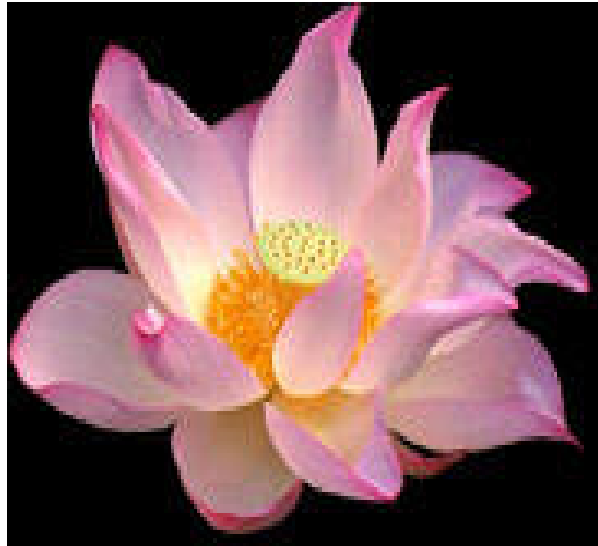


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**Esoteric philosophy
and its applications to
individual and group
service and the expansion
of human consciousness.**



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The Esoteric Quarterly

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Divine Purpose and Symbolism

Our field of interest is not known for its dependence on dogma, but there are certain core beliefs to which most esoteric students subscribe. One of these is the notion that the universe and its lives are purposeful and unfold within a framework of Divine Will. As finite beings we cannot pretend to comprehend Will in its entirety. In fact we are told that even the evolved beings who comprise the Hierarchy of Masters understand only a small part—albeit much more than we do. That part is referred to as Purpose (with a capital “P”). The masters give us occasional glimpses of Purpose to guide the course of human affairs.

To the extent that we have free will, we are not constrained to go along with the Hierarchy’s wishes; but through trial and error we discover that voluntary compliance increases collective success and happiness. At some point—a most important one in the unfoldment of consciousness—mere compliance gives way to enthusiastic collaboration, allowing us to realize much more of our human potential. The Aquarian Age, perhaps more than any previous age, offers rich opportunities for humanity to work with the masters to express Hierarchical Purpose and make the world a better place.

Clearly there is much to be gained by studying Hierarchical Purpose to understand how it works and discover what specific plans may have been made for the years and decades ahead. Three articles in this issue of the *Esoteric Quarterly* address this important issue.

John Hinds’ article deals specifically with our relationship to the “great chain of being” that links all life, from the lower kingdoms to the masters and beyond. It is within this chain that we find our place and discover our service responsibilities. Temple Richmond’s article seeks to contact Purpose through the expansion of consciousness to the buddhic plane: the

plane of intuition, wisdom and synthesis: the plane, indeed, where the masters can be found. Richmond provides meditation exercises to help us move to this higher level. Finally, the short paper by Yves Chaumette stresses that Purpose is to be sought in our receptivity to the whole human experience and—echoing the conclusions of the earlier studies—our commitment to serve.

The other three articles in this issue all address aspects of symbolism. Symbols speak to the intuition as much as to the intellect, and have provided a basis for esoteric study since the time of the ancient mystery schools.

Donna Brown’s article explores the Qabalistic Tree of Life and its esoteric companion, the Tarot, to provide insights into the coming of the Teacher for the Aquarian Age. This Avatar will express itself both in an individual outpouring, comparable to the Christ experience of 2,000 years ago, and also in a rapid expansion of group consciousness in all who open themselves to its influence. The last full-length article draws on the wisdom of the Qabalah, as well as on Egyptian, Neoplatonic and Christian theology, in an attempt to formulate a consistent symbolic model of the trinity. Emphasis is placed on the process by which the trinitarian aspects emerge and on their numerical and gender symbolism.

This issue concludes with a short paper by Angela Lemaire, which turns to the symbolism of mythology. The paper explores the 12 labors of the Greek hero Hercules, viewed as symbols of initiation. Lemaire challenges artists around the world to express the meaning of the twelve Herculean labors through the creative arts.

At the time of writing (early April 2005), the world mourns the death of Pope John Paul II. We might disagree with some of John Paul’s positions on doctrine and church discipline, but

few could question his commitment to world service. Untiring in his ministry, he shared his energy, humanity, joy and suffering to within a few days of his passing. His life made a difference, and we are challenged to do likewise.

Publishing the *Esoteric Quarterly* would not be possible without the tireless support of authors, reviewers, members of the editorial board, and everyone else involved. We thank them all for sharing their time, talents and energy. This is a wonderful service opportunity, and we encourage you, our readers, to participate also, by submitting your own articles and book reviews. As should be clear by now, the *Quarterly* covers a wide variety of esoteric topics. What might seem to be a unique interest may be of great interest to our readers; so please don't be shy.

In particular we welcome letters to the editor. Please share your views on the articles, reviews, or any other aspects of the *Quarterly*.

John Nash
www.uriel.com

Publication Policies

Articles are selected for publication in *The Esoteric Quarterly* because we believe they represent a sincere search for truth, support the service mission to which we aspire, or contribute to the expansion of human consciousness.

Publication of an article does not necessarily imply that the Editorial Board or the School for Esoteric Studies agrees with the views expressed. We encourage critical thinking and evaluation of ideas. However, we will not allow this journal to be used as a platform for attacks on individuals, institutions or nations. This policy applies to articles and features as well as to comments from readers.

In turn, we understand that the author of an article may not necessarily agree with the views, attitudes or values expressed by a referenced source. Indeed, serious scholarship sometimes requires an author to cite work that he or she finds abhorrent. We will not reject an article for publication simply on the grounds that it contains a reference to an objectionable source.

Quotes of the Quarter

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men—
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out.
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth

The Great Invocation, Universal Prayer
for the Aquarian Age

We shall then be led to the consideration of the evolution of intelligence, or of the factor of mind which is working out as ordered purpose in all that we see around us. This will reveal to us a world which is not blindly going on its

way, but which has back of it some plan, some co-ordinated scheme, some organised concept which is working itself out by means of the material form. One reason why things appear to us so difficult of comprehension is involved in the fact that we are in the midst of a transition period, and the plan is as yet imperfect; we are too close to the machinery, being ourselves an integral part of the whole. We see a little bit of it here, and another little bit there, but the whole grandeur of the idea is not apparent to us. We may have a vision, we may have a high moment of revelation, but when we contact the reality on every side, we question the possibility of the ideal materialising, for the intelligent relationship between the form and that which utilises it seems so far from adjustment.

Alice A. Baily. *The Consciousness of the Atom*. Lucis Publishing Co., 1922.

This love of symbol had a curious effect upon the medieval way of thinking... Symbolic interpretation involves a certain concordance and analogy of essences... [T]he symbol and the thing symbolized have in common certain characteristics which can be abstracted and compared. Thus, red and white roses flourishing among thorns could bring to mind the virgins and martyrs who shone forth amidst their persecutors. Roses and thorns on the one hand, martyrs and persecutors on the other: they had certain properties in common, the white of innocence, the red of blood, harshness, cruelty. Colours were in this way reduced to essences, with a distinctive and autonomous value.

Umberto Eco. *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*. Yale University Press, 1986.

Kabbalah is a word meaning "tradition," and it is a major thesis of this work that the tradition

this esoteric tradition was dedicated to transmit had its origin with the ancient Hebraic priesthood... The sacred science that engaged the priest-scientists of the Hebrew Temple, as of so many ancient cultures, was focused on the three areas that could demonstrate the same unification of the finite with the infinite... These three areas are geometry (both earthly and astronomical), sound (both harmonic and linguistic), and number: geometry involving the realm of the limited, sound of the unlimited, and number of that which can bring these inverse polarities into relationship.

Leonora Leet. *The Secret Doctrine of the Kabbalah*. Inner Traditions, 1999.

[T]he world was made in six days, not because the Creator stood in need of a length of time (for it is natural that God should do everything at once, not merely by uttering a command, but by even thinking of it); but because the things created required arrangement; and number is akin to arrangement; and, of all numbers, six is, by the laws of nature, the most productive: for of all the numbers, from the unit upwards, it is the first perfect one, being made equal to its parts, and being made complete by them... [I]t is formed so as to be both male and female, and is made up of the power of both natures; for in existing things the odd number is the male, and the even number is the female... It was fitting, therefore, that the world, being the most perfect of created things, should be made according to the perfect number... the first combination of odd and even numbers, since it was to embrace the character both of the male who sows the seed, and of the female who receives it.

Philo of Alexandria. *The Creation of the World*. 30 CE. Oliver J. Thatcher (ed.). Milwaukee: University Research Extension Co., 1907.

The Sacred Rule of Life: The Idea of Hierarchy

John Hinds

Summary

This article looks briefly examines the notion that life is not random but rather has an order and meaning, a purpose, and that this viewpoint is perfectly compatible with a scientific approach to phenomena. Most religious traditions include belief in teleology, but the idea of a personal god is not necessary for such a belief. The idea that life is interconnected and interdependent (the ancient idea of a “great chain of being”) and that human evolution may be an evolution of consciousness is discussed.

Human evolution as the unfolding of greater, more inclusive and creative states of being implies the strong possibility that states of consciousness exist far in advance of what we think of as the normal human state. Indications of such awareness are seen in the most evolved and creative human beings, and the possibility of individuals’ being able to cultivate such higher states of awareness to receive help from higher states of being and consciousness is part of nearly all religious traditions and is consistent with the notion of a “sacred order” or hierarchy in the universe.

Introduction

The universe is either nurturing or it is not; it is either meaningful or meaningless; it is either “alive” or it is “dead.”

Many people today are “hungry” in spite of an abundance of possessions; they are hungry for greater meaning. This is a spiritual hunger. Some people find meaning in a blind unquestioning religious faith. Others feel that blind faith, a faith unexamined, is little more than superstition—a comforting illusion—and cannot be satisfied with that approach. Many intelligent, educated people are finding the traditional dogmas of various churches no longer believable or acceptable. But they often think

that the only alternative to dogmatic religious belief is some form of materialism. After all, materialism is the dominant “religion” of our society and is promoted on all sides. We are judged by how we look, what we may own, how much money we have, not by our values or the goodness of what is in our hearts. The signs of “success” are purely material ones. “Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.” Yet many people who have achieved this kind of “success” have found it does not bring them the fulfillment they thought it would. They feel empty or so overstressed that life seems meaningless.

If neither the old theologies nor materialism can satisfy the human need for meaning, is there any other way that can? Is there a third way?

There are two basic ways of looking at the universe. There is the material one and there is one that might be termed “spiritual.” The materialistic view is the view of science. Science (rightly) starts with what can be directly seen and known and this is the world of forms. The usual assumption that scientists make is that the universe began “randomly” and that life and even consciousness are simply “accidents” arising from combinations of matter. However, many scientists as well as traditionally religious people see even in science evidence of an “intelligent design.” Things fit together

About the Author

Dr. John Hinds is a licensed psychologist who currently practices in New York City. He has been a student of world religious traditions as well as the Ageless Wisdom for many years. Dr. Hinds also has extensive experience working in the arts. He has written occasional articles on the creative mind for professional journals and has published in *Venture Inward* and *The Beacon*.

too well and the balance between different parts of life, and different orders of existence too intricate to assume it is random. (In fact, randomness is nearly impossible to achieve and is in some ways “unnatural”.) This brings in the second major way of looking at things, which for want of a better term is called “spiritual.” The spiritual view says that the world we see, the world of matter and forms is the *result* of an unseen or spiritual cause. There is an “invisible world” of causes; the world we see and know, the material world, is a world of “results”. This is a basic premise of most religions and Platonic philosophies. To some extent, this view is also adopted by science.

Science now holds that our common-sense notions of reality do not hold and the world of the senses is the result of unseen forces. The main difference is that science still holds matter to be the supreme ultimate principal. Since matter is energy, all it would take is a wider and deeper notion of what this mysterious “something” called energy is and what are its possibilities to arrive at a meeting of the minds between the scientific and religious views in their broadest and most inclusive forms.

Spiritual View of Life

Accepting the idea of an intelligent design does not (necessarily) mean the existence of a *personal* God. Intelligent design in the universe may mean that there is an intelligent unknowable source or cause of all things. This is the philosopher’s God, the unmoved mover, the causeless cause, the thing that is not a thing and is utterly beyond our ability to imagine. On the other hand, this view does not negate the possibility of a personal creative “agent” or “agents” who implement and express the underlying qualities of intelligence, love and pur-

pose of this ultimate source or **Grand Overall Design**. Other possible views include the idea that energy or matter is inherently “intelligent” and potentially “conscious” without any theoretical limits in its expression. Let me suggest that all of these are simply different ways of thinking about the same thing. The new scientific paradigm is that there is no one “true” paradigm of viewpoint. No one viewpoint is capable of fully encompassing reality. From the human point of view, there are only *useful ways of thinking about things*. No one truth is completely true, but for any given situation there are ways of thinking about it that are use-

ful in varying degrees. If science realizes that its methods cannot express *all* truths and the spiritual approach does the same (for both can only deal with human understandings of One Reality, and human understandings, even of the Absolute, are relative understandings). Thus, a spiritual point of view need not conflict in any way with a scientific one

What are the implications of the spiritual view of life? First, forms are not fundamentally separate

but come from a single invisible cause and are therefore in some way connected. This science too acknowledges but seldom emphasizes. We are used to looking at life as a competition in our Western societies, and certainly there is a part of life that seems to operate on that level but some degree of cooperation and interdependence seems needed to make life possible. Lewis Thomas, author of *Lives of a Cell*,¹ remarked that if life were found in a remote corner of Mars the curious thing would not be finding life on Mars but in finding it only in one small corner of it. Life does not seem to operate that way. On Earth life is found everywhere from the polar icecaps to nearly boiling waters around hot springs or subterranean volcanoes. Truly life is everywhere. And each “higher” form of life depends for its suste-

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nance on the “lower” ones. The vegetable kingdom depends on and transforms the elements of the sun, water, air and the minerals of the soil into organic life forms that feed the animal and the human. We in turn help the vegetable kingdom propagate and evolve new forms. The same relationship holds between the human kingdom and the animal with the additional relationship of humans with domestic animals and pets in which a personal relationship is often established and we “learn” from animal behavior and pets often absorb human traits by their close contact with their owners. Both sides benefit.

If life is interconnected, and it is obvious that it is, why should anyone assume that humans are the highest types of creatures possible? If evolution stopped at the level of average humanity today we all would be in trouble, the planet included. It may be that humans are the highest material beings on the planet but does evolution necessarily *stop* there? Each new stage or evolutionary leap forward (sometimes called a *kingdom*: — mineral, vegetable, animal, human) has expressed possibilities that could not have even been imagined based solely on past developments. What a great leap forward the mobility and intelligence and adaptation of an animal is over that of plants. How much greater is the intelligence and imagination of a human being over that of the highest animals. Can you imagine the most intelligent dog or monkey or even a dolphin creating art, symbols, philosophy, religions, or higher mathematics? And within humanity itself, look at the range of awareness and abilities. Does a DaVinci, an Einstein, a Christ, a Buddha not represent practically a different order of human being from the average person? Yet in humans this difference is not one of *form* but represents an expansion in consciousness, spirituality and the range of creativity. Perhaps this is an indication of where the future evolution of humanity lies, perhaps it is one of consciousness and not so much of form? Perhaps this is what Jesus meant when he spoke of the rule of God being within us or when he said, “you are gods” and “greater things than I have done shall you do”? Perhaps this is what the poets,

artists, saints, mystics and philosophers have sensed and have searched for?

The Next Step Forward

If evolution of consciousness does not stop with us, what might the next step look like? Judging by the most advanced and creative individuals, the next step would include not only greater mental perception but also greater creativity and greater intuitive, as opposed to analytical, abilities. Most creative people, scientists included, will tell you that their creative insights usually come through an intuitive insight which is then checked and tested by reason. An inclusive, synthetic awareness might be a next stage of development after the analytical mind has reached the limits of its development. If we are to judge by the consciousness reached by the greatest spiritually minded people, the spiritual teachers and true philosophers, the next step ahead must also include a greater awareness of the whole. Not losing any of our individuality or identity, our sense of self seems to *expand* with evolution to include a connection to *all* of life. In such a state we would be one with both ourselves and with the greater whole. Many people have occasional flashes or glimpses of this state of awareness. Certainly, it would seem that more of this kind of awareness is needed if we are going to survive the ecological and political crises we are faced with. And what, if not selflessness, was most characteristic of all the holy ones and the spiritual leaders of humanity?

Before our modern times the idea that life was a “great chain of being” was the widely accepted way of looking at life. In this view what happened “above” affected what was “below.” Perhaps it is time for a modern reformulation of this idea.

If evolution in humans becomes an evolution of consciousness and if one can see examples of such evolution in the most advanced members of the human race, is it not possible then that there are those who have developed subjectively and spiritually to such an extent that they might be considered members of a new “spiritual kingdom” so far ahead in conscious

ness to the average person as to constitute a whole new order of being?

