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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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The Spiritual Global Network

Today we can discern a growing global network of people who are becoming an increasingly potent force for transformation in human affairs. They are inclusive, not separative; they seem to be in touch with the “soul of humanity,” urging “a conspiracy of love,” as did paleontologist-priest Teilhard de Chardin.

People aligned with this higher consciousness inevitably become transmitters of a wider vision, dedicated to the well-being of humanity. They are linked together by an attitude of mind and heart rather than by outer organization.

A view of the deeper spiritual significance of this integrating group, including practical evidence of their work today, is offered in *Building and Bridging: The New Group of World Servers*, available from:

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One copy of this booklet is available free, but your \$5.00 (U.S.) donation is encouraged to help keep these publications in service.

Discipleship and the Expansion of Consciousness: Potential and Pitfalls

The relative emphasis may have shifted from time to time, but esoteric work has always had the dual goals of nurturing the expansion of human consciousness and contributing to the implementation of Hierarchical Purpose through discipleship work. The dual goals and the means for accomplishing them are discussed in every occult school.

A disciple, as Temple Richmond reminds us, is “one whose character and capacities have qualified her or him to enter into a subjective or telepathic relationship with one of the Ashrams of the Masters, and is thus fundamentally attuned to the major work in the world which must go forward under the Divine Plan.” To make this possible the disciple selflessly commits him- or herself to a rigorous program of preparation, typically including meditation, study and service. Discipleship work opens up the potential for moving individually and collectively to new levels of human consciousness. However, it encounters many challenges, and the path to expanded consciousness can be anything but smooth.

The articles in the current issue of the *Esoteric Quarterly* all relate, in one way or another, to this broad theme. Each article also draws upon and explores specific teachings of the schools within the Trans-Himalayan tradition. Temple Richmond’s article provides a comprehensive review and analysis of the Alice Bailey teachings on discipleship and initiation. It reflects Richmond’s long study of the teachings as well as the impeccable standards of scholarship which are her hallmark. This is a two-part article, and Part II will be published in the Fall 2006 issue,

In the second article, David Reigle presents a mantra taught to students in traditional occult schools in Tibet. The author suggests that this mantra provides a means for contacting and

communicating with the Solar Angel and recommends its use by western students. The mantra is presented in transliterated Sanskrit, with tips on pronunciation. An English translation is provided for reference.

Jacqueline Watts’ article examines the various levels of the mind as they unfold during the evolution of consciousness. Watts draws on eastern sources and also on relevant western commentaries.

The article by Zachary Lansdowne addresses two familiar impediments to the expansion of consciousness, glamour and *maya*, and relates them in an evocative way to the beasts in the *Book of Revelation*. This work is presented as part of Dr. Lansdowne’s larger study of esoteric symbolism in *Revelation* that has now been published in book form. The article provides an interesting connection between eastern and western esotericism.

The last full-length article explores another pitfall in the expansion of consciousness: the sudden realization that a particular esoteric path no longer has meaning or validity to the student. This phenomenon, which may be more common than we like to admit, can have a devastating impact on a student’s self-worth and trust in esoteric teachings. But, with compassion and understanding, the student can emerge with greater wisdom and effectiveness, possibly in new areas of discipleship work.

William Meader’s short paper provides a timely examination of intelligent design from an esoteric perspective. Studies of this type are urgently needed at a time of intense public—and often politicized—controversy between the scientific theory of biological evolution and fundamentalist interpretations of scripture. We encourage further submissions on this topic. Meanwhile, we direct readers’ attention to the review of the Dalai Lama’s

book: *The Universe in a Single Atom*, that addresses the issue of evolution and a number of other topics of contemporary concern.

Two other books are reviewed in this issue, both of which should also be of considerable interest to our readers.

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. Nor do we have the means to verify all facts stated in published articles.

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 letters to the editor. 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 reference to work that the author 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

Edgar Cayce's most terrifying vision of America's involvement in the war came on August 30, 1941, more than three months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The vision was not only unique for the message it contained, but because it occurred while Edgar was in the middle of giving a business reading for a local Virginia Beach labor leader. Using language and imagery straight out of the Book of Revelations, the Source painted a grim picture of the destruction to come.

