

# Origins of the Seven-Levels-of-Consciousness Model

Richard Barrett

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Abraham Maslow was one of the first psychologists to draw our attention to needs-based motivation. In *Motivation and Personality* and *Toward a Psychology of Being*<sup>1</sup> Maslow proposed that humans operate as if they had a hierarchy of needs. The primary human need is survival. When we are able to master survival, we shift the focus of our consciousness to the establishment of relationships that make us feel safe. When we are able to master the art of relationship building, we shift the focus of our consciousness to satisfying our need for self-esteem. When we are able to feel a strong sense of self-worth, we shift the focus of our consciousness to self-actualisation—overcoming the fears we hold that are preventing us from becoming viable and independent human beings. During self-actualisation we learn to release the fears that keep us trapped in our dependency based “we-ness” so that we can be free. This is the state of consciousness that I have called “transformation.” The process of transformation corresponds to the process that Carl Jung termed “individuation,” and the process Roberto Assagioli termed “psycho-synthesis.”

In *Liberating the Corporate Soul*,<sup>2</sup> I proposed that Maslow’s categories of needs represent states of consciousness and that the state of consciousness that Maslow labelled self-actualisation could be expanded to include four distinct stages in the development of soul consciousness or spiritual awareness—transformation, internal cohesion, inclusion of others, and unity. Thus, I was able to identify seven states or levels of consciousness that together explain the motivating forces of all human interactions.

From a psychological perspective, the first three stages in the development of human consciousness represent stages in the emergence and development of the human ego, and the

last three stages represent stages in the emergence and development (or unfolding) of the human soul. Between the last stage in the development of the human ego and the first stage in the development of the human soul lies the fourth stage in the development of human consciousness (transformation). This is the stage where the individual learns to release the subconscious and conscious fears of the ego, so the ego can energetically bond with the soul.

The motivating forces that correspond to the first three stages in the emergence and development of the human ego are:

- Physical survival—meeting the individual’s basic physiological needs so that he or she can survive one more day.
- Relationships—meeting the individual’s basic emotional need for love and belonging so that he or she can feel safe and protected.
- Self-esteem—meeting the individual’s basic emotional need for respect so that he or she can feel as sense of self-worth.

From the ego’s perspective, all three of these needs are dependency-based. We satisfy them by trying to get what we want from the external world.

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## About the Author

Richard Barrett heads a cultural-transformation and leadership-development consultancy practice. He is also an internationally known keynote speaker on values and cultural transformation. Prior to starting his consultancy practice Richard was values coordinator at the World Bank. His books include *Liberating the Corporate Soul* and *A Guide to Liberating Your Soul*. For further information see: [www.valuescentre.com](http://www.valuescentre.com).

The motivating forces that correspond to the first three stages in the unfolding of the human soul are:

- Internal cohesion—finding personal meaning in life by uncovering and integrating the motivations of the soul.
- Making a difference—acting out the soul’s motivations by making a difference in the lives of other individuals or the community through the expression of our unique abilities.
- Service—when making a difference becomes a permanent way of life we enter the path of selfless service.

As long as the ego’s needs remain unsatisfied it cannot fully align with the motivations of the soul. The ego must release its fears before it can become one with the soul. The energy field that is created by our fears is not compatible with the energy field of the soul. The energy field of fear has a much lower frequency of vibration than the energy field of love. The process of learning how to align the needs of the ego with the needs of the soul is called personal trans-

formation. The process of transformation involves letting go of the fears we hold about not having enough, not being safe, and not being respected. We shift from object-referral to subject-referral. During transformation we learn to source the satisfaction of our needs, not from external sources, but from internal sources.

One of the most frequently occurring ego-soul conflicts individuals encounter has to do with work. It is the conflict between survival and self-esteem on the one hand, and meaning and making a difference on the other.

Many people, through various circumstances, find themselves in jobs or careers that provide them with a decent living, but hold no meaning for them. They cannot wait to retire. Without being aware of it, they have chosen ego gratification over soul gratification. Very often the realization that they are in the wrong job occurs when they have significant financial commitments, such as a mortgage and school fees. The thought of leaving their chosen career to do something they are passionate about and fully utilise their unique abilities is too scary to consider. They believe that they would have to sacrifice their standard of living to do what they love. The process of resolving such fears is called personal transformation.