The traditions of all major religions of the world speaks of such beings. They are those who have entered the spiritual kingdom, the kingdom of god, or heaven as Christians put it. It is important to realize that this concept is not about an organization but is a *subjective unity of minds*. This is the Christian “communion of saints.” It is sometimes called the Society of Illumined Minds. In the Eastern tradition it is sometimes known as the Buddha and his Arhats. Theosophists talk of the Masters of the Wisdom and the Spiritual Hierarchy of the Planet (using hierarchy in its original sense of “sacred order”).

The Spiritual Hierarchy

A natural question would be: “If there really is such a thing as a group of advanced beings, why is humanity in the mess that it’s in and why aren’t they helping us solve our problems?” This is a reasonable enough question. There are many ways to answer it but basically it comes down to human free will. Throughout the ages, teachings have been given, warnings made, guidance offered. Great spiritual truths have been spoken by advanced spiritual teachers such as Krishna, Buddha, Christ and others. The fundamental message has always been the same: Know yourself, overcome the limitations of selfishness and make yourself at-one with the divine or higher mind that exists within you. It is up to each of us, collectively and individually, to search out such wisdom and make it our own. No true spiritual guide ever imposes on human free will. Guides can offer guidance and inspiration and even some forms of knowledge but it is up to us to accept it and apply it and make it our own. The world situation is not the result of whim but is the

result of our own collective ignorance and selfishness and it is by human hands and human feet alone that the situation can be changed. Those who have achieved spiritual mastery are ready to help us to help ourselves. No one can save us from ourselves but ourselves. Everyone who has ever attempted any kind of self improvement knows this to be a fact.

The spiritual hierarchy works for the good of *all*, not for any one sectarian group at the expense of another. The teachings and inspiration they offer can be found in all fields, science as well as religion and philosophy. Their teachings can be recognized by their note of

inclusion, their recognition of the *potential* for divine expression within all of us (sometimes called our spirit or soul consciousness), and the fact that there is a *purpose* and a *plan* both for the betterment and evolution of humanity and of all the lesser lives on our planet. It is up to each of us, therefore to develop our ability to recognize and respond to the note of

It is up to each of us, therefore to develop our ability to recognize and respond to the note of the spiritual guides or Hierarchy, the Communion of Saints, the Church Invisible. Its teachers and workers can be found in every walk of life and are not limited to what are considered traditional religious modes of expression, although they can naturally be found in all churches.

the spiritual guides or Hierarchy, the Communion of Saints, the Church Invisible. Its teachers and workers can be found in every walk of life and are not limited to what are considered traditional religious modes of expression, although they can naturally be found in all churches.

By the cultivation of our soul side, our spiritual side, by freeing ourselves from our personal biases, fears and limitations we can free ourselves to know and cooperate with the spiritual guides and masters who are trying to help us evolve. The way of approach is that taught by all religions and philosophies: Know yourself, free yourself from fear, from greed and hate,

learn to love, develop within yourself tranquility of mind and then you will be able to know “the kingdom of God” that is within you.

*Man, Know Yourself
And you shall know the Truth
And the Truth Shall Make You Free*

¹ Thomas, Lewis. *The Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher*. New York: Viking Press. 1974.

Affirming Planetary Purpose

Temple Richmond

Summary

The main evolutionary objective of our planet is established on the basis of its place in the esoteric model of the solar system. According to indications given by the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul in *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* by Alice Bailey, this main evolutionary objective is the development of the buddhic principle.

“Buddhi” is explored in an extensive discussion of how this term is used by the Tibetan Master. It is explored under three headings: universal love, intuition, and divine discriminating conscience. Background is provided by relevant remarks from H. P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical movement. The essay concludes with a brief meditative exercise for development of the buddhic principle in the individual seeker as a contribution to the evolutionary advancement of our planet.

Inquiring into Our Moment in Time

In any time of great planetary need, all dedicated aspirants and disciples of the Planetary Hierarchy earnestly inquire how they may render the most effective service possible. To this end, many entertain fundamental questions about the nature of the evolutionary plan for our planet and how individual efforts may best contribute toward its objectives. Many are the paths by which answers to these questions may be obtained, but chief among them stands the acquisition of an overview sufficiently broad to reveal the place of the current moment within the overall picture.

Such an overview was suggested by particular questions raised rhetorically and in our behalf by the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul in *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*. There he directed our attention to the greater context in which our planetary life exists. This greater context is of course the planetary scheme to which our

globe belongs and the solar system in which our planetary scheme finds place. The Tibetan called attention to this context by formulating a series of questions, the first two of which inquire into the purpose of the present incarnation of the Solar Logos and the purpose of the Logos of our planetary scheme.¹ It is from the answers to these questions that may be derived overarching principles sufficiently inclusive to properly direct our thinking as we reflect upon the best way to be of use in the advancement of evolution on our globe.

Should we follow such a methodology in our thinking, we would find ourselves in the best of company, for according to the Tibetan, this is precisely the method used by Hierarchy in determining its objectives. Hierarchy, we are told, derives its guidelines for the institution of evolutionary enterprise from contemplation of the place held by our globe within our planetary scheme and the place of the scheme within the solar system.² Contemplation of this nature produces meaningful insights because the placements of our globe and system reveal the functions each should fulfill.

The Tibetan stated the matter this way: “It is by knowledge of the nature and quality of the electrical force of our centre, and by realisation of the place our centre holds in the body logioic, that the Hierarchy achieves the aims of evolution.”³ Here, “our center” can be understood to mean both the position of our scheme within the solar system, and the place of our solar system in its greater context. In either case, the position held within the greater envi-

About the Author

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roning Life reveals the objective toward which the efforts of lesser units should be bent.

In order to take our cues from the above passage and its implications, an examination of the esoteric structure of cosmic and systemic space is in order, that we may the better appreciate the location of our center within the body logoi, whether that body logoi is construed as the body of the planetary Logos, the Solar Logos, or yet a greater Logoi life.

The Esoteric Structure of Space

As students of the Bailey material know, the Tibetan espoused a cosmological teaching which posited a septenary structure upon which the manifested form of the universe is based. His vision of cosmic organization is as follows.

Space itself is an Entity, comprising countless hierarchically arranged orders of life. Within this context, there exist Super Cosmic Logoi, the bodies of which contain seven energy centers. These seven energy centers are made of groups of suns or solar systems. At the next level of organization downward, there exist Cosmic Logoi, the bodies of which contain seven energy centers, with each center made of just one solar system. In turn, each solar system is made of seven energy centers called schemes. These schemes are the bodies of manifestation of the Planetary Logoi, and themselves contain seven chains of seven globes apiece.

As orderly and appealing as this vision may be, it is reasonable to expect that in fact this model of cosmic and systemic space is only part of the picture, with the scale extending infinitely in both directions, such that the pattern may be found to repeat itself in both the infinitely great and the infinitely small. If this is so,

scale ultimately becomes irrelevant, and the main teaching point which emerges is the vision of all lives as units within their greater context on one hand, and as units containing lesser lives on the other.

This is the context in which our globe must be placed if its intended function is to be intuited. This is so because each major subdivision of seven units within a greater unit functions as do the chakras or etheric centers in the human being. Hence, they are centers of force with specific functions and roles to play, just in the same way that the head, heart, and throat centers play specific and definite roles in human expression.

In that each of the seven corresponding functions are identifiable, so also are the functions

of any given unit among a grouping of seven. This principle holds good whether one considers the Cosmic Logoi making up the Super Cosmic Logos, solar systems making up the Cosmic Logos, the planetary schemes making up the Solar Logos, the chains making up the schemes, or the globes making up the chains. Each has its appointed place and function within the greater whole of which it is a part.

Thus, to begin we might ask what position our Solar

Logos holds within its Cosmic Logos. Indeed, the Tibetan posed this question himself⁴ in what may well have been a wisely calculated bid to direct our thoughts along just these very lines.

In answer, it might be said that the esoteric doctrine holds that our solar system forms or is part of the heart center of a Cosmic Logos.⁵ Hence, our solar system must be destined to fulfill all those things traditionally associated with a heart center, which is naturally a repository of Love-Wisdom energies. And so it is. We are told that the objective of our present

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solar system is the development of Love-Wisdom, or the ability to love that which is perceived as other than the Self.⁶ This goal, the Tibetan stated, is in contradistinction to the goal assigned to the first of the three manifestations of the solar system, of which the present is the second. In the earlier system, the organization of matter was the greatest objective. Now, the Tibetan has indicated, it is the development of the soul of things, or the Christ principle, which claims the highest priority.⁷ Consequently, it is the unfolding of consciousness within its sphere of influence which occupies our Solar Logos.⁸

In addition to the characterization of our solar system as positioned in the heart center of a Cosmic Logos, the Tibetan alluded several times to the fact that our solar system is “of the fourth order.”⁹ This suggests that our Solar Logos is found in a center holding position number four in a sequence of seven units making up the body of a Cosmic Logos, just as the heart center is the fourth counting sequentially either from the crown or from the base of spine centers in the human frame.

The Implications of Position the Fourth

The implications of this positioning are critical to understanding the objectives of the present solar system. According to the Tibetan, this positioning indicates that our Solar Logos is working toward the co-ordination of the fourth or buddhic principle and vehicle.¹⁰ This the Solar Logos accomplishes, we are told, by developing mind and hence the ability to touch the cosmic buddhic plane.¹¹

Hence, the information available suggests that the Solar Logos is striving towards its ideal expression along the line of the even-numbered rays. In keeping with this pattern, our Solar Logos is currently polarized upon the cosmic astral plane.¹² The cosmic astral plane embodies the 2 - 4 - 6 line of ray force and is said to be a vortex of universal and impersonal love. Given that our Solar Logos is currently polarized on a cosmic plane of an even numbered quality, there emerges a picture of the Solar Logos as primarily concerned with the

forces of the 2nd, 4th, and 6th rays. All these ray natures are magnetic and unifying, in contradistinction to the inherently dispersive influence of the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th rays, several of which deal with segregation of forms by type into categories proper. The even numbered rays, by contrast, emphasize the attractive force which binds distinct elements together in cohesive relationships.

From the position of our solar system in its group of seven we can therefore gather that the purposes of the Solar Logos are connected with the development of the principles associated with the even numbered rays – the monadic, buddhic, and astral, or the second, fourth, and sixth principles (counting from the highest plane or principle to the lower). All these principles and the rays from which they spring are versions of the Second Aspect and the Law of Attraction, and as such operate as attractive and building forces.

All this being said, we have some notion of what the solar system may be intended to produce. But a cautionary warning is in order. Though we may gain some small glimpse of the purposes of a higher entity such as the Solar Logos, we should be aware that in fact it is impossible for the human mind to encompass the real nature of the Solar Logos and its objectives. As the Tibetan pointed out, even such great beings as the Planetary Logoi have not the privilege of perfectly perceiving the place held by our solar system in cosmic space. Needless to say, it is so much the less likely that inquiring human minds should succeed entirely in scaling such heights.

Even so, a measure of sober mountain exploration remains inviting. Thus, we might shift our attention one level of organization downward and inquire into the purpose and objective held by the Planetary Logos of the scheme in which Earth is but one of 49 globes.

The answer to this question begins with an important principle articulated by the Tibetan. Each scheme, the Tibetan Master stated, is intended to embody one of the seven principles¹³ and to teach an aspect of consciousness.¹⁴ Further, the Planetary Logos of any scheme is charged with implementing the general pur-

poses of the Solar Logos,¹⁵ in whose body of manifestation such Planetary Logos has its existence. In the case of our globe, this will is registered at Shamballa, where the will of the Solar Logos is “imposed” on Sanat Kumara,¹⁶ the representative of the Planetary Logos on our globe.

Thus, the most general purpose of any Planetary Logos is to implement the will of the Solar Logos in its sphere of influence. The next and more specific objective of the Planetary Logos is determined by its functional place within the solar systemic body.

Fortunately for us, the Tibetan has detailed our planetary situation in this regard from the position of the solar system right down to that of our globe, including even the time period (or round) within which we currently evolve. This might be considered our residence or “esoteric address” in space and time, which the Tibetan Master has revealed as follows:¹⁷

We are located, the Tibetan has said, in:

1. a solar system of the fourth order
2. a scheme of the fourth position in the system
3. a chain of the fourth position in the scheme
4. a globe of the fourth position in its chain
5. and the fourth round.

Careful examination of this, our “esoteric address,” shows that the Planetary Logos in whose body of manifestation we reside is, like our Solar Logos, concerned with the fourth or buddhic principle. Why so? Because the body of manifestation of a Planetary Logos is a scheme, and our scheme is the fourth. Therefore our Planetary Logos holds the fourth position among seven, and thus is charged with demonstrating the perfected expression of the fourth or buddhic principle. Further, our chain, globe, and even our round are characterized by correspondence to the fourth or buddhic principle.

Observant students will note that the particular race period currently in progress is not the Fourth, but the Fifth. This fact of course indicates the striking of a different note, but because a race period is but a very small fraction of that represented by a round, a race period sounds but a minor note of difference, as seen and heard from the macrocosmic angle. In sum, it is safe to say that Ray the Fourth and Principle the Fourth dominate at all the higher levels within which our present evolution unfolds.

This rather dramatic convergence upon the fourth principle is of paramount importance, for it orients us inescapably toward the larger goal to which the appearance of not only our solar system, scheme, and chain, but also our

globe and this round in time are dedicated.

Thus it might simply be concluded that, if we are to properly and proactively express the macrocosmic purpose for which our planet exists, we must apply ourselves to the development of the fourth principle, the buddhic faculty.

That this is so is verified by the Tibetan,

who stated flatly that when the initiate attains the consciousness of the systemic buddhic plane (the systemic correlate to the cosmic buddhic plane) he or she is enabled to make contact with the emanations of the Planetary Logos.¹⁸ In other words, attainment of the buddhic level or principle puts the initiate in a position to make connection with planetary purpose in a very potent manner.

The implication is clear. It is the buddhic principle and hence the buddhic plane of which we must become aware if we are to link with planetary purpose and affirm it effectively in our own consciousness and actions.

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understanding of the term, buddhi. This term and what it signifies are related, of course, to the buddhic plane, a level of consciousness which just happens to be of great interest to contemporary esoteric students, for as evolution proceeds in the Human Kingdom, focus is predicted to shift upward from the intellect to the intuition, which is to say - from the mental to the buddhic plane.

Hence, let us see how the Tibetan and the Ageless Wisdom tradition have characterized this faculty of consciousness. We will do so under three headings: buddhi as pure love; buddhi as intuition; and buddhi as discernment.

Buddhi as Pure Love

In *The Rays and the Initiations*, the Tibetan equated the term buddhi with “pure love” or “love-wisdom.”¹⁹ Such a characterization immediately draws attention to an important distinction. It points up the fact that there exists a significant difference between personalized forms of sentiment on one hand, and some other kind of love on the other. Though personal sentiment is certainly referred to as love in everyday parlance, the other kind of love suggested by the idea of a pure love is something altogether different. It might be defined as a universal beneficence powered by a genuine recognition of the sentiency and inherent divinity to be found throughout creation, and this existing in such abundance and equality for all units and forms that it functions entirely free of any taint from self-referent motives or subconscious drives for individual advantage.

The contrast between so-called human love and this type of spiritual regard is evident enough without much more elaboration. The former has a great deal to do with the human need for validation through association; the latter, independent of that hunger, has to do with the fundamental fact of universal unity and the attitudinal result of full alignment with that reality. Therefore, the following inferences may be drawn. As an expression of pure love or love-wisdom, the buddhic principle embodies the more spacious awareness of non-partial, universally radiated beneficence. Buddhi is the quality of consciousness thus generated, and the

buddhic plane is the vibrational level within the manifested universe at which such a state prevails.

Buddhi as Intuition

As a clue to what he meant by the term buddhi, the Tibetan equated it with the word “intuition.”²⁰ Intuition is a word the mainstream popularity of which has vastly increased in the last twenty-five years. Its appeal has largely been advanced by the now world-wide New Age Movement, which has rightly championed the existence of aspects of mind other than that which produces strictly linear logic. The word intuition has consequently found its way into everyday use. In this context, intuition as a word usually signifies an ability to extract information seemingly out of the air, to know the true inner character or attitudes of others, to know what is best for one’s own unfoldment, the ability to detect future trends, the most logical way in which equipment might be expected to function (i.e., “intuitive software”), or even conventional wisdom (i.e., a “counterintuitive stock purchase,” one that goes against prevailing beliefs). These and other related senses in which the term is used are all completely valid uses of the word in their own times and places and are attempts to describe an emerging sensitivity to multiple levels of being and sensing.

A somewhat similar definition for the intuition was long ago offered by the Tibetan, who described the intuition as “...the ability to arrive at knowledge through the activity of some innate sense, apart from the reasoning or logical processes. It comes into activity when the resources of the lower mind have been used, explored and exhausted. Then, and then only, the true intuition begins to function. It is the sense of synthesis, the ability to think in wholes, and to touch the world of causes.”²¹ In this definition of the intuition, we see reflected the popular notion of intuition as the capacity to gather information or conclusions without a laborious intellectual process. However, the Tibetan took this concept one step farther and said that the intuition ultimately leads to a broader vision, or holism, which perceives distinct items only as integral parts of the systems in which they are embedded.