"I saw a great... white horse, with a man all dressed up in armor and in flowing robes but black, [and] fringed around the edges in gold," Edgar said, describing his vision. "Then I saw another horse coming—a very red horse. As it came closer I saw that the rider... had on white and blue armor, and there were hordes of people following him. Then as the two horses came together, it seemed that [the rider] disappeared and the two groups clashed. The followers of the first horse were well armed, while the others were not. Yet, there were

such hordes following the red horse that they seemed to march right through the ranks of the well-armed group, though millions were slain."

Sidney D. Kirkpatrick. *Edgar Cayce: An American Prophet*.
Riverhead Books, 2000.

As our knowledge of human nature grows, we cannot fail to be impressed by the great diversity of human gifts, by the richness of individuality amongst mankind, the almost infinite variety of human beings, the complexity of human nature....

Is there a key by means of which human nature may be understood and this infinite variety and vast potentiality of man be comprehended and reduced to order? Theosophy answers "yes," and further says that the key is numerical, the governing number being seven. Thus there are seven main types of human beings, each with its outstanding natural attributes and qualities.

All qualities and powers are within every human being, but in each of the seven main types there is a preponderant tendency. Knowledge of these seven types and their corresponding attributes provides a key to the understanding of human nature.

Geoffrey Hodson. *The Seven Human Temperaments*. Theosophical Publishing House, 1952.

[I]t sometimes happens that souls which have advanced far into the Mysteries turn back at the call of human love and forge anew the chains of karmic ties... [A] soul that is traveling fast may turn back to hold out a hand to a beloved one who is progressing more slowly...

If we rule our homes in a spirit of selfless love and serenity of heart, asking no return, but doing our duty for the sake of the need of those to whom we minister, our house will be a true Temple of the Hearth-Fire in which we can receive our initiation. But let it be remembered that the serenity of heart must be there as well as the faithful performance of duty...

Let us try to keep our homes always in readiness for the coming of the Wayfaring Christ, Who, as the old story has it, goes up and down among men saying "The foxes have their holes, and the birds of the air have their nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head."

Dion Fortune. *The Training and Work of an Initiate*. Aquarian Press, 1930.

Discipleship and Initiation: The Three Stages and Seven Steps to Hierarchy and Beyond

Temple Richmond

Summary

The nature of the spiritual path has been discussed in the books of Alice Bailey by the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul in terms of discipleship and initiation. It is therefore imperative that these terms be well understood. To this end, this essay surveys definitions of the terms “disciple” and “initiate” offered by the Tibetan. Each is explained in practical terms which may be applied by the seeker. Next, the three stages of discipleship are enumerated and explained, these being the Paths of Probation, Discipleship, and Initiation. Finally, the seven initiations available on planet Earth are described in detail, including the names for each, the nature of ray energies encountered, the resultant psychospiritual issues, the centers concerned, the marks of recognition, and the numbers of persons thus qualified, all according to the published books of Alice Bailey. Full footnote information is provided throughout. This is Part 1 of a two-part article.

Introduction

As the light of Hierarchy magnetically attracts more and more seekers to its radiant periphery, the concept of integration into higher centers dawns in the minds of many. In esoteric terminology, this is the process of initiation, preceded by discipleship. In fact, the Tibetan Master who dictated through Alice Bailey discussed spiritual progress almost exclusively in terms of the different degrees of discipleship and initiation. It is therefore imperative that the seeker gain a clear understanding of what these various terms mean.

Definition of the Term “Disciple”

According to the Tibetan, the word “disciple” is the term properly to be applied to all who

strive to cooperate with Hierarchy and the Plan, thus including all grades of seekers from the most naïve beginner on the spiritual path all the way up to and including the chief officiant of the Hierarchy, the Christ.¹ Obviously, then, the term “disciple” covers a wide range of consciousness and capability, and in so doing, its use diminishes the role of differentiation amongst seekers and augments instead the factor of solidarity, such that we get the idea of a great band of diversely talented and skilled workers all striving toward the same goals. However, the all-inclusive definition of discipleship offered above remains somewhat broad and even ambiguous, especially for those interested in identifying the exact stages upon the path at which various attainments should have occurred.