Personal transformation is never a singular event. It is an ongoing series of encounters between the needs generated by the subconscious fear-based beliefs of the ego and the needs of the soul. At each encounter the individual must learn how to blend the needs of the ego with the needs of the soul. Whereas the ego is hard, dominant and wants to control, the soul is soft, patient and yielding and yearns for meaning and connectedness. Normally the soul does not usurp

the ego. It makes its presence felt through subtle means.

When the needs of the soul are ignored over long periods of time, depression and physical sickness result. Regular bouts of anger, emotional upset, and rage are sure signs that the ego is out of alignment with the soul and is still holding onto unresolved fear-based beliefs. The process of realignment is often painful. The individual must confront and overcome the fears of the ego. This requires courage and a willingness to work through the unresolved pain of the past that is at the root of the individual’s fear-based beliefs. The pain of

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the past is a memory that was caused by an unresolved state of internal stability and external equilibrium that we experienced in our formative years.

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<sup>1</sup> Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold) 1968.

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Barrett, *Liberating the Corporate Soul: Building a Visionary Organization* (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann), 1998.

## Book Reviews

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The term “magic” carries considerable baggage in our society, much of it negative. But esotericists give it a definite and valid meaning: the purposeful manipulation of energy to produce specific physical or nonphysical outcomes. Esoteric healing is as much a form of magic as are the ceremonial rituals used in religious and masonic settings. The two books reviewed here explore magic as a means for raising human consciousness, the first based directly on the work of Alice A. Bailey, the other drawing from the further work of Lucille Cedercrans.

**M***agic in the World* by Donna Mitchell-Moniak. Published in 2002 by Llumina Press, P.O. Box 772246, Coral Springs, FL 33077; www.llumina.com. Paperback US\$15.00.

*Magic in the World*'s subtitle is “The Seven Laws of the Soul,” a reference to the laws described in Alice Bailey's *Esoteric Psychology*, Vol. II (Lucis Publishing Company, 1942). Donna Mitchell-Moniak examines these laws in a larger context of the Beatitudes of Christ, the Eightfold Path of the Buddha, and particularly the Seven Rays which form a major element of the teachings presented in Bailey's 24 books.

Each of us is a blend of rays that, together with astrological influences, encode the karma and dharma of our present lifetime and, more importantly, of the whole series of lifetimes that

make up our present phase of evolution. In consequence, one individual's opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses may be quite different from another's.

Mitchell-Moniak recognizes, as Bailey did, that the disciple has advanced in consciousness beyond the level of the masses and has acquired attitudes and values that facilitate and sustain a life of service. Accordingly, Chapter 4, which addresses the Law of Service, is particularly important in examining how the impulsive, and often naïve, energies of the sixth ray of Idealism and Devotion can be channeled into effective individual—and more importantly in the Aquarian Age, group—service.

The author concludes with the affirmation:

Each human being has the capacity to live more fully—more soulfully. As each person does so everything and everyone that is part of that person's life is affected... The Seven Laws of the Soul clearly can be seen in our lives, in the life of the world, and in the creative processes put in motion by people growing in consciousness. This is *Magic in the World*. Our mission, then, should we choose to accept it, is to grow, and grow the light that is in us, to be “a lamp unto ourselves”... the “light of the world”... and to understand... “that all exists for the sake of the soul.”

*Magic in the World* is not a work of critical analysis. Its appeal is to the intuition rather than to the intellect, seeking to stimulate an

expansion of consciousness in the individual and in humanity at large.

***The Magic of Consciousness Workshops*** by **Glen Knapé**. Published in 2005 by Preparation Press, 16222 Landmark Drive, Whittier, CA 90604; [www.preparationpress.com](http://www.preparationpress.com). Paperback US\$12.95.