In fact, in other passages of text, the Tibetan enlarged upon just this sense for the definition of intuition. Speaking of the intuition in *The Rays and the Initiations*, the Tibetan stated that intuition is "...the word we use to describe a direct contact with the Mind of God...." Such a contact, we are told, reveals the purposes underlying all Hierarchical efforts.²² In this sense, the intuition is nothing short of an ability to envision the Hierarchical Plan and the Shamballic Purpose behind it. Right to this very point, the Tibetan stated in *Discipleship in the New Age II*, "...for the initiate, the intuition is ever the revelation of the purpose of Shamballa and the working out ...of the divine Plan."²³ As is apparent,

such a definition for intuition far outstrips the usual contemporary understanding of this term, even as used in the more enlightened senses.

The Tibetan's use of the word intuition and what it implies goes beyond popular connotations of this word in yet another way. Whereas the popular use of the term includes everything from psychic hunches about purely personal matters to a description of the way technology might be expected to work, a definite concern with the greater context in which a unit exists is the distinguishing feature of the intuitional function as the Tibetan has described it. And since intuition is equivalent to buddhi, this is also true of buddhi. The Tibetan forthrightly clarified this issue, explaining in *Esoteric Astrology* that buddhi itself is awareness of the universe, the whole, and the group.²⁴ Therefore it might legitimately be said that according to the Tibetan, the buddhic faculty (or intuition) is the very perception of the relationship between the individual and its greater environment, which perception in esoteric thought is simply called group consciousness. So true is this that the Tibetan even pointed out that buddhi is the principle which not only promotes the integration of units

into the group, but which blends groups together with other groups.²⁵ He called it "the unifying principle of groups."

All in all, it is fairly evident that the way in which the Tibetan used the word intuition differs somewhat from its present popular usage. As a result, it is not enough to say simply that buddhi is equivalent to intuition and leave it at that. To do so would invite the formation of large gaps in understanding through which might leap the doubly mischievous creatures, assumption and misconception.

Nonetheless, it should be reiterated that the Tibetan did equate the term buddhi with the

word intuition.²⁶ In fact, the Tibetan offered a number of parallel terms for our consideration. He tells us that intuition, pure reason, and complete knowledge illumined by the loving purpose of the divine mind are terms all equally descriptive of buddhi and interchangeable in meaning.²⁷ From this, we sense the cognitive nature of buddhi, a level of perception that grasps divine pattern and purpose, or in other

words, knows what the divine process is doing and why.

In this role, according to the Tibetan the intuition is "...the appreciation by the mind of some factor in creation, some law of manifestation and some aspect of truth, known by the soul, emanating from the world of ideas, and being of the nature of those energies which produce all that is known and seen."²⁸

Clearly, the intuition functions to reveal specific knowledge, though that knowledge can only be apprehended within the context of wholeness. Ultimately, the energy of the intuition leads to the acquisition of complete knowledge illumined by the loving purpose of the divine mind, and this, too, is a realization characteristic of buddhi.

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Thus, buddhi is not only universal beneficence, as discussed in the previous section, but also a cognitive faculty which reveals specific content about the nature of the whole.

Buddhi as Discernment

The further development of this theme concerning buddhi as a quality of knowing leads along a path winding back into the historical and literary context from which the Alice Bailey writings arose, for the use of the term buddhi hails from the Theosophical movement which preceded the Bailey works, and beyond.

The word buddhi arises from the Sanskrit root *budh*, meaning “to know.” From this root come related terms, all of which are likely to be encountered by esoteric students and all of which are likely to color, incorrectly or not, one's notion of the term buddhi. Terms etymologically related to buddhi (and its own formal definition) follow, as explained in H.P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, which source was identified by the Tibetan as the first of three planned releases of Hierarchical teaching.²⁹

In *The Secret Doctrine* we find the information listed in Table 1.³⁰ As can be seen, this information presents a fertile field for study and contemplation, but for present purposes, Blavatsky's definition of buddhi alone may justly claim our attention. Therein, we note a number of terms which more or less parallel the meaning of buddhi and intuition as given by the Tibetan: spiritual soul, channel through which divine knowledge arrives, spiritual vehicle of *atma* (or representative of the next higher principle, the spiritual will, which could easily signify the Purpose of Shamballa as revealed by the intuition and as discussed in the previous section).

Yet, amongst all these familiar faces stands out a rather different and additional countenance, for here Blavatsky also offers up “discernment of good and evil” and “divine conscience” as equally acceptable senses in which buddhi may be used. The words “discernment” and “conscience” immediately conjure up something quite other than the blissful universal beneficence and endless relational power conferred on buddhi in the previous two

sections. Suddenly, here we have two equivalents for buddhi which look a lot like they might have to do with making distinctions between this and that, instead of erasing differences in the name of group cohesion. What might this be about?

Table 1. Words Derived from the Root *Budh*.

budh	Sanskrit root meaning “to know”
bodha	possession of divine intellect or understanding
buddha	acquisition of divine intellect by personal effort and merits
buddhi	faculty of cognizing the channel through which divine knowledge arrives; discernment of good and evil; divine conscience; spiritual soul; vehicle of <i>atma</i>
bodhi	trance condition during which the culmination of spiritual knowledge is reached; <i>samadhi</i>
Buddhism	name given in more recent history to the religious system of ethics preached by Gautama Buddha, so named after his title, Buddha, meaning enlightened
Adhi Budha	name given by earliest Aryans to the Unknown Deity; absolute wisdom; in the form
Ad-bhuta	the primeval uncreated cause of all

What it concerns is the revelation of yet another facet of the complex jewel called buddhi, or the intuition. As it turns out, buddhi-intuition as it was understood in the Tibetan's mind and in that of Blavatsky embraced not only the unifying forces described previously, but also the power to make important distinctions or, may we say it, value judgments. Here is a notable characteristic which distinguishes aspects of the esoteric philosophy of the Tibetan from that of the broader New Age spiritual community, in which there exists a relatively overt prejudice against

the whole notion of forming judgments. Frequently in popular spiritual circles is heard the injunction that one should not judge. Apparently, this pop wisdom is not entirely upheld or condoned by the esoteric philosophy of the Tibetan, which assigns to buddhi, a relatively high function in the spectrum of the planes, just this very capacity.

That this is so is suggested in a passage wherein the Tibetan equated intuition with “discrimination,”³¹ a word which surely suggests the making of careful distinctions of some type or another. The proper role for the mental act of discriminating, or noting basic differences in qualities, was outlined by the Tibetan in a passage in which he showed that the making of distinctions in fact leads directly to the development of intuition, or buddhi. “Discrimination,” he stated, “is the educatory process to which the Self subjects itself in the process of developing intuition...”³² Seen in this light, then, the ability to tell the difference between this and that has a legitimate place in right spiritual unfoldment. According to the Tibetan, it is the fourth principle, or buddhi, which makes such discriminations possible. Speaking of the fourth archetypal pattern in terms of the fourth ray, the Tibetan Master stated in *The Rays and the Initiations*, “It is this fourth ray energy which makes apparent the distinction (so often misunderstood by man) between good and evil.”³³

This is essentially what Blavatsky’s definition of buddhi reveals as well. Just as the Tibetan used the term “discrimination” in conjunction with buddhi, Blavatsky translated buddhi as “discernment,” literally as the discernment of good versus evil, or the power to tell the difference between that which is spiritually true and wholesome and that which is not. This capacity to cleave right down the middle of a complex set of issues and to neatly identify the right from the wrong is as much the working of buddhi, our authorities have revealed, as is the entirely composed and blissful union with the All otherwise associated with this state of consciousness.

Given that buddhi-intuition is the fourth principle, and therefore the very principle we are charged to manifest in perfection, this point

should engage our attention. It tells us that in order to fulfill our divine purpose under the Plan by fully embodying the fourth principle, we need to learn how to cleanly divide the good from the evil, the true from the false, the accurate from the distorted, the essential from the non-essential, the greater good from the lesser good, the important from the trivial. This is the action of Blavatsky’s “divine conscience,” which surely knows deep in its heart what is not only morally right but what is also spiritually essential and necessary. Thus, it is not the part of buddhi to fall into an amorphous state in which no distinctions whatsoever are made, for buddhi does not equate to absolute moral permissiveness. Rather, it is a capacity to make relevant value judgments when necessary—judgments leavened by the wide horizons of universal intuition, no doubt—but a capacity to separate the wheat from the chaff, no less.

A Brief Exercise for the Development of Buddhi

As has just been shown, buddhi may be understood as pure or universal love, intuition, and spiritual discernment. These characteristics are native to the fourth principle and the fourth or buddhic plane, upon which the principle of buddhi resides. This plane is one major vibrational level higher than the mental plane within the seven planes of our solar system, and so represents the frontier of consciousness evolution as we move from intellect on the mental plane to intuition on the buddhic.

How this principle may be directly contacted, known, and integrated is therefore of immediate relevance. A brief meditative exercise may be useful in this regard. The following meditation sequence may be used on its own or added as a step within or following any other meditation form.

1. Quiet the personality vehicles.
2. Focus concentration inwardly. Form the intention to lift consciousness to the
3. buddhic plane, the plane whereon the emanations of the Masters may be known, as stated in *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*, p.111.

4. To facilitate the rise in consciousness toward the buddhic plane, visualize a golden solar yellow, the color of the buddhic plane, as indicated in *Letters on Occult Meditation*, pp. 214 – 215.
5. Fill your field of vision with this color of light.
6. Hold this frequency of light-color in mind while considering the characteristics of buddhi as described above. Select one or more of the definitions of buddhi offered above and use that as a seed thought. For example, while visualizing the golden solar yellow of the buddhic plane, slowly repeat in mind the phrase “Complete spiritual knowledge illumined by the loving purpose of Divine Mind,” one of the equivalent phrases given by the Tibetan for intuition, or buddhi. Do the same with as many of the word definitions for buddhi as desired, taking time on each step to imaginatively enter into the state described.
7. Radiate golden solar yellow streams of light energy outward for the blessing of all.

If used frequently, this exercise can assist in obtaining a first-hand experience of the characteristics of buddhi and the buddhic plane.

Summing Up and Looking Ahead

Let us recall that the Tibetan has used the word buddhi to signify a fairly broad range of characteristics: pure love, intuition producing universal and group consciousness, and even right discrimination. From this vantage point on the use of the words buddhi and intuition, both of which characterize the fourth principle and the fourth plane, we are much better informed about the archetype of the fourth position.

Many are the reasons that we might pursue further comprehension and actualization of this, the fourth principle. The occult incentives to do so are appealing. After all, it is the fourth or buddhic plane upon which the consciousnesses of the Masters may be found,³⁴ as has been the case since 1925.³⁵

Another incentive to heed the message of the fourth principle concerns the potential for healing on all levels. We are told that upon the buddhic plane shall the human and deva evolutions eventually make contact,³⁶ a development of great interest due to the curative and inspirational influences said to be radiated by the devic or angelic kingdom. Contact with the buddhic plane may also be of great relevance to the seer and the artist, for upon the buddhic plane electrical force shows forth as color.³⁷ The buddhic plane is also described by the Tibetan as a region of immense stimulation from solar vitality, the wellspring from which flows much of the impulse galvanizing the dense physical vehicle into purposeful and coherent action.³⁸

All these characteristics suggest that energies from the buddhic plane exude a vibrancy and luminosity which are of immediate evolutionary relevance and some of which may play a definite role in the sciences of natural and spiritual healing. The connection of the buddhic plane with healing is particularly outstanding, for according to the Tibetan, “...when humanity can function with its consciousness centered upon the fourth or buddhic plane, disease will die out...”³⁹

As if this weren't enough to invite us into an immediate and headlong pursuit of buddhic consciousness, we should also consider the fact that the United Nations is watched over by a group of Fourth Ray disciples, according to the Tibetan.⁴⁰ This important world body thus can be said to operate at least in some significant measure under the aegis of the Fourth Ray, the Ray of Harmony to be arrived at via Conflict. Perhaps we could help the United Nations toward the expression of its higher destiny by developing the fullness of the fourth principle in ourselves.

We have seen that the development of the fourth or buddhic principle is not only inherently attractive but also incumbent upon us due to our position in a solar system of the fourth order, a scheme of the fourth position, a chain of the fourth position within that scheme, a globe of the fourth position within that chain, and in round the fourth. As the Tibetan has said, “It is by knowledge of the nature and

quality of the electrical force of our centre, and by realisation of the place our centre holds in the body logoi, that the Hierarchy achieves the aims of evolution.”

Here is the overview which provides us with an orientation toward the evolutionary objectives of the greater lives within which we have our being, all of which are characterized by a definite emphasis upon the fourth or buddhic principle.

It is our joy to contribute toward the attainment of these objectives and to assist in the manifestation of the purposes for which our planet exists in the solar system. When our globe reaches its high destiny within this context, it shall have become a sacred planet. The Tibetan has stated, “When this happens, our planet will no longer be known as the planet of sorrow and of pain, but will be distinguished by a quality of tranquillity and by an aura of calm potency wherein the will of God...will be focussed; this will enable the solar Logos...to bring the first great divine aspect, that of Will or Power, into expression throughout the solar system.”⁴¹

This is, according to the Tibetan, the consummation of the preordained task of our Planetary Logos, which task was originally undertaken when our Planetary Logos embarked upon incarnation through the medium of our scheme and planet. In other words, the purpose of our Planetary Logos is to assist the work of the Solar Logos in expressing the will to good of the First Aspect of Divinity. This we now do in our appointed place through fulfilling the function of the fourth among the seven, transforming our globe from the planet of sorrow and pain to an expression of tranquillity and calm potency.

At any time of heightened geo-political tensions, these objectives appeal to us more than ever. Let us therefore bear in mind that our service may be aligned most effectively with the larger planetary purpose when we cultivate the realizations of the fourth principle and plane. To do so is not to escape, but rather the better to affirm planetary purpose.

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- ¹ Alice A. Bailey. *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*. Lucis, 1925, p. 566.
 - ² *Ibid.*, p. 358.
 - ³ *Ibid.*
 - ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 224 – 225.
 - ⁵ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 520. The full ramifications of this notion are explored in M. Temple Richmond, *Sirius*. Manasadeva Press, 2000, pp. 287 – 309.
 - ⁶ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, pp. 234, 241.
 - ⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*. Lucis, 1951, p. 255.
 - ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 294.
 - ⁹ For example, see *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 1086.
 - ¹⁰ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 115.
 - ¹¹ *Ibid.*
 - ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 570.
 - ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 257.
 - ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1175.
 - ¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 1043.
 - ¹⁶ Alice A. Bailey. *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*. Lucis, 1957, p. 534; *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 1043.
 - ¹⁷ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*. p. 363.
 - ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 400.
 - ¹⁹ Alice A. Bailey. *The Rays and the Initiations*. Lucis, 1960. p. 415.
 - ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 700.
 - ²¹ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, p. 516.
 - ²² Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 711.
 - ²³ Alice A. Bailey. *Discipleship in the New Age II*. Lucis, 1955, p. 258.
 - ²⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, p. 471.
 - ²⁵ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 383.
 - ²⁶ *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 700.
 - ²⁷ *Ibid.*
 - ²⁸ Alice A. Bailey. *A Treatise on White Magic*. Lucis, 1934, p. 15.
 - ²⁹ Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 255.
 - ³⁰ H. P. Blavatsky. *The Secret Doctrine*. 1888 Facsimile Edition, v. 1, pp. xviii–xix.
 - ³¹ Alice A. Bailey. *Esoteric Psychology II*. Lucis, 1942, p. 559.
 - ³² Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 201.
 - ³³ Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 606.
 - ³⁴ Alice A. Bailey. *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*. Lucis, 1950. p. 111.
 - ³⁵ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age II*, p. 405.
 - ³⁶ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, pp. 328, 473.
 - ³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 319, 321.
 - ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 683.

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- ³⁹ Alice A. Bailey. *Esoteric Healing*. Lucis, 1953, p. 564.
- ⁴⁰ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age II*, p. 220.
- ⁴¹ Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 654.

The Qabalah and the Aquarian Avatar

Donna Brown

Summary

This article seeks to demonstrate the relationships between the Qabalah, the Tarot and the Ageless Wisdom teachings. It hopes to show that a synthesis exists between these symbolic systems and the teachings of the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul concerning spiritual development, global transformation and group initiation.

The article begins by providing a background on the 10 luminous emanations that comprise the Qabalistic “Tree of Life.” Emphasis is placed on the center or heart of the Tree since it depicts the first of the great initiations. From here the article traces the Path leading from Egoic awareness into the more rarefied levels of realization and identification acquired in the higher reaches of the Tree. Special focus is given to the Tarot *Star* and the mysterious sephirah *Daath*, as the rich symbolism that each contains provides insights into the Science of the Antahkarana, the Coming Group Avatar and the Aquarian Age.

Introduction

Astrologically, we are transiting into the sign of Aquarius, the sign of the new dispensation poured out to humanity and to all life. We are told that the great gift of this Aquarian Age will be the coming of a Group Avatar and a Planetary Teacher, a “Sun of Righteousness”¹ whose fiery radiation will transmit “Life more abundant” to the earth and to all its inhabitants.