Fortunately, the Tibetan did offer more detail concerning the way in which he used the word “disciple” when speaking of such persons as they are found in the Human Kingdom. In this sense, a disciple is a human person vitally concerned with effecting constructive efforts in behalf of Humanity, rendering aid to the higher forces working to advance evolution, and unfolding the powers of the soul or consciousness aspect within self.²

Such a person, the Tibetan stated, has attained to a state of mind relatively immune to the seductive powers of the world of appearances with its multitudinous distractions and inessen-

About the Author

M. Temple Richmond is an internationally recognized authority on esoteric teachings and author of the milestone book *Sirius*. She recently founded the StarLight Ashram, an online discussion group dedicated to the study of esoteric astrology: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/StarLightAshram>.

tial invitations. Instead, the person who qualifies for discipleship status evidences a more fundamental interest in understanding and promoting the spiritual oneness of all existence and in facilitating the progress of all things toward recognition of eternal spirit.³

From this position in consciousness, the disciple seeks no special attention in a way that would further the sense of isolated individuality, but rather places attention upon the principles of spiritual living.⁴ On the world scene, she or he desires only that which is best for all of Humanity, and not just one subgrouping within it.⁵ In her or his concern for the state of the world, the disciple is one who does not waste time in lamenting the dire state of things, but instead one who works quietly and diligently at making a positive difference wherever she or he may be.⁶

In fact, the disciple is one who guards all her or his words with infinite care, knowing that speech is the most occult power for manifestation in existence and the means of all creation.⁷ The disciple therefore only speaks into existence those conditions which are in alignment with the values of the higher planes, an exacting standard to be sure, but one in keeping with the fact that the disciple by definition is one who has transferred consciousness from the four lower subplanes of the mental plane to the three higher subplanes.⁸

This focus on higher mental levels allows for the expression of three effects of a purificatory nature for which all disciples are known:

- the ability to dispel illusions on the lower mental plane,
- the ability to dissipate glamour on the astral levels, and
- the ability to disidentify from *maya* on the physical plane, thus conferring the ability to pour light through the etheric centers to the surrounding environment.⁹

The disciple is thus one who, by right of consciousness and nature of energy field, dissolves clouds of wrongly directed energies and misplaced desires, pointing the way toward truth and higher values.

A disciple is further distinguished from the mass of Humanity in that she or he is, according to the Tibetan, not entirely controlled by the alternation of experience between pain and pleasure as are so many of the millions whose lives are but continuous dramas of positive and negative excitement. By contrast, the disciple is one who lives more purposefully, electing to turn continuously toward the light and joy of the soul or the bliss of the monad, even in those circumstances which would most surely evoke pique in average or mass Humanity.¹⁰ This is due to the fact that the individual worthy of the title “disciple” realizes that in essence, she or he is not the physical, emotional, or mental sheaths, but the soul or beyond that - the Will aspect in action.¹¹

Thus, there emerges a picture of the disciple as an individual of some considerable psychospiritual attainment, one who has located her or his locus of control in the world of eternal values rather than in the domain of quick thrills and momentary gratifications, and who has made a commitment within self to be proactive in behalf of enhancing true spiritual quality of life wherever life may be found. Further, a person worthy of discipleship status shall have arranged the circumstances of life to allow for extensive efforts in behalf of some spiritual enterprise greater than the personal life, for as the Tibetan has said, “All disciples of any standing gather around them the few or the many that they have found themselves able to aid....”¹² Thus, yet another telling mark of the disciple is the tendency to attract a group and to supply that group with constructive inspiration.

As a result, the disciple is one whose character and capacities have qualified her or him to enter into a subjective or telepathic relationship with one of the Ashrams of the Masters,¹³ and is thus fundamentally attuned to the major work in the world which must go forward under the Divine Plan.

