problems associated with honesty (and dishonesty) is the matter of interpretation (perspective) and meaning. Fortunately, as spiritual consciousness is evolved it becomes (increasingly) easier to discern truthfulness. Considerable effort (intention) may be needed for the student to cultivate (and refine) the concept and expression of an honest nature. It may not be so easy to be completely honest in thought, in word (speech) (communication), and in deed (action). To the extent to which it is possible, however, the spiritual student must endeavor to be entirely honest in every way.

One might ask at this point, why honesty is so important. The answer is that the cultivation of an honest nature is very closely related to the realization of truth (God) itself. If the student earnestly seeks truth (the God within) (reality), then the student must become truthful, in every possible way. How can a student expect to realize truth unless he is of a nature quite similar to truth? There are other reasons why honesty should be quite important to the student. The consequences of dishonesty are of a nature to undermine and impede spiritual progress. Dishonesty is related to disharmony, not only between individuals but also between the individual and the various cosmic (spiritual) laws, and between the personality and the (overshadowing) (indwelling) soul. Dishonesty actually creates (and sustains) the disharmony (which might be called illusion) which is a barrier between what is said (thought) (done) and what is true (real) (meant). Honesty, on the other hand, sustains reality and discourages illusion.

There are many forms of dishonesty, some quite obvious, others rather subtle. To say one thing and mean another is a form of dishonesty. To believe something but not to live in accordance with that belief is dishonest. To misrepresent oneself, to pretend, or to wear a face (facade) (appearance or behavior) is to be dishonest (to be in disharmony with reality or oneself). Dishonesty is also possible by omission or implication. Dishonesty (disharmony) is also related to disease. Wherever a discrepancy exists between what is said or done and what should be, there is disharmony. Awareness of such (by the person involved) implies dishonesty: lack of awareness of such implies either self-deception (which is worse than dishonesty) or ignorance (darkness).

It is essential that the spiritual student cultivate truthfulness in all regards; to be as honest as possible in all dealings with others (inwardly and outwardly), and to be entirely honest with oneself. Self-honesty is the very basis or foundation of truthfulness, for in self-honesty there is cultivated an awareness of truthfulness. There is no substitute for the cultivation of humility, honesty, and truthfulness in matters large or small, if the student expects ever to find the true self. It is necessarily a progressive cultivation, for as momentum builds, the student will realize more and more the nature and reality of truth and his relationship to (That) truth.

« Commentary No. 914

Intellectual Honesty

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

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

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

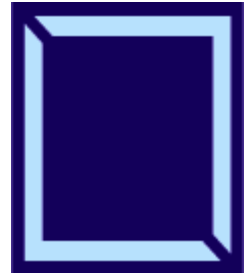
Although the intellect is a considerable and evolutionarily-intended achievement, it is intended as an effective tool within the mind, and is not an end in itself. Identification with the intellect is a natural stage through which we all pass. But if the intellect is over-developed, overly-relied-upon,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

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

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



Section 6.523



Harmlessness

Harmlessness is the third of the three gates or special virtues and refers to the fundamental behavioral ideal of not harming anyone or any living creature.

Harmlessness

The adjustment of inner teachings to outward manifestation is a challenge to the person (student) on the spiritual path. There comes a time when a person realizes that he or she has outgrown the attitudes and habits of another time. The student finds that working out one's destiny and karmic obligations requires a sense of inner direction and much intelligently applied diligent work.

It is what a person thinks and feels that makes one what one is. Therefore, by the adjustment of one's thoughts and feelings one can powerfully affect the working out of daily life experiences. By the proper use of determination and will, a person can train the mind to think only those thoughts that are worthy of the spiritually directed person. The student can purposely rid the mind of all unkind and critical thoughts, and at the same time cultivate the qualities of harmlessness, kindness, and loving understanding in all areas of endeavor.