As students of the Ageless Wisdom we are ever alert to the many signs that speak to the veracity of these teachings on the New Age and the Coming Avatar. To that end, I would like to turn to one of the esoteric symbol systems with roots in the Mystery religions that can provide us with a fresh perspective on this auspicious period in which we have the unique privilege to be living. This symbol system is the modern Hermetic Qabalah.

For those not familiar with the Qabalah it is comprised of a vast superstructure of Gnostic thought which focuses on the Tree of Life as a symbolic representation of the Divine Creative Process. The Tree of Life is said to evolve organically from the *Ain Soph Aur* or transcendent cause. It contains ten sephiroth or luminous emanations consisting of the Supernal Triad, a superior triplicity of divine force, (corresponding to the Christian Trinity) along with a septenary expression of energy and force, i.e., the seven rays. The Tree of Life can be likened to an immense circuit or vast energy system, where the Life and power flow from the apex of the Supernal Triad down the Tree and up again.²

Tiphareth is regarded as the “Mediating Intelligence” where the upper sephiroth may enter into communication with the lower ones. “The powers of all the other sephiroth flow into Tiphareth where they are balanced, synthesized and sanctified.” From Tiphareth it becomes possible to work in group formation.

About the Author

Donna M. Brown is a long time student and teacher of esoteric philosophy. Her background includes a career in the arts and election to public office in the District of Columbia. She serves as a Board Member of the School for Esoteric Studies.

Divine Emanations

The first progression of divine emanations begins in a lightning flash with *Kether* (also called the Ancient of Days). From the activity of *Kether* emanate two sub-divisions; these are *Chokmah*, the Will-to-Force or male-positive force, whose physical expression is the Zodiac, and *Binah*, the Great Mother or the Will-to-Form and the female-negative force whose physical expression is Saturn. Together these sephiroth form the great Trinity³ or Supernal Triangle; the Spiritual Self Supreme.

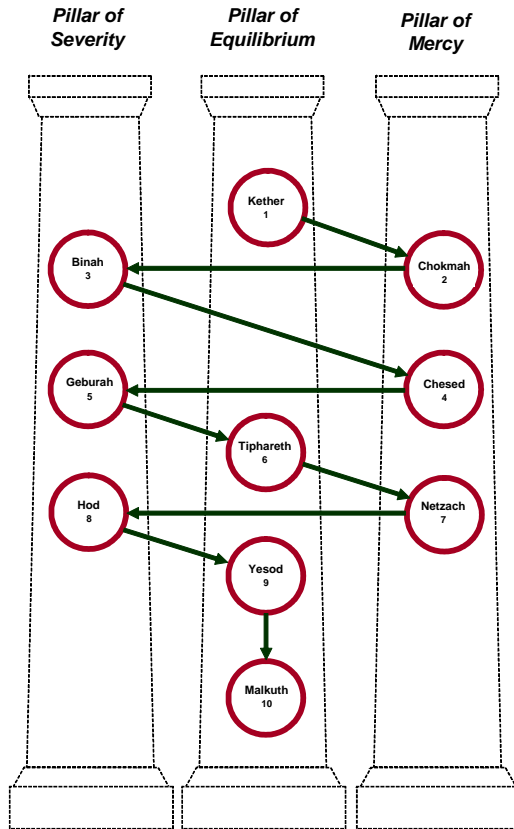
From this “Three in One” the following septenary of divine emanations are derived. They are *Chesed*, mercy, unifying intelligence and the receptacle of all powers, whose material expression is Jupiter. Next is *Geburah*, judgment and eliminator of the useless, whose physical manifestation is Mars, then, *Tiphareth*, the principle of beauty, the son, whose manifestation is the Sun, then *Netzach*, occult intelligence, whose sphere is Venus, (Hierarchy of mind to our planet). Following these is *Hod*, the splendor of form which has now been brought down to the concrete mind and whose expression is Mercury; then *Yesod*, the foundation or machinery of the Universe, whose sphere is the Moon, and finally *Malkuth*, “the Kether below” (our planetary Spirit) whose physical manifestation is Earth⁴ or “Body of the Divine.”

Four Worlds and Three Pillars

The Qabalah also portrays the universe as existing in four levels or worlds. These four worlds form a succession of ever-increasing concreteness, from the most intangible, spiritually rarified levels to the most dense and material. They are the formless archetypal world of pure spirit, the creative world of pure intellect, the formative world of subtle patterns behind or underlying matter, and the active world of material universe.⁵ This is important to keep in mind as it speaks to the multidimensionality of the Tree and the various expression of the sephiroth within each of these four worlds. For example, it explains why *Tiphareth* (#6 on the Tree) can be seen as signifying individuation, Christ Consciousness *and* the Cosmic

Christ. The multidimensional nature of the Tree might also be said to encompass the cosmic, solar, planetary and human levels.

Figure 1. The Path of the Flaming Sword



The Tree itself is divided into three Pillars; the sephiroth on the right side are on the *Pillar of Mercy* or Mother, those on the left are on the *Pillar of Severity*, Father or Will, and those in the center are on the *Pillar of Equilibrium*, consciousness or Son (Figure 1). Through a “Science of Triangles” each sephirah is balanced by its opposite with the sephirah on the central pillar of the Tree. The process of synthesis and harmonization is an important part of the practical work with the Hermetic Qabalah, since it is from the Pillar of Equilibrium or (Noble Middle Path) that the individual and the group can invoke and evoke higher, more refined spiritual energies. Self-realization occurs when the initiate realizes all ten sephiroth, via the major Trinity of Triads within him- or herself.

Tarot and Path-Working

The Major Arcana of the Tarot give us one of the meditative aids used for ascending the Tree. These cards or trumps might be said to represent a synthesis of the chief symbolic languages: numerical, geometrical, astrological, mythological and theosophical.⁶ Used in conjunction with the Tree they constitute a rich ontological system that can be used for penetrating deeper into the essence of being.

The 22 Major Arcana, or trumps, are allocated to the Paths running between the 10 Emanations on the Tree (Figure 2). The 22 plus the 10 give us the 32 Paths to Wisdom or steps to the initiations. When these paths have been traversed both up and down the Tree we have the 64 ways of manifestation, the 64 Hexagrams of the I Ching, and the 64 members of the occult Hierarchy.⁷ (The occult Hierarchy is primarily concerned with the unfolding of the Egoic Lotus in the Heavenly Man and in humanity.)

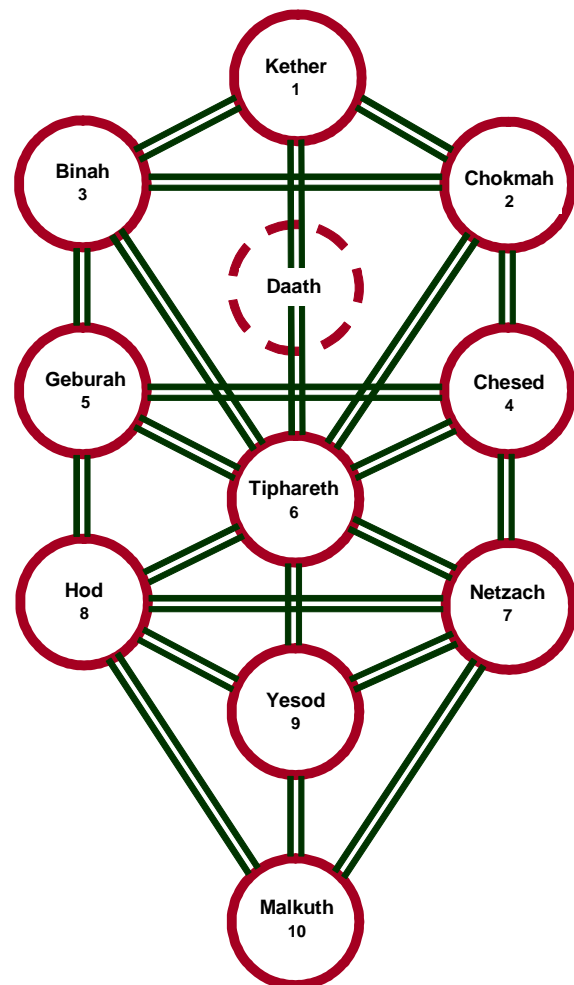
While path-working on the Tree will necessarily involve working with all 10 emanations and all 22 Major Arcana, the focus of this article will be on the synthetic Middle Pillar and those cards that constitute the path of alignment from Tiphareth, (#6, the Self or Christ within) through Daath (the invisible sephirah added during the late medieval period) into the Supernal or Logic Triangle. This link or bridge built up between the aforementioned sephiroth can be likened to both the individual and planetary Antahkarana and to the emergence of the Aquarian Group Avatar, i.e., the knowers of God in varying degree.

Tiphareth or Beauty is, for our purposes, the starting point. But before proceeding to Tiphareth it is important to bear in mind that the Tree can be viewed from the perspective of both the individual and the group and in terms of past, present or future. The glyph of the Tree is a compound symbol reflecting both macrocosmic and microcosmic evolutionary processes.

It is also necessary to give some additional background on the sephirah preceding Tiphareth. The first rung of spiritual ascent begins with #10, Malkuth: The Kingdom. Malkuth

pertains to manifest creation and to the world of appearances. It represents the physical world, the physical body and the animal instincts. However, it is also Spirit vibrating at its lowest level. To describe it in another way, Kether is in Malkuth and Malkuth is in Kether. This reveals a correspondence to the Seventh Ray.

Figure 2. Daath: The Invisible Sephirah.



Yesod, #9, the Foundation, corresponds to Pisces and the Moon, to the past and the etheric world, Hod #8 is the concrete mind or passive recognition, and #7 Netzach, represents the astral world the emotions and emotional control. When the various energies in each are realized and brought into balance they form what is known as the Astral Triangle or Per-

sonality in incarnation.⁸ This Triad also represents the multiplicity of forms.

Christ Consciousness

From this lower Triad the aspirant progress to Tiphareth or Beauty which is located in the nerve center (#6) or at the Heart of the Tree. Tiphareth is regarded as the “Mediating Intelligence” where the upper sephiroth may enter into communication with the lower ones. “The powers of all the other sephiroth flow into Tiphareth where they are balanced, synthesized and sanctified.”⁹ From Tiphareth it becomes possible to work in group formation.

Tiphareth is also the path that has more-or-less direct access to Kether, the Crown or Infinite Source on the Tree and might be seen it as the Soul of all things.

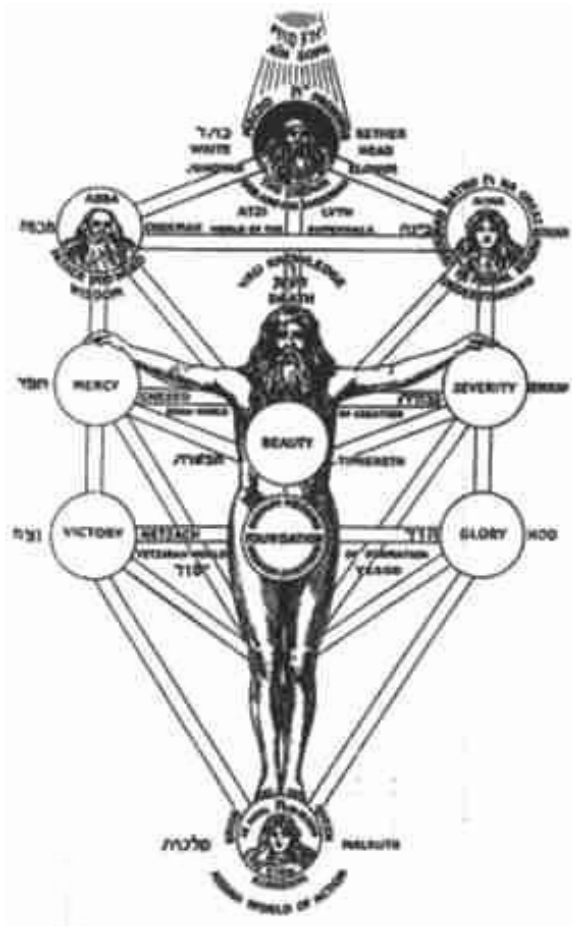
On one level Tiphareth is the integrated human being, a vision of the Soul or Soul Contact. At higher levels it signifies the Inner Christ, the Ego or the Causal World and the first of the great Initiations.

Tiphareth, ultimately synthesizes or balances with Geburah, the Warrior or Strength and with Chesed or Mercy forming what is known as the Ethical Triangle or Higher Self.¹⁰ Geburah is discipline, endurance, steadfast determination and the controlled and purposeful use of energy. Chesed is love, beneficence, compassion and generosity. When these are brought into a balance in Tiphareth the result is Harmony.

Not surprisingly, the Tarot Card allocated to this sephirah is L'Amoureux, usually translated as The Lover(s). Its inner meaning, however, is closer to “he who is enamoured,”¹¹ signifying the yearning for and creation of harmonious relationship and brotherhood, the ability to think in the heart, and Love as unifying and healing force. It also speaks to the development of right choice or discrimination, to freedom from the separative, lower self, to the ability to hold “a point of tension” and to the expression of Soul Love and Solar Light. Tiphareth, therefore, is our essential nature, the Observer or Self. We might also view it as the First Divine Recognition—the recognition of the soul-infused personality which serves as

the core of group will and action. Tiphareth expresses as an outpouring of love, consciousness and harmony which is directed into the world of human endeavour *and* into the higher formless worlds.

Figure 3. Christ on the Tree of Life.



Tiphareth then, is the heart of the group organism, who “in the fullness of time and through the work of evolution,” and embodying the group ideas abstracted from the higher sephirah on the Tree, can demonstrating the group nature and “manifest in a small way the true significance of the Body of Christ”¹² Something of this significance is captured by the famous depiction of the Christ crucified on the Tree of Life (Figure 3¹³).

Daath and Aquarius

From Tiphareth we can ascend further up the Tree into the transpersonal or universal realms.

But along the path and between Tiphareth and the direct influences of the supernal spheres, is the “invisible” sephirah of Daath. Also known as the access and exit point into physical existence¹⁴ or the Door and the Abyss, Daath is said to “veil” the upper Triad. In terms of pure Qabalistic doctrine, Daath is not represented in the Tree and is not actually considered a sephirah. Some believe its existence stems from the “unwritten” or orally communicated Qabalah. The experience of Daath, however, is requisite to cross the Abyss (the gulf or gap in consciousness) separating the Supernal Triad (the creators) and the world below (the created.) The Qabalah states that the level of Daath is as far as the Self or Soul can go. Those seeking union with the Divine “must leap across the Abyss, fearlessly and unaided, creating for him/herself the transition of Daath.”¹⁵

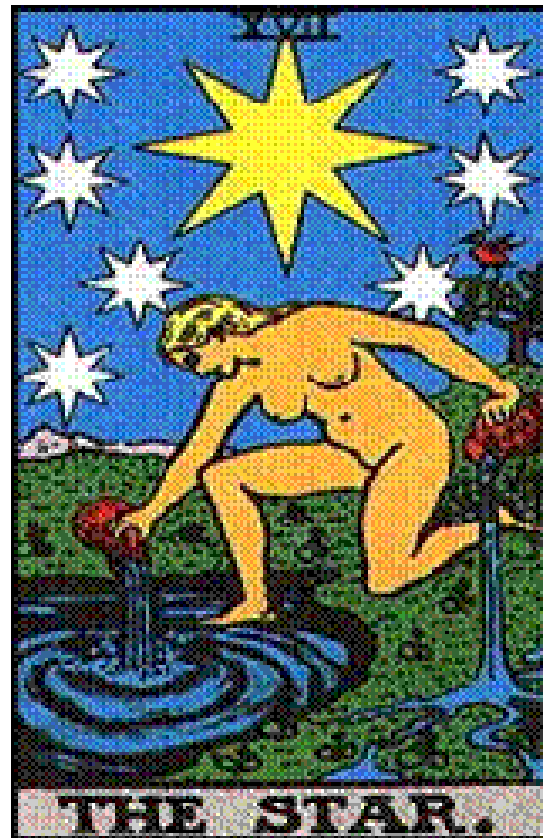
Another important idea associated with Daath is that of communion with the Holy Guardian Angel¹⁶, i.e., Angel of the Presence. This idea refers to the fusion of personal light, soul light and the light of the Presence. The ultimate experience of Daath, however, involves willfully relinquishing one’s acquired powers. In other words, Daath requires a willing sacrifice to God’s Will. These ideas are clearly suggestive of the need for building the Antahkarana and the encounter between the Angel and the Dweller. Entrance into Daath represents development of the intuitive faculties, the higher initiations and ultimately, Monadic realization.

The sign allocated to this part of the path is Aquarius and its symbolic representative is “The Star” (Figure 4). Our Sun’s present transit into the sign of Aquarius and its relationship to this part of the Tree should be looked at with special interest since it represents a highly potent confluence of energies. It speaks to developments that are currently taking place on both the individual, planetary and systemic levels.