Perhaps these distinctions make more clear the meaning of the term disciple as used by the Tibetan Master. Next, let us turn to the definition of the term “initiate.”

Definition of the Term “Initiate”

According to the Tibetan, there are seven degrees of initiates on our planet,¹⁴ representing a very great range of attainment, a situation which obviously serves to further complicate any attempt to define the term. Given this, an exploration of initiation and of the seven grades mentioned is in order.

Initiation itself, the Tibetan held, is “but another name for synthesis and fusion”¹⁵ and a “process of developing inclusiveness.”¹⁶ In other words, the initiate learns to include and embrace more and more of the totality of manifested existence, including the higher worlds not normally sensed by average Humanity.

The Tibetan described this journey of discovery this way: “Initiation is essentially a penetration into areas of the divine consciousness which are not within the normal field of consciousness of a human being. This initiatory penetration is achieved by the disciple through reflective meditation, the development of an interpretive spiritual understanding, and the use of the trained discriminative mind.”¹⁷

Naturally, progress on this path entails the increasing realization of unity with all that exists and the essential oneness of the self with all other selves. This increasing realization of unity results in a widening sphere of perception that continuously enlarges until it includes the entirety of creation, bringing with it the ability to see and hear on all the seven systemic (and eventually cosmic) planes. Parallel to this development, initiation entails a vastly increased awareness of Divine Intention and a greatly enhanced ability to enter into knowledge of the consequent Divine Plan and to further its manifestation.¹⁸

As the individual opens her or his mind and heart to all that is, initiation becomes a graduated sequence of integration into greater and greater centers of force, starting with admission into a Master’s group, leading later to assimilation with Hierarchy as a whole, and ultimately, into assimilation into Shamballa, the planetary head center itself.¹⁹ Indeed, as the Tibetan has revealed, every step upon the Path of Initiation serves to increase the individual’s recognition of membership in varying assemblages and groups of beings, such that initiation essentially becomes “an expanding series of inclusive recognitions.”²⁰

Initiation..., the Tibetan held, is “but another name for synthesis and fusion” and a “process of developing inclusiveness.” In other words, the initiate learns to include and embrace more and more of the totality of manifested existence, including the higher worlds not normally sensed by average Humanity.

In simplest terms then, it could be said that at the psychological level, the path of initiation transforms the self-conscious individual into the group conscious unit.²¹ Energies evoked by the individual unit itself bring this about,²² making for an acknowledgement of the many collectivities of being to which any unit belongs in the upward scale of evolutionary lives.

On the practical level, this involves the relinquishment of all personality reactions which are separative in nature, resulting in “a series of progressive renunciations”²³ which are characteristic of

the path of discipleship and initiation. These and an encounter with varying types of specialized energies describe the experience of the striving seeker along the path of initiation.

In fact, the encounter with energies is a critical theme of the initiatory process, which itself is in reality “a great experiment with energy,” according to the Tibetan Master.²⁴ In this regard, the Tibetan stated, “Every initiation is a process of energy transmission from a higher centre of energy to a lower; every initiation charges the initiate with electrical force.... These transmissions of energy enhance the magnetic-attractive force of the initiate, and at the same time are eliminative in their ef-

fects.”²⁵ It is these eliminative effects, consequent upon the impact of energies, which result in the renunciations along the path which are so characteristic of the discipleship situation. These must be taken into consideration, along with the basic ray energies encountered at the various initiations,²⁶ which reveal the archetypal or universal content of the various initiations.

Indeed, the encounter with energies is the core issue of initiation. The Tibetan stated it this way: “Initiation is in fact a process wherein the initiate is taught how to work with energy, how to use the creative, attractive and dynamic energies in accordance with the Hierarchical Plan in order to bring about the precipitation of the planetary Purpose into the outer field of manifestation.”²⁷ Thus, skilled recognition and management of energies constitute two of the main preoccupations of the disciple-initiate. Along with this, there proceeds the effort to glean the purposes under which our planetary evolution proceeds, for initiation not only concerns the encounter with energies, but this within the context of grasping the nature of Will.²⁸

Understanding of the Will Aspect in fact distinguishes the processes of initiation, especially from the Third Initiation onward, from the more general processes of discipleship and the earlier processes of personality unfoldment. In fact, the Tibetan has characterized the Path of Initiation as a training process fundamentally concerned with the evolution of the Will,²⁹ the Will standing behind the love-wisdom nature discovered in the processes of discipleship.