When these qualities are practiced and automatically made part of a person's daily life expression, then glamour will end. The student will then see all people and occurrences in the light of love and understanding, allowing them to be free to live their own lives and handle their own responsibilities. The student will think only constructive and positive thoughts about himself (herself) and others and will conduct himself (herself) in a good and positive manner. The student will be so much in control of himself (herself) that no mood or emotional reaction will affect those with whom he (she) comes in contact. Therefore the student will demonstrate harmlessness in thought and word and deed. The student will also find that by eliminating glamour and illusion in his (her) own life and living in the light of the inner teachings and intuition, and by demonstrating harmlessness, the student will aid his (her) own personal awakening as well as the awakening of these same qualities in humanity.

It is believed that the practice of harmlessness alone will do more to produce harmonious conditions in a person's daily life than work along any other line, because it is the expression of the life of the person who realizes that he (she) is a soul whose nature is love, and it is this soul that eventually controls the personality and leads to the expression in everyday life of the God within.

Harmlessness

One of the qualities or virtues to be cultivated by the spiritual student is (dynamic) harmlessness. Harmlessness is an attitude (state of mind) which discourages the student from inflicting any injury (physical, emotional, or mental) upon any life-form. Motives and circumstances should be carefully considered and evaluated before any interference in any life is contemplated. Actually, every action could well be evaluated, and action taken only where there is proper motive, need, kindness, and the intention of harmlessness.

The roles of the various kingdoms in nature can be considered in terms of karma and the need for harmlessness. The plant kingdom has certain responsibilities to perform, including that of providing food and oxygen for the animal and human kingdoms. The animal kingdom also has certain responsibilities, but providing humanity with flesh foods is not one of them. All of the kingdoms in nature are highly interrelated, and even humanity has certain responsibilities to the various kingdoms. These responsibilities and relationships are both karmic and evolutionary, and in themselves are sufficient cause for the conscientious application of harmlessness.

Harmlessness may arise from purely intellectual and rational causes, but it is the genuine harmlessness that is the expression of love that the student should cultivate. Harmlessness needs to be a way of life, an automatic process, a natural response to the circumstances to be faced in the external world. Through the discipline and practice of harmlessness, this virtue can easily be made a part of the daily life. There need be no worry or distraction involved, simply a healthy, positive, loving, and automatic (comfortable) expression in the outer life of the love-nature of the soul. The expression of harmlessness does not imply a passive way of life; it does suggest a positive attitude and an awareness of the goodness within every life-form. Harmlessness includes looking at the good qualities in other persons, and not dwelling on the bad. If the good is looked for, it will be found, for everyone is an expression of a soul whose nature is love (goodness). The student should recognize the soul or God within every human life as the same God that exists within himself, regardless of whether or not the outer person is aligned with the inner soul. Looking for the

good as an expression of harmlessness should overshadow all thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Positive harmlessness implies strength and discipline, not weakness or inability. It takes strength to remain silent where words might not be helpful and constructive. It takes strength to avoid gossip (in thought and speech); it takes strength to eliminate all criticism. Harmlessness is the opposite of selfishness. Harmlessness leads to greater awareness and understanding, and to the capacity for love on much higher levels than the physical and emotional. Harmlessness leads to usefulness, for the selfish person cannot be effectively utilized for constructive (spiritual) work. Harmlessness minimizes limitation. It is also a breeder of virtues, for harmlessness leads to kindness and other heart-centered qualities.

Harmlessness leads to an increased inner awareness that assists in the adjustment of inner teachings to the outward manifestations of life. Though harmlessness is quite a simple virtue, the effects are rather potent and far-reaching. By living the spiritual life in the external world, the positive growth of humanity is encouraged (as harmlessness is considered an integral part of the spiritual life). And when mankind has learned the meaning of harmlessness, then truly can the world disciple emerge as an obvious reality.

« Commentary No. 561

Harmlessness and Truth 1

The demeanor (posture) (value practice) of harmlessness and the quest for truth are both noble and realizable goals for the spiritual student. But care should be taken not to excuse one for the other or to suffer the respective associated deceptions (misconstructions).