The glyph of Aquarius gives us some hints about the influences at play. It consists of two jagged or wavy lines, one on top of the other. The upper line might be seen as the Door leading into the formless and fiery worlds and into the realm of the Supernals. The lower line

might be viewed as the Abyss or the test of knowledge, science and power that if misused or disconnected from the preceding sephiroth can take the individual or group back down the Tree into the deep sleep and bondage of Malkuth. This dual vibration has special relevance when seen in the light of the tremendous scientific and technological advancements presently at the disposal of humankind and to the amassing of vast stores of knowledge, wealth and power. It suggests that humanity is on the threshold of realizing its inherent potential to co-create a new world. But it also suggests the importance of linking heart and head to prevent certain and unexpected dangers.

**Figure 4. The Star Card
(Rider-Waite Deck)**



These ideas seem to be borne out by the Tibetans comments that Aquarius is a dual sign and signifies two vibrations.¹⁷ Looking at the lines or waves of this glyph from another perspective we can see that they convey the idea of motion or the ability to move from place to

place (perhaps an electromagnetic frequency).¹⁸ The upper line represents the

higher Aquarian vibration, divine inspiration and the intuitive aspect of the mind dispensing higher knowledge and great ideas to the rational, concrete mind, (the lower line.) From this we can see that Aquarius brings about a free flow of ideas and interconnectedness. It also facilitates the development of the insight, intuition and direct knowledge. In this context we might see Aquarian energies as contributing to the development of the so called “global brain” with its potential for global illumination, transformation and initiation.

The Star Card graphically depicts this process on both the individual and collective levels.

But before turning to the symbolism it contains let us look at the Hebrew letter frequently allocated to this Card, which is *Pe*. *Pe* is said to represent the influence of the macrocosmos on humankind.¹⁹ It stands for liberation, inspiration and spiritual perception. It is also said to represent the mouth and the tongue, which gives the teacher, the spiritual visionary or group,

great powers of communication and the ability to broadcast or dispense the water of consciousness and of “life more abundant” to others. The Symbolic Language of the card communicates much of the same indicating the nourishing of humanity’s spiritual consciousness via the spark of Universality. This spark of Universality is suggested by the great central Star, which some Qabalists view as having reference to Kether, the symbol of Divine Fire and Life concentrated and radiated from all the other stars. The seven smaller stars seem to refer to the seven sacred planets, the seven interior stars and the seven great ashrams, all of which imply the presence of seven centers or groups of radiant psychic force. Each of these stars (there are eight in total) has eight rays of

light. Esoterically the number eight symbolizes Christ energy and an emanating source for the Cosmic Christ.²⁰

However, this central star may also refer to Sirius, the Central Spiritual Sun about which our own sun revolves. Sirius is said to be the supervising and mentoring life of our system. This idea is reflected in the imagery of the card, specifically in the pool where the water flowing from the pitcher creates seven concentric rings corresponding to our sun and seven sacred planets. This correspondence is emphasized by the occult connection said to exist between Isis and Sirius²¹ and by the fact that the energy or idea of Freedom which is so central to this path on the Tree originates in the greater Sirian system.

This idea is further depicted in naked figure of the water bearer (Venus?) which suggests “unmasked or naked truth;” Isis Unveiled and the revelation of nature’s mysteries.²²

The water bearer is shown as pouring out two streams of water (symbolic of the ocean of space) from her/his jugs. This sacramental dispensation signifies the pouring forth of stellar consciousness or the “food of the Gods,” dispensed, not to just a few, but to all creation.

The sprit/seed-water is brought down in the way of divine ideas from the fiery realms of the Tree to the sphere of practical living. It suggests a unique relationship between the Earth, Venus and Sirius worthy of further investigation. In some renditions of this card the water bearer is shown carefully combining these life giving waters. This implies a “Doctrine of Synthesis,” or a wise blending of all the major religious traditions and authentic systems of self-realization.²³ This blending represents the emergence of the One World Religion.

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Conclusion

Looking at the Tree of Life from the angle of the Tibetan's teachings there is clear reference to a new dispensation, to a global mind shift or awakening brought about through the aid of a Group Avatar. This Group, traversing the path from Tiphareth through Daath and beyond, consists of the disciples and initiates who are working with the Christ on behalf of humanity and all planetary Life. They are the knowers of God emerging from within the ranks of humanity (and the Tree) who will anchor dynamic truths in the hearts and minds of wo/men that have not been expressed before. It is this group the Coming One will use to liberate humanity into a new initiatory level of awareness thereby ushering in the New Age.

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The Trinity and Its Symbolism

John Nash


Summary



Belief in a triune God, expressed in Christianity as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has pervaded major religions throughout history and in every part of the world. This article examines several trinities, representing theological and philosophical insights covering a period of four millennia, to identify common elements in their characteristics and symbolism.

Typically, there is a sense of sequential manifestation from some ineffable divine essence—although this essence is not necessarily identified as a Godhead. An important issue in the present study is how the three divine aspects manifest, relate to one another, and play their distinctive roles. On this basis alternative trinitarian models can be formulated. In one, the aspects emerge in a linear sequence, giving rise to the familiar notion of First, Second and Third Aspects or “Persons.” In the other emphasis duality emerges at a high level, lending itself to gender symbolism: Father and Mother. From that duality a “Son” is born.¹

The Trinity in Ancient Egypt

The pantheon of deities in Egyptian religion formed a hierarchy extending down from a high god: first the sun god Rā and later Amen, “the Hidden One.”² Many deities were grouped in threes. Even Rā was sometimes grouped with Khepera and Temu to form a solar trinity. Khepera represented the rising sun, Rā the midday sun, and Temu the setting sun. Sometimes groups of three gods were similarly grouped to produce *enneads*, or nine-fold deities, and at least one group of three enneads were formed to produce a composite of 27.³

By far the most enduring Egyptian trinity consisted of Osiris, Isis, and Horus. Contrasting with Amen-Rā, the transcendent high god, Osiris (Hieroglyph: ) was the anthropomor-

phized god, the God-Man or Perfect Man. Osiris was the archetypal father and his sister-wife, Isis () the archetypal mother. The Greek writer Plutarch (c. 46–119 CE) provided a lengthy account of Osiris’ death and dismemberment at the hands of the evil Seth.⁴ Isis recovered his remains and brought him back to life. After Osiris’ resurrection Isis bore his son Horus, whose hieroglyph was a hawk (). In turn Horus had four sons, represented by the baboon, jackal, hawk, and man—comparable with the four beasts of Ezekiel, but more specifically symbolizing the kingdoms of nature.

Osiris and Isis were subordinate to Amen-Rā, in the hierarchical pantheon, but not his immediate progeny. According to legend, they were children of the goddess Nut who was also the mother of the Sun and Moon. The fact that Osiris and Isis were not only husband and wife but also siblings offends the modern consciousness, reminding us of the incestuous relationships common in pharaonic Egypt. But we can also interpret it as a strong affirmation of the gender equality between them. Indeed, Egyptian religion would seem to offer a worthy contrast to the patriarchal bias of more recent religions.

Osiris, Isis, and Horus provided a model for the Holy Family of Christianity, and artistic portrayals of Isis holding the infant Horus served as the prototype for the Madonna and child. However, Christian apologists rarely

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acknowledged these cultural debts, and in general Egyptian trinitarian beliefs had little influence on the development of Christian doctrine. Much greater influence came from Judaic religion and Greek philosophy.

Trinitarian Concepts in Greek Philosophy

Belief in a triune god was not prevalent in classical Greece. Plato (428–348 BCE) saw an essential “threeness” in all creation, but the notion of a triune God did not take definite form until the rise of Neoplatonism six centuries later. Plotinus of Alexandria (204–270 CE) formulated a trinity consisting of *Monad* (Greek: Μοναδος, “the One,” “Unity”), *Nous* (Νους, “Mind”), and *Psyche* (Ψυχη, “Soul”).

The three aspects of Plotinus’ trinity formed a cascading hierarchy of emanation: from Monad to Nous to Psyche. The Monad was considered ineffable and beyond comprehension or description: “The Unity is not a being... strictly no name is apt to it... [I]t eludes our knowledge, so that the nearer approach to it is through its offspring.”⁵ Nous is the divine intellect, “the Intellectual-Principle itself,” while Psyche, is the creator, the author of all living things. Thus descending emanation of divine essence continues into the created universe.

According to Plotinus, Psyche is twofold in its activity; one part looks up “in devotion” toward Spirit, while the other looks down to the created universe:

Psyche creates, then, on the model of the Ideas; for, what it has received from the Intellectual-Principle [Nous] it must pass on in turn. In sum, then, the Intellectual-Principle gives from itself to the Soul [Psyche]... [T]his again gives forth from itself to its next, illuminated and imprinted by it; and that secondary Soul at once begins to

create... (I)t overflows... and the image it gives forth, its last utterance towards the lower, will be the creative puissance.⁶

The Monad in Plotinus’ formulation is androgynous or presexual, synthesizing the masculine and the feminine. Nous, both grammatically and in terms of polarity, is masculine, while Psyche is feminine; indeed, Psyche was also the name of a Greek goddess. Gender balance was achieved in Plotinus’ trinity, although the feminine might seem to be lower than the masculine in the hierarchy of emanation. If Psyche is the mother of the created world, Nous could be considered its father, and the world the product of their union.

Meanwhile, the concept of the *Logos* (Greek: Λογος) had received considerable attention,

eventually to influence both Christian doctrine and modern Theosophical teachings.⁷ The Logos was first discussed by Heraclitus (c. 500 BCE) who discerned in the universe a principle of reason corresponding to man’s rational faculty. In due course “Logos” came to signify not only

reason but principle, proportion, harmony, order and stability.⁸ The Stoics regarded the Logos as the soul of the universe, with the status of a deity. At times it was identified with Apollo. Jewish scholar Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE–50 CE) spoke of the Logos as the creator:

As therefore the city... was stamped solely in the mind of the workman, so in the same manner neither can the world which existed in ideas have had any other local position except the Logos which made them.”⁹

More generally, in Philo’s work and elsewhere, the Logos was considered to be the mediator between heaven and earth, as the soul is

the mediator between the human spirit and body.¹⁰

The Christian Trinity

Developing Trinitarian Doctrine

Interest in a trinity arose among early Christians even before Plotinus' time. Of the three divine aspects necessary to construct a trinity, two were readily available. The Judaic Tetragrammaton (Hebrew: יהוה)—rendered in English as Jehovah or Yahweh—became God the Father. And Jesus Christ was believed to be his Son.¹¹ In the *Gospel of John* Christ was identified with the Logos, which the editors of the King James Bible translated rather inadequately as “the Word.” Athenagoras (c.133–c.190 CE), a Platonist philosopher who converted to Christianity, described the relationship between the Father and Son:

[W]e acknowledge one God, uncreated, eternal, invisible, impassible, incomprehensible, illimitable... we acknowledge also a Son of God.... [T]he Son of God is the Logos of the Father, in idea and in operation; for after the pattern of Him and by Him were all things made, the Father and the Son being one.¹²

A third aspect was needed to complete the trinity, and considerable debate ensued before a definitive choice was made. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch (c. 117–c. 181 CE) defined the three aspects as *Theos* (Θεός, “God”), *Logos* and *Sophia* (Σοφία).¹³ The reference to *Sophia* is highly significant. “Sophia” was a direct translation of the Hebrew *Chokmah* (חכמה, “Wisdom”), the feminine principle explored at great length in the Wisdom Literature of late-biblical scripture and the apocrypha.¹⁴ Sophia also absorbed many characteristics of the *Shekinah* (שכינה): interpreted in the *Talmud* as the divine glory, God's presence in the world. “Shekinah” is another feminine noun, and in first-century esoteric Judaism and Gnostic Christianity the Shekinah-Chokmah-Sophia was fast gaining the status of a feminine divine hypostasis.¹⁵ Had Sophia been established as the third aspect, as Theophilus proposed, the Christian trinity would have had much in

common with the Egyptian one. But this was not to be. Sophia managed to survive in the East, although not always in association with the Third Person of the trinity.

In the West, attention shifted to the Holy Spirit. This term was frequently used in biblical Judaism to denote the spirit of God. Its Hebrew form was the feminine noun *Ruach* (רוח), which could mean either “spirit” or “breath.” The Gnostic teacher Valentinus (c. 105–c. 165 CE) identified the Holy Spirit as God the Mother, and efforts were even made to relate the virgin birth to a feminine Holy Spirit rather than to Mary.¹⁶ The third-century Iranian teacher, Mani, who founded the sect of Manichaeism, also was convinced that the Holy Spirit was feminine.¹⁷

Trinity in the Western Church

Any prospect that the Third Person might have feminine characteristics came to an end when Athenagoras identified the Holy Spirit with the Greek word *Pneuma* (Πνευμα). *Pneuma* may be a direct translation of *Ruach*, but it is a neuter rather than a feminine noun. As a result, the western Christian trinity crystallized into the combination of two obviously masculine aspects and one neuter aspect. The only vestige of the Third Person's sophianic origins was a vague awareness that wisdom—in its conventional sense—flows from the Holy Spirit.

It was Christian theologians who coined the term “persons” of the trinity. The Latin *persona*, related to the verb *personare*, meaning “to sound through,” or “speak through,” literally means the mask worn by an actor in a play. Accordingly, the persons of the trinity can be viewed as conduits through which aspects of the divine essence are expressed and perceived.

Augustine of Hippo (354–430) wrote no fewer than 15 books on the trinity. He rejected the Neoplatonic concept of a hierarchical trinity, asserting instead that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are co-equal. The Council of Nicea (325 CE) declared that Son, as his name implies, proceeded from the Father by a process of *filiation*:

We believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, generated of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten not made, the same in nature with the Father by Whom all things were made.¹⁸

The church fathers had struggled with the identity of the Third Person of the trinity. They also struggled with its relationship to the First and Second Persons. Athenagoras stated: “The Holy Spirit [is] an effluence of God, flowing from Him, and returning back again like a beam of the sun.”¹⁹ The Gnostics said the same about the human soul.

The fathers agreed that the Holy Spirit proceeded by a process of *spiration*, a clear reference to Ruach or Pneuma interpreted as “Holy Breath.” But precisely what does that mean? “Spiration” is harder to understand than “birth,” as in the birth of Horus. But the absence of gender polarity between the first two persons precluded any appeal to procreation as an explanatory model.

The Latin and Greek branches of the church could not agree on whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father alone or jointly from the Father and Son. What became known as the “Nicene Creed” was drafted by the Council of Nicea but amended by the Council of Toledo in 589 CE after trinitarian doctrine took more definite form. The amended version affirms:

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life: Who proceedeth from the Father *and the Son* (Latin: *Qui ex Patre, Filioque procedit*). Who together with the Father and Son is adored and glorified.²⁰

The eastern churches rejected the *Filioque* clause as ascriptural, insisting that God the Father alone was the source of both the Son and the Holy Spirit.

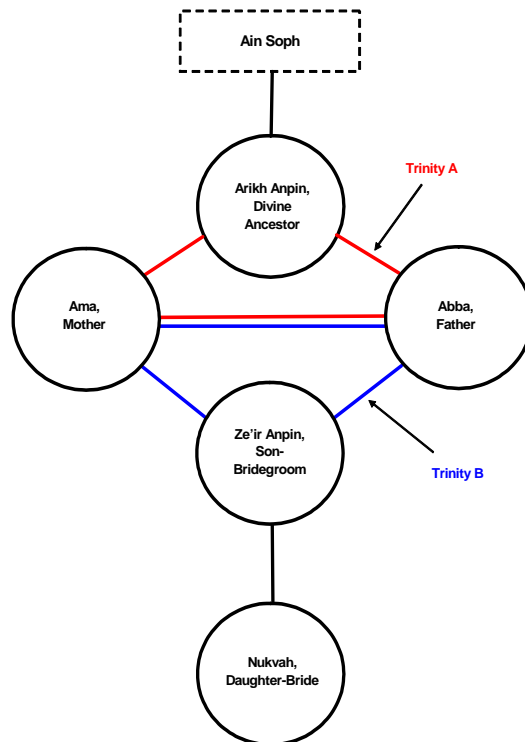
Christianity rejected Plotinus’ claim that the universe represented an extension of divine emanation. Indeed the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 asserted that the universe was not a divine emanation but was “created out of nothing” (Latin: *creatio ex nihilo sui*).²¹ Having

established that the universe was separate from God, only a small step was needed to conclude that it was evil. Christian doctrine also asserted that the work of creation could be traced to any one person of the trinity but was the collective work of all three; in Thomas Aquinas’s words, creation is *ex trinitate*.

Trinities in the Qabalah

Qabalistic teachings explicitly refer to an unmanifest Godhead, the *Ain Soph* (Hebrew: אין סוף, “Limitless”). From there the divine essence cascades down through a sequence of forms. These forms are most often represented by the *sephiroth* (singular: *sephirah*, ספירה, “number”),²² and we shall return to these shortly.

Figure 1. Trinities in the Partzufim.