*The Magic of Consciousness Workshops* is structured as a novel whose main character is a twelve-year-old girl named Ellora. Her father, whom she meets for the first time, is an experienced esotericist who introduces her to teachings on the Ashram of Synthesis. However this is not a work of fiction; the book's purpose is to explore the Synthesis teachings first discussed by Alice Bailey, and continued and expanded by Lucille Cedercrans. The novel's storyline is that Ellora is taken to a series of classes or workshops using lecture and question-and-answer formats. During the classes Ellora recognizes her own psychic potential and role in the ashram. In fact we learn that she is "a petal of [the group's] throat chakra." A run-of-the-mill child of her age could scarcely understand the material being discussed; but because of her gifts Ellora is able to document and interpret the Synthesis teachings.

The book is readable and instructive. Glen Knapé explains that it is addressed to "experienced and knowledgeable esotericists." Certainly readers are expected to have a basic understanding of the Alice Bailey and Lucille Cedercrans works. The book could serve as a text for classes of advanced students as well as a basis for individual study.

However there are some weaknesses that should be addressed when the author prepares a new edition. For example, in the introductory "Dramatis Personae," one reads that Angélique Laroche "Took N.S. and T.T in 1990s." Only later do we discover that "N.S." is a course based on Lucille Cedercrans' book *Nature of the Soul*, and "T.T" is a teacher training course. The use of terse abbreviations and jargon limits the book to an in-group and excludes the larger readership to which it could appeal. Also there is some confusion among the characters. One wonders whether "Jed," mentioned on page 10, is the same as the "Zed" mentioned elsewhere. Careful editing could greatly improve this book.

The author is clearly knowledgeable on a wide range of topics and has a talent for presenting the material in an engaging—if somewhat corny—manner. All-in-all *The Magic of Consciousness Workshops* makes a useful contribution to esoteric studies.

Editorial staff

## Cumulative Index for Volume 1

### Articles and Papers

		No.	Page
Assagioli, Roberto	Balancing and Synthesis of the Opposites	1	7
Brown, Donna	Synthetic Trends	2	9
	The Qabalah and the Aquarian Avatar	3	25
Chaumette, Yves	Becoming Receptive to Purpose	3	47
DeMotte, Charles	An Historical Perspective on Law and Its Spiritual Impact on Human Consciousness	1	35
Domalske, Barbara	Soul Relationships	2	15
Fields, Melessei	Toward Synthesis	1	45
Gold, Jeffrey	A Mystical Interpretation of the Binding of Isaac	4	25
Hinds, John	The Sacred Rule of Life: The Idea of Hierarchy	3	7
Lemaire, Angela	In the Tracks of Hercules	3	48
Lyon, Bruce	The Black Hole God	1	27
	The Third Approach	4	9
Meader, William	The Sonata of the Master Musician	2	19
Nash, John	Duality, Good and Evil, and the Approach to Harmony	1	15
	Service Ideals in the Rosicrucian Movement	2	33
	The Trinity and Its Symbolism	3	33
	The Shekinah: the Indwelling Glory of God	4	33
Richmond, Temple	Fixed Stars in Esoteric Astrology	2	23
	Affirming Planetary Purpose	3	13
	The Role of Alan Leo and Sepharial in the Development of Esoteric Astrology (Part I)	4	13

## Book Reviews

	No.	Page
<i>Agni: Way of Fire</i> by Bruce Lyon	4	53
<i>Brain and Belief</i> by John J. McGraw	2	45
<i>Going Deeper</i> by Jean-Claude Koven	1	47
<i>Meditation: The Royal Road to the Soul</i> by Niels Brønsted	2	43
<i>Peace Means Action</i> by Yves Chaumette	1	47
<i>Quest for the Soul</i> by John Nash	2	43
<i>The Burning Bush</i> by Edward Reaugh Smith	1	46
<i>The Gentle Art of Blessing</i> by Pierre Pradervand	4	53
<i>The Roman Cult of Mithras</i> by Manfred Clauss	3	51
<i>The Sophia Teachings</i> by Robert Powell	3	51
<i>The Soul and Its Destiny</i> by John Nash	2	45

## News from the School

	No.	Page
School for Esoteric Studies	1	48
<b>The Three Major Festivals:</b>		
Easter Festival	4	41
Wesak Festival	4	45
Festival of Goodwill	4	50