In the first place, harmlessness is more a demeanor and posture than it is an absolute practice. As a practice, the posture of harmlessness is (inversely) limited by the extent of awareness and realization. One can achieve and maintain an effective posture of harmlessness and still (more or less passively (involuntarily) (coincidentally)) be an instrument or catalyst for apparent

distress. Within any karmic domain, all consequences are warranted. Therefore what is relatively important for the spiritual student is the posture of harmlessness that qualifies all activities and attitudes (thinking and feeling) so that no harm is intentionally or carelessly or unnecessarily inflicted (within the domain of one's awareness (which should necessarily be cultivated, refined, and gradually expanded)). Lack of awareness is a mitigating factor, but lack of earnestness in achieving (an) awareness (of consequences of (potential) actions) is not an acceptable position for the spiritual student. The spiritual student should care enough to be (become) aware of his activity (on whatever levels) and the effects (and potential) of that activity.

On the other hand, the concept of harm should be carefully considered in its karmic context, beyond the apparent (secular) meaning. From the occult standpoint, any deliberate, careless, or unnecessary imposition (apparent or otherwise) is a potentially harmful exercise (and particularly for any such exercise which limits or injures the personality instrument (on any level)) for the perspective of the one who so imposes, while for the one who is imposed upon there is naught but warranted consequences within the scope and consistency of karma. The fact of that karmic warrant in no way excuses any imposition. One should therefore exercise prudent (sensible) (non-oppressive) care in all activities, and where imposition is reasonably necessary (consider the awkwardness of such a karmic position) one should proceed nonetheless gently (with appreciation for the sacredness of all life).

Harmlessness is sometimes (falsely) used as an excuse for dishonesty. But in fact there is nothing inconsistent about harmlessness and honesty (the embrace of truth). One can always remain silent, knowing that any presumption is the responsibility of the one who presumes, but one should be careful not to mislead by remaining silent. In the final analysis, one should be honest in all respects, and open wherever there exists an appropriate responsiveness to openness (with mutual understanding and respect) (without imposition of ideas). The real crime is deception (including self-deception), so one should be careful in both dimensions (the practice of harmlessness and the embrace of truth) to become aware of (and overcome) deception.

In a sense, harmlessness is a precursor to truth. One cannot really (fully) embrace (the quest for) truth until an effective awareness (realization) (posture)

of harmlessness (the consequential dynamics of the forces of human conscious and unconscious activity) is achieved, and until that achievement has become an effective qualification of consciousness and has fallen below the threshold of normal waking-consciousness. Any unfounded presumption of harmlessness will undermine the quest for truth, since the refinement of consciousness is a necessary prerequisite for the realization of (higher) (relative) truth.

« Commentary No. 687

Harmlessness and Truth 2

Of the three major endeavors within the spiritual path (namely (1) the adherence to truth, (2) the practice of harmlessness, and (3) service), service is the least understood by aspirants to the spiritual life; the concept of harmlessness is reasonably well understood (by virtue of its practicality) and increasingly so as the aspirant matures; and adherence to truth is not only poorly understood by aspirants but aspirants' belief in their understanding of adherence to truth generally greatly exceeds their real understanding of it.

Truth is revealed progressively as the student grows and deepens in the spiritual discipline and as the student becomes more and more qualified (refined). Adherence to truth is a more complex matter in which experience tests the student's ability to discern truth and the means and practice of adherence to the truth that is revealed, discerned, and relatively understood. In addition to the distinction between truth and adherence is the distinction between being honest with oneself and being honest with others. Virtually everyone is self-deceived to some extent, but on the spiritual path one must be determined to virtually eliminate self-deception (lack of self-honesty), as a prerequisite to proper external expression (honesty in regard to others) and proper internal expression (self-honesty leading to rapprochement with the soul). The spiritual student (who is endeavoring to embrace the spiritual path) as well as the aspirant (who seeks to embrace the spiritual path) generally greatly underestimate the importance of honesty (and adherence to truth).

One of the reasons for that underestimation is the attention of the mind of the student to other, more apparently pragmatic matters, such as the practice of

harmlessness. Harmlessness is nonetheless quite important, and as the student learns more and more of occult (spiritual) (cosmic) law and discerns more and more (better) the causal processes and cause and effect relationships, then the student is better able to practice harmlessness. The practice of harmlessness builds (proper) character and helps in the process of refinement (albeit not sufficiently in itself except in the sense that all of the preliminary (spiritual) disciplines and endeavors are considered aspects of the harmlessness (as they are, as well as being aspects of adherence to truth and service)).