The Partzufim

First it will be useful to examine the alternative but less known *partzufim* (singular *partzuf*, “face” or “persona”).²³ The five partzufim, akin to the “persons” of the Christian trinity,

form the pattern shown in Figure 1. Immediately below the Ain Soph is the *Arikh Anpin* (literally “long face”). Sometimes depicted as an old man, it may also be interpreted archetypally as the androgynous or presexual Divine Ancestor. At the next lower level, *Abba* (אבא) and *Ama* (אמא) are respectively the archetypal Father and Mother. Completing the pattern are the *Ze’ir Anpin* and *Nukvah*. The *Ze’ir Anpin* (“short face”) is identified as the Son, Bridegroom or “Holy One.”²⁴ *Nukvah*, the Daughter or Bride, is identified with the *Shekinah* who, along with fallen humanity, is lost in the wilderness, waiting to be reunited with the Holy One in a divine marriage.²⁵

Two trinities emerge from the partzufim. One, which we shall refer to as Qabalah Trinity A, involves the *Arikh Anpin* (the Ancestor), *Abba* and *Ama*. This trinity, shown by the red lines in Figure 1, depicts the emergence of duality from the primeval unity. The other, designated Trinity B, involves the *Abba*, *Ama* and the *Ze’ir Anpin* (the Bridegroom-Son). Shown by the blue lines in the figure, Trinity B emphasizes the birth of the Son from *Abba* and *Ama*—Father and Mother—just as Horus was born from Osiris and Isis. *Nukvah*, the Daughter-Bride, is excluded from the “trinitarian family” although esoteric Judaism envisioned a strong connection between her and *Ama*—often spoken of as the *supernal Shekinah*—as well as the anticipated nuptial bond between *Nukvah* and the *Ze’ir Anpin*.

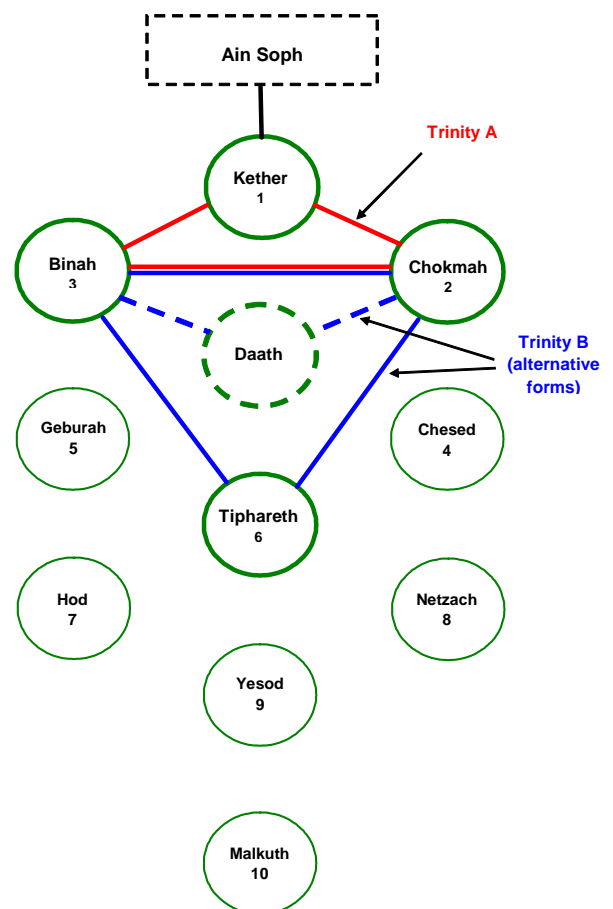
The Sephiroth

Compared to the obvious anthropomorphism of the partzufim, the sephiroth are more abstract in nature; being viewed either as differentiations of the divine essence or as the vessels into which it flows. In early formulations of the Qabalah there were ten sephiroth; but an additional one, *Daath* (דעת, “Knowledge”), was added in the late Middle Ages and has received increasing attention in more recent times. The sephiroth form the familiar configuration of the Tree of Life (Figure 2).²⁶

With ten (or eleven) sephiroth, it is not difficult to identify trinities to suit any given purpose, and standard descriptions of the Tree of Life refer to three “triangles” at different levels

of reality. The *supernal triangle* involves the first three sephiroth: *Kether* (Hebrew: כתר, “Crown”), *Chokmah* (חכמה, “Wisdom”) and *Binah* (בינה, “Understanding”). These three sephiroth correspond directly to the partzufim *Arikh Anpin*, *Abba* and *Ama*, so the supernal triangle is equivalent to what we have called Qabalah Trinity A. It is shown by the red lines in Figure 2. Many Christian Qabalists associate *Kether* with God the Father, *Chokmah* with the Son, and *Binah* with the Holy Spirit.

Figure 2. Trinities in the Tree of Life.



A contrasting viewpoint is that the trinity should consist of *Chokmah*, *Binah*, and either *Tiphareth* (תפארת, “Beauty” or “Harmony”) or the unnumbered “sephirah” *Daath*.²⁷ Corresponding to Trinity B, alternate forms are

shown by the blue lines in the figure. Kether, according to this viewpoint, remains part of the undifferentiated Godhead, overshadowing the trinity and the lower sephiroth.

Like Abba and Ama, Chokmah and Binah represent the first manifestation of duality, and they too came to be identified as the archetypal Father and Mother. They emerge in close succession, suggesting virtually equal status. Again there is a hypostatic duality at a high level, and the tension between them is resolved in a “birth”—not only of Daath and Tiphareth, either or both of which can be associated with “the Son,” but of all the lower sephiroth.

If the partzufim are superimposed on the Tree of Life, Nukvah (the Daughter-Bride) would obviously be located at Malkuth, which is also known as the Shekinah. The Ze’ir Anpin (the Son) could be located at either Daath or Tiphareth. The latter is particularly appropriate because Tiphareth lies at the center of a

hexagon or hexagram whose vertices are Daath, Chesed, Netzach, Yesod, Hod and Geburah—the sephiroth for which Ze’ir Anpin is considered the collective substitute. The hexagram has great significance in sacred geometry. We may recall that Tiphareth is assigned Number 6 in the classical Tree of Life; and numerologists consider six to be the number of perfected humanity, the number of the Christ.²⁸

To identify Chokmah with the archetypal Father—or as is common in Christian Qabalah, with God the Son—is not without difficulty. “Chokmah” is a feminine noun in Hebrew and was referred to as “she” throughout the Old Testament. Its direct Greek equivalent is Sophia. Nonetheless, Philo of Alexandria offered the terse solution: “[W]e do not concern ourselves with names, but simply declare God’s daughter, Wisdom, to be masculine.”²⁹

Whatever the justification, Chokmah was allowed to become the Qabalistic symbol of masculine potency, and it serves well in relationship to the receptivity and form-building capability of Binah.

The Trinity in Modern Esoteric Teachings

Notions of a triune God play a major role in modern Theosophical teachings. Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891), co-founder of the Theosophical Society, listed the Godhead and its triune manifestation thus:

- (1) The Absolute; the *Parabrahm* of the Vedantins...
- (2) The first manifestation, the impersonal, and in philosophy... the “First Cause”...
- (3) Spirit-matter, Life; the “Spirit of the Universe,” the Purusha and Prakriti, or the *second Logos*.
- (4) Cosmic Ideation, Mahat or Intelligence, the Uni-

versal World-Soul; the Cosmic Noumenon of Matter, the basis of the intelligent operations in and of Nature...³⁰

The Theosophical definition of the Logos should be noted carefully. Whereas Christianity equates it with the Second Person of the trinity, Theosophical teachings regard the Logos as the manifest God, itself triune in nature. The components of the Logoic trinity are sometimes referred to as the First, Second and Third *Logoi*.³¹ But confusion can arise from this ambiguous usage of “Logos,” and the trinitarian components are referred to more often as the First, Second and Third *Aspects*. Alternatively, they are referred to by their qualities: Will or Power, Love–Wisdom and Active Intelligence.³²

Neoplatonic philosophers and Christian theologians wrestled with the concept of scission at the divine level: how did the Second Aspect of the trinity emerge from the First? Their solution was to appeal to God’s self-consciousness: the unified God saw a reflection of itself in the mirror of its own mind or heard the echo of its own voice.

Theosophical writers have provided valuable insight into how the trinitarian aspects manifest through the created universe and humankind. Charles Leadbeater identified three “outpourings” of the divine essence.³³ They occur in reverse order. The first outpouring, from the Third Aspect of the Logos, penetrates and vitalizes the “virgin matter” of seven planes of creation.³⁴ In this regard, it is noteworthy that the Nicene Creed referred to the Holy Spirit as the “giver of life.” Also, we see here a cosmic symbol of the Holy Spirit’s impregnation of the Virgin Mary. Theosophical descriptions of creation by the Third Aspect closely parallel Plotinus’ creation of the world by *Psyche*. Indeed, the very term “World Soul” appears in the above quotation from Blavatsky. They also parallel the depiction of the Qabalistic Binah-Ama as the creator of lower forms. Finally, the combination of the triune God and the seven planes of nature recalls the ten sephiroth of the Qabalah.³⁵

The second outpouring, from the Second Aspect of the trinity, builds forms from the vitalized matter of the planes. It descends to the physical plane and then begins an upward-sweeping arc, ensouling lives on successive planes and urging them forward on their evolutionary paths.

The third outpouring, emanating from the First Aspect, remains at a high level. But tension between it and the second outpouring provides an evolutionary urge unique to humanity. In Leadbeater’s words:

[The third outpouring] appears to be unable of itself to descend lower than the Buddhic plane, and there it hovers like a mighty cloud, waiting for an opportunity of effecting a junction with the second outpouring, which is slowly rising to meet it.³⁶

The third outpouring provides human entities with the potential for unlimited expansion of consciousness. People need only recognize and respond to the divinity within them and the beckoning divinity above. Theosophy views the Christ as the example, per excellence, of human evolution, and Leadbeater’s words recall Jesus’ remark: “I go to the Father.”³⁷

The outpourings operate on a much larger scale in the three solar systems described in Theosophical literature. Each solar system, we are told, brings to full expression one of the divine aspects. Our present solar system, the second, expresses the Second Aspect of Love–Wisdom, which embraces the notions of coherence and form-building. As the Tibetan Master notes:

The method employed by the Logos in this the second solar system is definitely the use of form for purposes of manifestation, as a medium of expression and as the vehicle whereby the indwelling life may grow, expand, experience and find itself.³⁸

He adds that this is true whether the form is an entire solar system, a human being, or a form constructed by a human being. The forms are built from undifferentiated matter, comparable with the *prakriti* of Hindu teachings, left over from the first solar system which expressed the Third Aspect of deity.³⁹

Emergence of the Trinitarian Aspects

The Process of Scission

If the Godhead is absolute, unified, eternal and unchanging, how did the process of differentiation necessary to produce a trinity ever get started? An analogous problem had already arisen in Egypto-Greek number theory. The ancient Egyptians—and much later the Qabalists—believed that numbers were not just symbolic counters but powerful potencies in their own right. Pythagoras, who probably acquired his numerical expertise from Egypt, inspired generations of Greek philosophers to similar beliefs. Particular attention was paid to the sequence of natural numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4... “1” was the monad: the primal unity from which all other numbers emerged; “2” represented duality. Once duality emerged, the rest of the series could be formed by addition: for example, three is equal to one plus two. But how did duality emerge from unity? How did the primeval *scission* come about?

Neoplatonic philosophers and Christian theologians wrestled with the concept of scission at

the divine level: how did the Second Aspect of the trinity emerge from the First? Their solution was to appeal to God's self-consciousness: the unified God saw a reflection of itself in the mirror of its own mind or heard the echo of its own voice. Plotinus referred to Nous, the Second Aspect of the Neoplatonic trinity, as the Monad's image of itself: "The Divine Mind in its mentation," he wrote, "thinks itself; the object of the thought is nothing external: Thinker and Thought are one; therefore in its thinking and knowing it possesses itself, observes itself and sees itself."⁴⁰ One thousand years later Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) came to a similar conclusion: "What is conceived in the intellect is a likeness of the thing understood... and so it seems to be a sort of offspring."⁴¹ For Aquinas, of course, this offspring was God the Son.

Equally important questions concern the impact that scission had on the unity and immutability of the Godhead. Was the primal divine unity destroyed by the emergence of the duality of the First and Second Aspects—and then by the triplicity of the Third Aspect? Or did primal unity survive at the level of the Godhead, while duality and triplicity emerged at a lower level? Could duality and triplicity be viewed as *manifestations* of the unmanifest unity? The trinities examined in this article can be categorized according to the answer to these questions.

Primal Unity Destroyed by Scission.

In the Neoplatonic and Christian trinities, it would seem that emergence of the Second Aspect destroys the primal unity of the First. Monad is now juxtaposed against Nous and the Father against the Son. The original unity now participates in the duality, with a correspondingly diminished status. Absolute unity had to give way to coexistence with something else.

The biblical Adam had to give up something—his rib—to produce Eve; his primordial completeness was lost. Similarly, Christianity's God the Father had to give up something to produce the Son. He may even have suffered a further loss when the Holy Spirit emerged. Christian doctrine stresses that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are co-equal, and one in substance. But this substance is not an overshadowing Godhead, comparable to Ain Soph of the Qabalah or the Hindu Brahman that overshadows the *trimurti*.⁴² When Peter Lombard (1095–1160) explored the notion of the Godhead, Joachim of Flore (1135–1202) accused him of trying to change the Trinity into a "quaternity." Joachim's position was supported by

Anthropomorphism is less evident in Theosophical teachings... but interesting conclusions are drawn from the Third Aspect's penetration of the "virgin-matter"... The biblical account of the Annunciation, in which the Archangel Gabriel tells Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," is regarded as allegory of this process.

the Lateran Council of 1215.⁴³ By default God the Father uneasily serves two roles: as a *de-facto* Godhead and also as an anthropomorphized and knowable trinitarian hypostasis. This dual role almost inevitably ensures destruction of the primal unity by the filiation of the Second Person.

Plotinus tried to preserve the Monad as an androgynous, presexual aspect, but Christianity made the First Person of the trinity unashamedly masculine. Since no distinction was made between God the Father and the Godhead, it endorsed the notion of absolute masculine pre-eminence throughout the cosmos. The feminine—wherever it might be found, in the trinity or anywhere else—was unambiguously lower in status, a kind of afterthought. This was consistent with Augustine's opinion that women were not made in the image of God but were created to be helpmates to men.⁴⁴

An additional problem arises when we consider the numerological symbolism of the trinitarian aspects. The Greeks considered odd

numbers to be masculine: constantly thrusting forward into new territory, while even numbers, which restored harmony after each forward thrust, were feminine. Qabalists, Christian or otherwise, might be comfortable assigning number 1 to a godhead-like Monad, God the Father and Kether-Arikh Anpin, the First Aspects of their respective trinities. But Nous, the Son and Chokmah-Abba—all considered masculine—are assigned the “feminine” number, 2. And Psyche, a feminine noun and name of a goddess; the Holy Spirit that sometimes takes on feminine characteristics; and Binah, which is unambiguously feminine, are all assigned the masculine number 3.

Primal Unity Preserved.

In Qabalah Trinity B, scission produces the duality of Chokmah and Binah, Abba and Ama, masculine and feminine. But that duality emerges at a lower level of reality than the undifferentiated unity: the androgynous Kether-Arikh Anpin. In turn, Chokmah-Abba and Binah-Ama give birth to the Son, represented by Daath, Tiphareth or the Ze’ir Anpin, at a still lower level. In the Qabalistic model, the divine essence cascades from one level to the next, leaving all previous levels of emanation intact.

Kether-Arikh Anpin is not included in the trinity but forms an extension of the overshadowing Ain Soph. Thus, the Godhead is represented as having both an unmanifest and a partially manifest component—a kind of “vertical” duality, distinct from the “horizontal” duality of Chokmah-Abba and Binah-Ama. The unmanifest portion of the Godhead is eternal, unchangeable, and indeed *unchanged* by the emergence of the lower manifestations. Esoteric teachings predict that the partial and full manifestations will be reabsorbed into the Ain Soph at the end of the epoch. The simultaneous existence of Kether-Arikh Anpin and the three aspects of Qabalah Trinity B might allow Joachim of Flore to accuse us of the heresy of quaternity. But Joachim would have to deal with the issue that they are not additive but exist on different levels of reality. The trinity is an expression of the Godhead.

The foregoing is an elegant model of divine emanation. But the problem of numerical labels is no less serious than it was before. We would like to call the masculine aspect, like Osiris or Chokmah-Abba, number 1 and the feminine aspect, Isis or Binah-Ama, number 2. The Son—thrusting forward as the symbol of new creation—would appropriately be number 3.

Unfortunately, in the Qabalistic Tree of Life, Kether is the first sephirah, Chokmah is the second, and Binah the third. Perhaps the even number assigned to Chokmah can be traced to its biblical and grammatical feminine status, before it took on its character as the archetypal Father; but Binah, which paradoxically is assigned an odd number, has always been feminine. The problem could be solved by assigning zero to Kether; 1 to Chokmah, and 2 to Binah. However, zero was not known in the West until the late Middle Ages; it would have been incomprehensible to the early Qabalists who coined the term “sephirah,” which literally means “number” in the sense of the natural numbers. As far as the Son is concerned, Tiphareth is assigned Number 6 while Daath, a later addition to the Tree of Life, remains unnumbered.