The Three Stages of Discipleship: Probation, Discipleship, and Initiation

Thus, the Path of Initiation is distinguished from the Path of Discipleship in this way. These two are then further distinguished from what the Tibetan has called the Path of Probation, which follows the workings of the Third Aspect, in contrast to the First and Second Aspects driving the Paths of Initiation and Discipleship respectively.³⁰

The Tibetan offered a tabulation in which this point was made. There he differentiated between the three segments of the evolutionary journey in the following way.³¹

The first segment he named the Path of Evolution and Probation. It concerns the unfoldment of intellect and of sensory perception and expresses itself through the personality and the activities of Humanity in general.

The second he named the Path of Discipleship, which is the portion of the path concerning the unfoldment of the love nature and the buddhic principle, expressing through the nature of the soul and the endeavors of Hierarchy.

The third portion of the path he termed the Path of Initiation, stating that it concerns the unfoldment of the will and the achievement of synthesis, expressing through the monad and the dynamic radiations of Shamballa.

To this might be added the more specific information regarding the precise levels of initiation implied. The Path of Probation includes all of Humanity, even those who have not yet taken any initiations whatsoever. The Path of Discipleship can be said to refer to initiates of the First and Second Degree status, and even those between the Second and Third. Lastly, the Path of Initiation refers to those just nearing the Third Initiation, those of Third Degree status, and those well beyond the Transfiguration Initiation.

In sum, the relevant points may be placed in tabulation.

Path	Probation	Discipleship	Initiation
Center Inspiring	Humanity	Hierarchy	Shamballa
Group Manifesting	Humanity	Disciples	Initiates
Initiatory Status	Before the first Initiation	Initiations 1 & 2	Initiation 3 and higher
Level	Personality	Soul	Monad
Function	Intellect	Love	Will

The Seven Initiations Specified

The previous sections have highlighted the definition of the terms “disciple” and “initiate.” It remains, however, to specifically enumerate the seven distinct grades of initiates discussed by the Tibetan Master. The entirety of the seven initiations has been named by the Tibetan in the following way:³²

1. The Birth
2. The Baptism
3. The Transfiguration
4. The Renunciation
5. The Revelation
6. The Decision
7. The Resurrection

In order to facilitate recognition of the various stages thus represented, a psychospiritual profile of each of the seven follows.

The First or Birth Initiation

The First or Birth Initiation is so named because it signifies the occurrence within the individual of what the Tibetan Master has termed “the birth of the Christ in the cave of the heart,”³³ which is to say, the first glimmerings of the fact that the individual is an incarnated soul living out a meaningful path in a spiritual universe. As a result, this initiation constitutes the spiritual moment which marks the initial entry into a spiritual path starting with the adoption of a basic spiritual orientation³⁴ and leading ultimately to cosmic realizations.³⁵

According to the Ageless Wisdom tradition as articulated by the Tibetan, the individual who arrives at and takes the First Initiation senses strongly that there is a spiritual component to self and life, but all the same, he or she still falls very short of consistently and readily responding to the voice of the soul in all matters.³⁶ He or she may therefore make what would appear to be many mistaken evaluations and choices, frequently falling to the glimmers of the personality worlds, and only with strident effort regaining a proper orientation. Frequent episodes of alienation from spiritual core may be his or her lot. As a result, the life path of a First-Degree initiate may therefore be con-

stantly beset with spiritual angst and efforts to reclaim that which was once glimpsed.

Even so, the individual who has taken the First Initiation demonstrates a meaningful degree of control over the physical appetites, including those for food, drink, and sexual expression.³⁷ In fact, the attainment of a reasonably well ordered lifestyle through right self discipline is one of the benchmarks qualifying an individual for the taking of this initiation.³⁸ Even though control of all appetites may not be perfect, such control is at this stage sufficient to demonstrate that the individual realizes that there exist standards for right living which ought to be followed.