But often enough students see (albeit improperly) a conflict between harmlessness and truth and choose harmlessness over truth. In practical matters it is psychologically easier (for most people) to practice perceived harmlessness than it is to be honest (this is also true in more subtle ways). Harmlessness is often the excuse used to justify “white lies” and other forms of dishonesty. But (in truth and harmlessness) (in theory and practice), there is no actual conflict between truth and harmlessness (while conflict does indeed exist between harmlessness and dishonesty). The student should always endeavor to be true (honest) as well as harmless, never undermining one for the other, and true to oneself as well as to others, withholding comment where necessary in order to remain true (and harmless). In practical matters (of honesty) one must have the courage to be truthful (openly where appropriate) (and withholding comment where appropriate). One is never obligated to answer questions or to comment upon the demand or expectation of others. With gentleness, one can properly refuse (and have the courage to face the consequences of that refusal).

It is better to be honest (harmless) than to be dishonest (albeit perceived (improperly) as harmless), for dishonesty (even in apparently inconsequential matters and ways) is harmful, for it creates a barrier between the mind and the soul, that fosters self-deception and inhibits the discernment of truth.

Ahimsa

Ahimsa does not belong merely to the Jains nor to Jainism, but is a concept found to some extent in every God-centered religion, but ahimsa has been popularized mainly through Hinduism and Jainism and theosophy.

Ahimsa is a Sanskrit word with many meanings and implications. It is a principle of non-harming or non-violence, of dynamic harmlessness embracing both truth and compassion. Ahimsa “is a central concept of Hindu and Jain morality” but it appears in other words and forms in virtually every other religion as well. In Hinduism ahimsa is a basis for rejecting animal sacrifices, a basis for vegetarianism, and a basis for right human relations. In Jainism the concept is extended to the microscopic realm and to all of life. Clearly one cannot avoid “harming” lives for which one is barely aware, but the principle is a matter of intent as well as practice, and one must endeavor to not harm other lives directly or deliberately, and to minimize the harming of other lives indirectly (incidentally). Thus it is both an ideal and a daily practice.

The basis of ahimsa is a simple recognition of the God that lives within all lives. To harm another creature is to harm oneself. To harm another creature (or oneself) is to live not in harmony with God. The implications are vast, and extend from individual human relationships to collective consciousness to relationships among nations, races, and cultures, to relationships with other kingdoms (especially the animal and plant kingdoms). There is of course an underlying purpose to all of life, and intended relationships between kingdoms, such that the animals are evolving (involving) through their relationship with humanity (which does not include provision of food), while the plants are involving less directly (more passively) (and which does include the provision of food to other lives). In other words, eating flesh foods is counter-evolutionary, it does not contribute to the evolution of animal consciousness, while eating plant foods is evolutionary and does contribute to the evolution of (collective) consciousness, especially if it is done with respect and consideration for plants-as-life.

Ahimsa is very much a matter of awareness. As one approaches the God-Self, one simply finds oneself unable to harm others in any direct or deliberate sense, one finds oneself more and more averse to flesh foods (i.e., one who is relatively refined in consciousness becomes more and more sensitive to the quality and caliber (and suitability) of foods and the digestive system will eventually reject all animal foods). As the awareness grows, so does the recognition and apprehension of consequences of our attitudes, behaviors, feelings, and thoughts. One simply becomes more aware of the potential harm and there is (gradually) evoked a natural change in attitude and behavior and feeling and thinking such that one is less and less harmful to others.

Ahimsa is not merely a passive attitude. In proper practice it is an active, dynamic process. It is not a matter of weakness, it is a matter of spiritual strength. It is a matter of allowing the God within to express itself, which naturally embraces compassion, gentleness, harmlessness, harmony, peace, and poise. It is not simply a matter of not hurting someone but of embracing compassion for all others, regardless of circumstances. It is accepting responsibility for one's own actions (on every level of consciousness) and for one's own circumstances. It is living from the heart. It is embracing reverence for (all) life. The student is not expected to be perfect in all these regards, but the student is expected to sincerely embrace the principle and its practices, to the full extent of his or her abilities and awareness.