The Aspects’ Order of Emergence

General Comments

The numbers assigned to the sephiroth denote the order in which they emanate from the Ain Soph. In the Neoplatonic trinity the sequence is from Monad to Nous to Psyche. Christianity specifically uses the terms First, Second and Third Persons of the trinity, reinforcing the notion of progression from the Father to the Son, to the Holy Spirit, leaving aside the issue of whether the Holy Spirit emerged from the Father or jointly from the Father and Son.⁴⁵

However, if God the Son is the Second Person of the trinity and the second to emerge, there is no possibility that the Third Person might be God the Mother. Mainstream western Christianity would not be overly concerned, since it rejects any notion of a divine feminine hypos-

tasis. However, it does insist that Jesus Christ—the incarnation of God the Son—was conceived by the Holy Spirit. To argue that only the human nature of Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit would smack of the Arianism condemned by the Council of Nicea.

If emphasis is placed on the birth of a Son from gender polarity, as it is in the Egyptian trinity and Qabalah Trinity B, it would seem that God the Mother should be the Second Aspect, and the Son the Third Aspect. That arrangement would also be compatible with the number symbolism, in which odd numbers are masculine and even numbers feminine.

Anthropomorphism is less evident in Theosophical teachings than in Christianity, but interesting conclusions are drawn from the Third Aspect's penetration of the "virgin-matter." Much is made of the etymological connections between "matter" and "mother" (Latin: *mater*). The biblical account of the Annunciation, in which the Archangel Gabriel tells Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee,"⁴⁶ is regarded as allegory of this process. For example:

The Holy Spirit, the One Who overshadows and Who implants the germ of life in the waiting acquiescent Virgin Mother or matter (causing her to awaken and to commence her great work of producing the divine incarnation) is a primary factor from the standpoint of the second solar system.⁴⁷

The Second Aspect is often portrayed as the mediator between the First and Third, besides being their arithmetic mean. The concept of the cosmic mediator goes back far in history. Thoth-Hermes-Mercury was the archetypal mediator between spirit and matter; philosophers from Heraclitus to Philo regarded the

Logos as the divine mediator, the bringer of harmony; and Christianity portrayed Christ as the mediator between God the Father and humanity. The Tibetan Master brings together several of these concepts in an interesting passage: "Mercury," he states, "is interchangeable for the Sun (Son) and stands for the Mediator or intermediary, between the Father and the Mother, between Spirit and Matter."⁴⁸ Interestingly, mediation is often considered a feminine characteristic, contrasting with masculine stereotypes of aggression and divisiveness; and in this respect a Second-Aspect mediator is appropriate. But then one wonders why this mediator is depicted as the Son rather than the *Daughter*? Actually, this possibility has been noted. The medieval mystic Julian of Norwich

attributed feminine characteristics to Jesus: "Jesus is our true Mother in nature by our first creation, and he is our true Mother in grace by his taking our created nature."⁴⁹ In a recent article Bishop Allan Barnes refers to the Second Aspect as the "Mother in some teachings."⁵⁰ Qabalistic teachings acknowledge an archetypal Daughter in the parzufim,

but she is placed at a lower level than the Son.

Theosophical teachings preserve the traditional numeration of First, Second and Third Aspects of deity, although Leadbeater's "outpourings" of divine essence take place in reverse order: the first outpouring from the Third Aspect, and so forth. The same reversal is noted in the three solar systems: the Third Aspect was brought to full expression in the first solar system, while the Second Aspect is being expressed in the present, second solar system. The importance and relevance of the solar systems, in this context, becomes readily apparent when we recall that what Theosophy most of-

Valuable insights have been gained into this symbolism as well as into the qualities of the trinitarian aspects, their sequence of manifestation, and the fundamental process by which a trinity could emerge from an unchanging, unified Godhead. The need for studies like this one is enhanced by the increasing crystallization of conventional beliefs, particularly concerning the Second Aspect of the Trinity.

ten refers to as “God” is the Solar Logos, the great entity whose vehicles of express are the solar system and its associated lives. The Theosophical Logos is very much a manifest God.

Clearly a distinction is being made between the procession of the divine aspects themselves and their expression through creation. The divine aspects emerge in numerical sequence: First, Second and Third. However, their subsequent expression allows the Second Aspect to act upon the product of the Third, mediating and creating forms from its virgin matter. In a final stage the First Aspect will act on the product of the Second and Third.

Two Models

Based on the sequence of manifestation, two contrasting trinitarian models can be discerned. The first model depicts a linear sequence of emanation in which terms “First,” “Second” and “Third Aspect” (or “Person”) are particularly relevant. Qabalah Trinity A and the Theosophical trinity provide the most complete description of this model, setting it in the context of a larger reality that includes, on the one hand, an overshadowing Godhead, and on the other, the created universe. Here there is an intriguing and most important correspondence between the macrocosm and microcosm. Theosophy regards the trinity as a threefold expression of the Logos, while Greek philosophy viewed the Logos as the macrocosmic equivalent of the soul. We now know that the soul is a threefold entity juxtaposed between an overshadowing monad and the lower vehicles of the incarnate self.⁵¹

Difficulties arise when we try to reconcile terms like “First,” “Second” and “Third Aspect” with numerological symbolism. The Greeks considered two to be a feminine number, but the Second Aspect has been identified with the divine Son, even though it is also seen as the mediator between the First and Third Aspects, and mediation could be construed as a feminine activity. Three was considered a masculine number, and this accords well with the notion that the Third Aspect of the trinity impregnates and vitalizes “virgin matter.” But it conflicts with suggestions that the Third Aspect might have feminine characteristics. Per-

haps, following Plotinus, we must distinguish dual functions in the Third Aspect, one participating in the collective divinity and the other participating in creation. At the risk of exposing ourselves to the charge of “quarternitarianism,” albeit for different reasons than did Peter Lombard, we might solve the numerological problem by assigning both 3 and 4 to the “Third Aspect.” In a sense Christianity does this through the intimate relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary—who herself is often regarded esoterically as a personification of virgin matter.

The second trinitarian model emphasizes the emergence of duality at a high level. And in a real sense manifestation demands duality. This duality can easily be anthropomorphized as a masculine–feminine polarity with generative potential: the archetypal Father and Mother bear a Son—and along with him the created universe. Recognition of a feminine archetype at the same high level as the masculine, and their simultaneous or near-simultaneous emanation, provide a gender-balanced view of the divine. Qabalah Trinity B provides the best illustration of this model: the duality emerges from an androgynous, presexual Godhead—albeit with unmanifest and partially manifest components which might imply another kind of duality. Indeed, the whole structure of the Qabalistic Tree of Life emphasizes pairs of opposites representing contrasting differentiations of divine force. It is built not around the linear Lightning Strike but around the Pillars of Mercy and Severity, together with the central Pillar of Equilibrium.⁵²

The “duality” model of the trinity does not lend itself readily to the use of “First,” “Second” and “Third Aspect.” The archetypal Father and Mother would need to be regarded as the First and Second Aspects, and the Son the Third. This would conform to the notion of masculine odd numbers and feminine even numbers; but it would violate the traditional belief that the Second Aspect is God the Son. And, in the Qabalah, the conventional numeration of the sephiroth would have to be discarded in favor of a separate numeration of the trinitarian aspects.

The duality model accommodates more easily the preservation of the unity of an overshadowing Godhead despite manifestation of the trinitarian aspects. For example, in Qabalah Model B both the Ain Soph and Kether-Arieh Anpin remain aloof from the scission that produced Chokmah-Abba and Binah-Ama. And in the religion of ancient Egypt Amen-Rā reigns supreme above the trinity of Osiris, Isis and Horus. However, primal unity can also be preserved in the “linear” model if a proper distinction is made between the First Aspect and the Godhead. Qabalah Model A and modern Theosophical teachings do so. But Christianity confuses God the Father with the Godhead, eroding the unicity of God which Thomas Aquinas listed as an essential attribute of the divine nature.⁵³ The same confusion also implies an unfortunate masculine bias at the very highest level of reality.

Closing Remarks

The trinities we have examined present an evocative tapestry of insights into the nature of God as it can be known by the human mind. Deep convictions concerning the triune divine nature have survived the ages, uniting philosophical and theological systems that disagreed on most other matters. The symbolism used to describe the three aspects, or “persons,” varied according to the environments in which the trinities were formulated.

Valuable insights have been gained into trinitarian symbolism as well as into the qualities of the three aspects, their sequence of manifestation, and the fundamental process by which a trinity could emerge from an unchanging, unified Godhead. Somehow unity had to give way to duality, and duality had to be resolved in trinity.

The need for studies like this one is enhanced by the increasing crystallization of conventional beliefs, particularly concerning the Second Aspect of the trinity.⁵⁴ It would be unrealistic to suppose that definitive answers could suddenly be found to age-old problems or convincing proof that one view of the trinity is “right” and another “wrong.” The two models discussed here should be regarded not as mutually exclusive but as complementary views

that, one day, will be resolved into a larger truth. Humanity’s ability to grasp complex concepts is continually expanding.

Certainly, as countless religious teachers have warned, the human intellect may be incapable of formulating a completely satisfying model of the divine nature; but the intuition and still higher aspects of consciousness can carry us further than philosophical speculation. Meanwhile, whatever insights can be gained will help us develop a more comprehensive view of reality and a better understanding of our relationship with the divinity in whose image we were created.

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- ¹ This study extends the author’s work published six years ago. See: John Nash. “The Triune God.” *The Beacon*, May/June 1999, pp. 6-13.
 - ² Amen became the high god upon the establishment of the New Kingdom and the rise of Luxor as the seat of political power.
 - ³ E. A. Wallis Budge. *Egyptian Religion*. Citadel Press, 1900/1997, p. 115.
 - ⁴ Plutarch. *De Iside et Osiride* (“On Isis and Osiris”)
 - ⁵ Plotinus. *Sixth Ennead*, VI. (Transl: Stephen MacKenna and B. S. Page.)
 - ⁶ *Ibid*, III.
 - ⁷ In this article “Theosophy” is taken to include all teachings in the tradition of Helena P. Blavatsky, including the work of Rudolf Steiner, Helena Roerich and Alice Bailey.
 - ⁸ John Fiderer. *Jesus Christ, Sun of God*. Quest Books, 1993.
 - ⁹ Philo of Alexandria. *On the Creation*, V, 20. (Transl: Charles D. Yonge.)
 - ¹⁰ John Nash. “Plato: A Forerunner.” *The Beacon*, July/August 2004, pp. 18-24.
 - ¹¹ More often Christ referred to himself as the “Son of Man,” a familiar term in Judaic tradition.
 - ¹² Athenagoras of Athens. *A Plea For the Christians*, X.
 - ¹³ Theophilus of Antioch. *Epistle to Autolychum*, II, 15. Theophilus is credited with coining the word “trinity.” He used the term *trias* (Greek: τριάς, “number three”), which was translated into the Latin *trinitas* and, in turn, into the English *trinity*. Theophilus of Antioch is not to be confused with the fourth-century patriarch of Alexandria of the same name.
 - ¹⁴ See for example: *Wisdom of Solomon* 8:2-5

- ¹⁵ See for example: Gershom Scholem. *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*. Schocken Books, 1991, pp. 140ff.
- ¹⁶ Karen Armstrong attributes this teaching to Origen. See her: *A History of God*. Ballantine Books, 1993, p. 100.
- ¹⁷ Similar ideas persisted through the Middle Ages. Followers of Guglielma of Bohemia (d. 1281) believed she was the incarnation of the Holy Spirit.
- ¹⁸ A major concern of the Council of Nicea was to counter the “heresy” of Arianism which held that Christ was created by God and thus was subordinate to the Father. Clearly the Council disagreed with the Apostle Paul whose epistles strongly imply Christ’s subordinate status. Indeed, in John S. Spong’s words, “Paul was not a Tritinarian.” See: *Born of a Woman*. Harper-Collins, 1992, p. 25
- ¹⁹ Athenagoras of Athens. *A Plea for the Christians*, X.
- ²⁰ Emphasis added. The original Nicene Creed stated only “And in the holy Spirit.” (Trans: Norman P. Tanner (ed.). *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*.)
- ²¹ A few years after the Lateran Council Thomas Aquinas discussed creation *ex nihilo* in his *Summa Theologiae*, Question XLV. Modern Library, 1948, pp. 242-245.
- ²² The sephiroth were identified in the *Sepher Yetzirah*, or “Book of Formation,” a text that may date back to the 1st or 2nd century CE, and were discussed further in the *Sepher Zohar*, or “Book of Splendor,” compiled by the 13th-century Spanish Qabalist Moses de Leon. See for example: Arthur E. Waite. *The Holy Kabbalah*. Citadel, (undated, c. 1910). Also: Dion Fortune. *The Mystical Qabalah*. Weiser, 1935, 1998.
- ²³ The partzufim are discussed at length in the *Sepher Zohar*.
- ²⁴ Leonora Leet. *Secret Doctrine of the Kabbalah*. Inner Traditions, 1999, pp. 22-23, 28-29.
- ²⁵ Numerous accounts of the lost Shekinah appear in esoteric Jewish literature, particularly during the 16th-century Safed period. See for example: Moses Cordovero. *The Palm Tree of Deborah*. (Transl: R. J. Z. Werblowsky) Oxford University Press, 1962.
- ²⁶ The Tree of Life, showing the spatial relationships among the sephiroth, was developed by the early 17th-century scholars of the Safed community in Palestine.
- ²⁷ John Nash. *Quest for the Soul*. 1stBooks Library, 2004, pp. 157-158. The notion that God the Son should be identified with Daath was proposed by Arthur Waite. See: *The Holy Kabbalah*, p. 210.
- ²⁸ Six is a “perfect number,” equal to the sum of its own divisors. See for example: Anne Marie Schimmel. *The Mystery of Numbers*. Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 122ff.
- ²⁹ Philo of Alexandria. *De profugis*, 9. Quoted in: Scholem. *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, p. 144.
- ³⁰ H. P. Blavastsky. *The Secret Doctrine*. Theosophical Publishing Company, 1888, p. 16. Some emphasis removed.
- ³¹ See for example: Annie Besant. *A Study in Consciousness*. Theosophical Publishing House, 1904, 3-7.
- ³² See for example: Alice A. Bailey. *Initiation: Human and Solar*. Lucis Publishing Company, 1922, p. xv.
- ³³ Charles W. Leadbeater. *Man Visible and Invisible*. Quest Books, 1902/1975, pp. 21-46.
- ³⁴ The seven planes—to use modern terminology—are the physical, sentient (“astral”), mental, buddhic, atmic, monadic and logocic.
- ³⁵ An even closer correspondence with the ten sephiroth is provided by the trinity and the seven rays that emanate from them. Detailed descriptions of the seven rays are given in the books of Alice Bailey.
- ³⁶ Leadbeater. *Man Visible and Invisible*, p. 48. The buddhic plane lies immediately “above” the mental plane.
- ³⁷ *John 16:16-17, 28*. (KJV).
- ³⁸ Bailey. *Letters on Occult Meditation*, p. 141.
- ³⁹ Annie W. Besant. *Avatars*. Theosophical Publishing House, 1899, p. 48.
- ⁴⁰ Plotinus. *Second Ennead*, II.
- ⁴¹ Thomas Aquinas. *Compendium theologiae*, ch. 39. (Transl: Cyril Vollert.) Sophia Institute Press, 1273/1993, p. 37.
- ⁴² The Hindu *trimurti*, literally “One with three forms,” consists of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.
- ⁴³ Source: “Peter Lombard.” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Interestingly, Joachim himself was criticized by the Lateran Council for his theory of “world ages.”
- ⁴⁴ See for example: Barbara Robinson. “Reconsidering the Doctrine of St. Augustine.” *Venture Inward*, Nov./Dec. 2004, pp. 12-16.
- ⁴⁵ The patriarchs of the Eastern churches evidently chose to ignore the Pythagorean precept that triplicity is formed from the addition of unity and duality.
- ⁴⁶ *Luke 1:35* (KJV).

- ⁴⁷ Alice A. Bailey. *Treatise on Cosmic Fire*. Lucis, 1925, p. 916.
- ⁴⁸ Alice A. Bailey. *Esoteric Astrology*. Lucis, 1951, p. 263.
- ⁴⁹ Julian of Norwich. *Showings*, ch. 59. (Transl: Edmund Colledge and James Walsh.) Paulist Press, 1978, p. 276.
- ⁵⁰ Allan B. Barns. "An Esoteric Approach to the Trinity." *Esoteric Christianity*, October 2004.
- ⁵¹ John Nash. *The Soul and its Destiny*. Authorhouse, 2004, ch. 5.
- ⁵² The Lightning Strike represents the descent of divine essence through the sephiroth in numerical order. See for example: Fortune. *The Mystical Qabalah*, pp. 49-55.
- ⁵³ Thomas Aquinas. *Compendium theologiae*, chs. 75ff. The doctrine of God's unicity was confirmed by the First Vatican Council in 1870.
- ⁵⁴ See for example: Alice A. Bailey. *Discipleship in the New Age*, II. Lucis, date, p. 403.