Thus, it is apparent that an initiate of the First Degree is a genuine spiritual seeker, yet one who also suffers from many character failings. He or she is also one who has achieved significant spiritual success by determining to live in a relatively orderly way and by maintaining a persistent background belief that the universe is sentient and intelligent in nature, rather than random and meaningless.

Even so, much improvement remains to be made in regard to regulating personal impulses on all levels. Fortunately, the individual at this stage does understand that he or she is responsible for self and its effects on the surrounding world.³⁹ This marks a significant degree of improvement over the unruly psychology of the mob and mass, which recognizes only fleetingly or not at all that the rule of law and principle should guide in all things. From this disorderly and self-serving point of view, the First-Degree initiate has differentiated himself or herself by virtue of recognizing and accepting the basic imperative to observe self-control.

Self-control at this level is largely construed and expressed as physical in nature, a fact reflected in the Tibetan’s allusion to this initiation as equivalent to the experience of Humanity in the Third or Lemurian Race,⁴⁰ during which time physical self control was gained by the mass. Even though by today’s standards this is not viewed as much of an achievement, within the overall context of evolution, it nonetheless represents a significant advance. Thus,

the achievement of the First Initiation marks a noteworthy stage on the Path.

The general improvement in spiritual functioning achieved at this initiation is very much a consequence of the activation of the various centers associated with the accomplishment of this step on the path. According to the Tibetan, the heart, throat, and sacral centers are all implicated in this initiation.⁴¹ Each of these is in some way affected by the energy applied to the initiate by higher sources at this point. Activation of the heart center produces greater idealism and altruism, while that of the throat and sacral centers facilitates the transformation of the reproductive urge dominant in the sacral center into the higher creativity of the throat center.

Thus, the transfer of energy from the sacral to the throat center is begun in earnest at this time, continuing as the path unfolds. The process is much facilitated by the application of Ray Seven energies, one of the special functions of which is the process of transfer from any center to another,⁴² for it is this ray with which this initiation is an encounter.⁴³ The Seventh Ray also naturally resonates with the sacral center, which center is governed by the ray associated with this initiation.⁴⁴ As a result of all this Ray Seven stimulation, the First-Degree initiate evidences all the struggles to bring the sacral center under the control of the Ray of Order and Organization, as opposed to letting its energies run wild in accord with every passing whim.

According to the Tibetan, there have been many individuals who have dealt successfully with these issues and have thus distinguished themselves, and many more yet so to do. Here is a suggestion of the numbers of persons on

this planet who are reported to have reached and completed the First Initiation.

Over the course of evolution on our planet, "many millions" of our Earth Humanity have qualified for and passed the First Initiation, according to the Tibetan.⁴⁵ This figure includes all souls who have ever achieved the Birth Initiation, whether incarnated or not at the time of the Tibetan's statement in this regard. In the mid 1900s, "thousands" of persons were said to have been found existing at this initiatory level,⁴⁶ presumably incarnated and living in personality expression at that

time. Only a few decades later and in that same century, great progress had apparently been made, for "many thousands" were reported by the Tibetan to have passed this, the Birth Initiation, at that point.⁴⁷ Greater numbers even than that were promised for the future by the Master, who stated unequivocally that the First Initiation lay within range of achievement by even the masses of Humanity,⁴⁸ and that literally "millions" shall have attained to this initiation by the year 2025 A.D."⁴⁹

This rapid increase in the rate of attainment for this initiation is facilitated,

the Tibetan said, by the influx of the Ray Seven energies associated with the Age of Aquarius,⁵⁰ for it is the Seventh Ray with which this initiation is an encounter, and the Seventh Ray which serves to bring together body and soul,⁵¹ emphasizing the need for ordered and rhythmic daily living.