Becoming Receptive to Purpose.

Yves Chaumette

In order to become receptive to planetary purpose, three conditions seem necessary: poise, intensity and “be-ness” which, according to the Secret Doctrine,¹ includes both being and not-being. Poise describes the inner attitude. We need to keep a firm, alert vigil in order to approach the silent, peaceful Will. Sanat Kumara is said to be the most firm in His intent, and we have to imitate Him in the most detailed manner in order to perceive this intent.

Intensity means that we become receptive not only to forms or to radiation (light, vision) but also to the factor which sustains all existence. It can be perceived as a thread of life or as zero-particle energy, if one could use these physical words.

Be-ness means that being is not given but is the result of a “divine incentive.”² Identity is the continuity in the process of existence; identity is not given. The perception of identity as a fixed point or as a solid describes identification with the body or the personality.

Some thoughts about Purpose are the following. Purpose is best approached through the mind, since—to quote Friedrich Engels—“mind is the sense of the general.” Purpose is also a proposition, if one may use such a vague word, on the mental cosmic plane. Purpose can be approached through inclusiveness; Christ Himself is still developing this approach, so we have much ground to make up. Finally, Purpose can be approached through inner stimulus: we proceed through deepening or going into the incentive of our being as much as we feel it.

Purpose can be approached through inclusiveness; Christ Himself is still developing this approach, so we have much ground to make up. Finally, Purpose can be approached through inner stimulus: we proceed through deepening or going into the impulse of our being as much as we feel it.

Most disciples have absorbed the culture of family, social stratum and nation. The disciple has probably taken the best part of the culture, but he or she is also likely to have assimilated some preconceptions from this field of consciousness. Purpose demands that we be receptive to the whole human experience, not only as it is polarized in the particular environment where we live, but with all telluric and spiritual possibilities offered by the earth plane. To this base must be added the strata of human history that so strongly influences our behaviour. The disciple then joins the essential significance of the human being, symbolized by the five-pointed star. Oneness, grounded in duality mediated by radiation, thus links Heaven and Earth, if one still uses these old words. These few words deal briefly with the standpoint of inclusiveness.

From the standpoint of energy, the atmic stimulus balances the impacting current of power on mental substance and the receptivity to pure reason. It is the link to Spirit,³ no longer the sensitivity or consciousness of form to its environment but a self-asserting dynamic stimulus. Since it is self-asserting, it is free

About the author

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from any tie, any link, save for His Intent. Who is “He”? The One we are trying to serve: Sanat Kumara, the Lord of the World.

From the standpoint of mind, the earth provides the soil for experience. This experience is based on intelligent creation (third ray) and develops free-will. When Purpose is grasped, we no longer search for ways to serve, because

the work to be done lies before us, open to the spark of Spirit has incarnated to undertake it.

¹ H. P. Blavatsky. *The Secret Doctrine*, I. Theosophical University Press, 1875, p. 7.

² Alice A. Bailey. *Esoteric Astrology*. Lucis Publishing Co., 1951, 594-595.

³ *The Secret Doctrine*, p. 338

In the Tracks of Hercules

Angela Lemaire

Some stories never die, and the tales of the labours of Hercules are an example. The popular view of Hercules is a dim-witted muscle man attacking everything in sight—someone who has to conquer his way up to the top. Soaring in that manner is not the way of the soul, it is argued, for we have left Patriarchy behind. The way to overcome darkness is not to wrestle with it but to embrace it: to go along with it, to understand it. And yet it could be argued that this embracing or understanding is precisely what Hercules does, over and over again, in the many labours. At the same time both soaring high and lying low may be part of the soul's journey. Hercules, after all, is said to have supported for a while the weight of the heavens on his shoulders. He also went down to Hades. The high mountains of the earth and the crevices of the sea all form part of the one land mass, just as light and dark are part of the one cosmos.

Hercules was said to be quick-tempered and a lover of wine and women: in other words, he was a human being. However, he was later

granted immortality. He thus belongs to both heaven and hell, to the heights and the depths, to both the Upper and Lower worlds. For he is as prone to joy as to the deepest despair, to achievement as well as to failure, to the most profound wisdom as well as to a destructive

psychosis—he did murder his wife and sons. One's wife and sons are one's household after all. They are oneself.

That Hercules strayed from the path like this is not the only reason he was given the labours; he was given them not because he was weak but because he was strong. The human being, Hercules, has already emerged from the

Hercules and his labours have been the subject of countless works of art from classical times to the present day. It may well be that through the arts in their various forms light can be thrown on these ancient, but crucially, and poignantly, modern themes. Is the artist no less potential hero-stuff than the obvious kind of hero?

About the Author

Angela Lemaire, who lives in Roxburghshire, Scotland, is best-known as an artist-printmaker and writer (see: www.oldstilepress.com). She has exhibited widely and her work is held in collections in the United Kingdom and abroad. She is also a long-time esoteric student.

animal self. This is graphically illustrated in the many images of Hercules wearing a lion skin, which is draped over his shoulders. His head seems to be crowned by the lion's mane and jaw. Hercules emerges, as it were, from that which he has conquered: his roaring, destructive, lion-self

Hercules, it was said, presided over all aspects of Hellenic education. To educate is to bring forth that which lies within. Hercules, who has himself emerged from the animal self, now brings forth the Hero, the Soul, the Great Man, from the human self, or ego, where it has always been, but hidden. It could be said that the image of Hercules as the muscle man is indeed correct, although it is not just portraying physical strength but is symbolically reflecting interior strength. If Hercules had not had the strength of a lion, outwardly and inwardly, how could the labours have been achieved?

According to some interpretations, each labour is a reflection of a spiritual path into the meanings, redemptions, and purposes of a particular sign of the zodiac. The early versions of the myth say nothing of the exact number of labours; apparently it was the epic poet Pisander of Rhodes who fixed the number of the labours at twelve, and related them to the zodiac. In our own times, Alice Bailey wrote *The Labours of Hercules: An Astrological Interpretation*,⁴ and here each labour is aligned with a sign of the zodiac. This book provides an amazing insight into the Greek myth, its manifold meanings, and its relevance today.

There is a growing recognition that humanity is moving into the "Age of Aquarius," after that of Pisces, which Christ epitomised as the Fisher of Men. Alice Bailey aligns the labour of the cleansing of the Augean Stables with the sign of Aquarius the water carrier. One can make many connections between this myth and our situation today. The King's stables had not been cleaned for a very long time and were unbelievably filthy. Though many had tried to clean them, all had failed. Hercules is asked to perform the task in two days. He observes two rivers flowing nearby, and after great labour he succeeds in diverting these streams from the

courses they had followed for decades. They were made to flow through the filthy stables, and the rushing torrents swept away all the muck. Alice Bailey calls these two rivers the rivers of love and life. It is not difficult to relate this labour to what is happening today. The stable of the world is, as it were, unbelievably filthy with the pollution of hatred and selfishness (manifesting as war, famine, environmental damage, and so on). A "group Hercules" in the world is aware of this situation and the means of its alleviation. As the Buddhist *Dhammapada* says, "hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love, this is an old rule."

Hercules often had to throw away his weapons; he had to learn to rely on his own inner strengths and intuitions to solve problems. He sometimes had to kneel down and get into the mud to solve a particular problem—symbolically this might mean getting off his ego—he often failed and had to start again. He killed, by mistake, many of his friends: that is, parts of himself. These are not battles so much as tasks which drew out the god-like nature within him.

The labours were assigned to Hercules by King Eurystheus, who disliked Hercules because of his courage. But the reason for these tasks was to appease Hercules' guilt for killing his wife and children in a mad rage, said to be infused into his mind by his mother Hera. Possibly modern psychology could read a lot into this, and that does no damage to the myth. These archetypal themes of rage, terror, loss and redemption have not gone away.

Around 417 BC, Euripides wrote his tragedy *Heracles* in which he uses the original legend but adds innovations of his own which alter its meaning. In his introduction and notes to this play,⁵ O. R. A. Byrde discusses the origins of Greek tragedy, its connections to the mysteries of nature and what he calls, after Frazer of *The Golden Bough*, the "vegetation spirit." The ritual of such Vegetation Spirits proceeds some such way as this. :

First, there is a contest between the Vegetation Spirit and his enemy: this is the

“Agon”: next the “Pathos”—the death or anguish which overtakes the spirit, frequently in the form of a “Sparagmos,” a scattering or tearing to pieces. Then follows the description of the death or agony by a messenger. Next comes the Lamentation; then the “Anagnorisis” or discovery of the slain, which is followed by a change of feeling or Peripeteia. Lastly, there is the reappearance or “Epiphaneia” of the risen god in his glory.

The above description of the cycles in Greek tragedy reach the heart of the mysteries, that of the dying and risen god, which in turn lie at the heart of the way of the “hero soul.” The journey is one of ordeal, of many tests and failures, and eventually of immortality. “The king is dead; long live the king.” These themes are familiar ones in poetry, art, myth, dance, folklore, fairytale. It is a theme no less relevant for us today. This hero is not only Christ, King Arthur, Hercules, or any of the many other heroes who attest to living and dying gods, but our own Buddha selves.

Joseph Campbell wrote:

How to teach again ... what has been taught correctly and incorrectly a thousand times, throughout the millenniums of mankind’s prudent folly? That is the hero’s ultimate difficult task. How to render back into light-world language the speech-defying pronouncements of the dark? Many failures attest to the difficulties of this life-affirmative threshold.⁶

Hercules and his labours have been the subject of countless works of art from classical times to the present day. It may well be that through the arts in their various forms light can be thrown on these ancient, but crucially, and poignantly, modern themes. Is the artist no less potential hero-stuff than the obvious kind

of hero? It may take courage to have “Something to say.”

The artist is obliged, if he is honest and sincere, to attempt to fill in the cracks in the soul ... ; he must dedicate himself ... to “higher purposes” which are “precise, great and sanctified”... He must “have Something to say,” because his obligation is not the mastery of form, but rather the suiting of form ... to that content, which must arise freely out of the artist’s innermost soul ...⁷

The Lucis Trust, an educational charity, has launched a creative arts project called *In the Tracks of Hercules*. The plan is for a weekend exhibition in London, in December 2005, of talks, poetry, painting, sculpture and movement, as well as the production of a digital book. Artists throughout the world, in many fields and disciplines, are invited to take part: to give a literal or abstract interpretation, in any of the creative arts, of one or more of the Herculean labours. This may extend to an exploration of meaning and symbolism, or to a spiritual quality or virtue.⁸

⁴ Alice A Bailey. *The Labours of Hercules*. Lucis Publishing Company, 1974.

⁵ O. R.A. Byrde. *Heracles*, by Euripedes. Introduction. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1914.

⁶ Joseph Campbell. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton University Press, 1972.

⁷ *Kandinsky in Munich*. Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, 1982.

⁸ For further information visit the website: www.lucistrust.org/hercules. *The Labours of Hercules*, by Alice Bailey, creates a rich source of inspiration and is a wide-ranging interpretation of ancient wisdom and myth. This book can be ordered via the website or from Lucis Press, Suite 54, 3 Whitehall Court, London, SW1A 2EF.

Book Reviews

***The Roman Cult of Mithras*, by Manfred Clauss.** (Transl: Richard Gordon). New York: Routledge, 2000; 198 pages, \$29.95.

Mithraism, the pagan initiatory religion that spread throughout the Roman Empire between the first century BCE and the fourth century CE, is considered part of the spiritual environment in which early Christianity developed. Certain Christian beliefs and practices are thought to have been modeled on Mithraic antecedents. Mithraism is also counted as one of the early expressions of the Western Esoteric Tradition.

While little is known about Mithraic beliefs because of its secrecy, there has been considerable speculation, much of it fanciful and much proven wrong by later studies. *The Roman Cult of Mithras* seeks to give us a firm foundation on which to form our own evaluation of its cultural, religious and esoteric significance. Professor Manfred Clauss' cautious and rigorous scholarship ensures the book's success in meeting this need. Through meticulous sifting of the evidence he presents a picture of Mithraism that is both exciting and in another sense disappointing.

Readers who wanted to learn about a Roman esoteric tradition may be disappointed to learn that Mithraism served much the same role as does modern Freemasonry. Its membership—exclusively male—was drawn primarily from the military, political, and administrative middle classes of Roman society. Members of these upwardly mobile social strata sought an environment that would further their secular ambitions as much as their spiritual needs. Mithraists even recognized one another by handshakes.

However, it would be a mistake to view Mithraism simply as a fraternal order or early Rotary Club. It also expressed an important spiritual tradition. Professor Clauss extracts from the archeological record a surprisingly detailed

account of the cult's sacred myths, temples, rituals, and priestly grades.

Against a backdrop of pagan polytheism, Mithraists worshipped a single god Sol Invicta Mithras, "Invincible Sun(god) Mithras." Mithras was born from a rock, already carrying a torch, reminding us that he was a god of light, and a dagger. The dagger would be used later to slay a bull, sacrificed to symbolize the release of life from its physical form to seek higher expression. At the end of his earthly life, Mithras shared a "last supper" with his disciples and then rode to heaven in a fiery chariot.

Initiates into Mithraism went through an elaborate death-and-rebirth ceremony that involved prayer and chanting. At Sunday services, members participated in a sacred meal of consecrated bread and wine for which the temple was lit by candles and perfumed by incense. Upon receiving answers to prayer, members dedicated icons to their god or to the priests.

Mithraism was Christianity's main competitor for the hearts and minds of citizens of the Roman Empire. When Christianity became the state religion, under Constantine, all pagan cults were persecuted, and Mithraic temples were gleefully destroyed by Christian mobs.

In fewer than 200 pages, Clauss has given us insights into Mithraic religion with new depth and sensitivity. This book is a must for all serious students of the ancient mysteries.

Editorial Staff

***The Sophia Teachings*, by Robert Powell.** New York: Lantern Books, 2001; 166 pages, \$15.00.

The feminist theology movement has produced so many popular books on Sophia that one hardly notices when another appears in bookstores. However, Robert Powell has some-

thing worthwhile to say, and *The Sophia Teachings* fills a useful niche.

We have to understand that, in the popular literature, “Sophia” has become a shorthand for the Divine Feminine in all her various aspects. So the author is able to consider as part of his theme personages ranging from the Greek Demeter, to the Divine Mother of Hinduism and Buddhism, to the Virgin Mary. He can discuss the Marian visions of the 18th-century stigmatic Anne Catherine Emmerich as well as the beauty of Helen of Troy. This free-ranging breadth of coverage is informative, even if it does sacrifice desirable specificity.

Mr. Powell contrasts Sophia with the Logos of Greek, Gnostic and Christian theology. At times, he points out, they have rightly been distinguished, while at other times they were confused by prominent philosophers and theologians. His own thesis is that they are complementary divine aspects that have existed from all eternity. However, the Logos incarnated as Christ and Sophia as the Virgin Mary.

Powell describes the rejection of the Sophianic tradition by official western Christianity as well as its reemergence in the writings of Hildegard of Bingen, Jakob Boehme, and others. He also provides a good account of the interest in Sophia in the Russian Orthodox Church. English translations of the major works of Vladimir Solovyev, Pavel Florensky, and Sergei Bulgakov have been available for some time. But Powell himself translated the work of Valentin Tomberg, and he explores the latter’s insights in considerable depth. Discovery of the Tomberg’s writings was, he confides, a turning point in his life.

Tomberg, who died in 1973, proposed a feminine trinity consisting of Mother, Daughter and Holy Soul. He also asserted that God the Mother was banished to the underworld as a result of humanity’s fall from grace. This, of course, was not a new concept; it is the theme of the Gnostic text *Pistis Sophia*, which dates

from the third century CE. Notwithstanding, Tomberg claims that, after the crucifixion, Christ descended into hell to rescue her. Powell explains:

We can see that through the descent to the Mother, and the subsequent ascent to the Father, Christ worked to reunite the Father and Mother. This is a profound mystery—the work of the Son is to overcome the chasm that occurred at the time of the Fall with the descent of the Mother into the underworld (pages 96-97).

In addition to his teachings, Tomberg left a legacy of devotional material that included the prayer “Our Mother” and a Sophianic rosary.

Besides his debt to Tomberg, Robert Powell acknowledges a special affinity for the work of Rudolf Steiner. He regards Helena Blavatsky, Steiner, and Tomberg as “heralds of the New Age” (p. 110). In the New Age, Sophia will play an increasingly visible role, complementing the reappearance of the Christ.

The Sophia Teachings explores many interesting concepts, and the breadth of Powell’s research speaks for itself. And it is written in a lively, readable style. The book’s biggest weaknesses are the lack of an index and the absence of references to allow serious readers to explore his sources in more detail. His “bibliography” consists of five works, three of which he either wrote or edited himself. The book is based on an earlier collection of the author’s lectures, and it follows a presentation style rather than a monograph style. Finally, Mr. Powell’s understanding of Greek philosophy is sometimes questionable. For instance he claims that “Plato’s philosophy is Sophianic and Aristotle’s philosophy is more related to the Logos” (p. 35). One could make a good argument that the reverse is true.

The book is not a “must have,” but it is a useful addition to the literature.

Editorial Staff