The Tibetan offered a general landmark for distinguishing those who have passed the First Initiation. He stated that "...all those who truly love their fellowmen, who are interested in the esoteric teaching, and who seek to disci-

Whereas in the experiences of the First Initiation, it is the sacral center to which transformative powers are directed, that process moves up one center at the Second Initiation to the solar plexus. This results in terrific turbulence caused in the solar plexus center as it is transformed from the seat of possessiveness to the processing station for energies on the way to the more altruistic heart center.

pline themselves in order to attain greater beauty of life..." have taken at least the First or Birth Initiation.⁵² Thus, these are some of the minimum requirements or landmarks for which the esoteric astrologer might look in attempting to get a fix upon the initiatory status of any person for whom esoteric astrological study is to be undertaken.

The "many millions" of individuals to whom the Tibetan has referred as having attained to this initiation by 2025 A.D. may be a figure which includes both those in incarnation and those not incarnated at that time, or perhaps it simply refers to incarnated souls existing in personality expression around that date who shall have taken the First Initiation. Thus, it is somewhat uncertain exactly what this figure means, but it certainly shows that the First Gate is not exceedingly narrow and may be traversed by many an aspiring soul. It is well to keep this in mind and to realize that attainment of this initiation, while significant, is not as rare as may have once been thought, and that furthermore, it is destined to become much more widespread and common.

Ultimately, when the whole of Humanity or some major portion of it succeeds in passing requirements for the First Initiation, this development will, as the Tibetan Master has said, "...make possible the return of the Hierarchy and the restoration of the mysteries."⁵³ Given that the return or externalization of the Hierarchy and the restoration of the mysteries are intimately bound up with the reappearance of the Christ, this last statement is tantamount to saying that the taking of the First Initiation by a major portion of Humanity will facilitate the much awaited reappearance of the Christ or Head of Hierarchy.

It would seem that the emerging worldwide movement promoting ecological awareness serves as evidence that a significant portion of Humanity is indeed cognizant of its collective and individual responsibilities in regard to the physical environment. This is surely an encouraging development and one that may well suggest that a widespread achievement of First Initiation standards of thought and behavior is in process of manifestation.

The Second or Baptism Initiation

Just as the attainment of physical self control characterizes the First Initiation, so the attainment of emotional self-control characterizes the Second or Baptism Initiation, named after a rite involving immersion or ablution to reflect the fact that this initiation concerns and requires the right management of emotional energy currents emanating from the water-like astral plane. The Tibetan also alluded to this initiation as a correlate to the Atlantean Race,⁵⁴ the experience and unfoldment of which was primarily on the astral or emotional level - with its virtues of sentiency and its vices of wrongly directed desires.

All these descriptive terms serve to underscore the fact that the Second Initiation is a great encounter with the Sixth Ray and the sixth (or astral) plane, thus engaging the solar plexus center of the individual, which is itself an expression of Ray Six energies.

Whereas in the experiences of the First Initiation, it is the sacral center to which transformative powers are directed, that process moves up one center at the Second Initiation to the solar plexus. This results in terrific turbulence caused in the solar plexus center as it is transformed from the seat of possessiveness to the processing station for energies on the way to the more altruistic heart center.⁵⁵

At the same time, the throat center is vivified,⁵⁶ thus making way for the greater inclination toward higher thought which will increasingly replace emotional reactions and preoccupations. There are thus at least two centers brought to prominence by both the labors of the seeker and the energies brought to bear from higher agencies in the initiation process. That being so, it remains that the center of greatest importance and attention at this point is the solar plexus, which must deliberately be tamed and intentionally brought into a state of reasonable quiescence.

The Second Initiation thus marks the phase on the path at which the individual accepts re

sponsibility for the emotional energies that he or she generates, absorbs, cultivates, and radiates. Before the Second Initiation, the human unit generally feels it is his or her right to indulge in any mood or emotional reaction rising up in response to inner or outer conditions. However, the spiritual path teaches that emotional reactions should be closely regulated, and this for two reasons: 1) such reactions may be based exclusively on personal sentiment, devoid of a greater perspective which might leaven perception and thereby prevent wrong response, and 2) such reactions, if colored by anger and spite, may in fact work harm upon others through the infliction of emotional or physical suffering by words spoken in haste, physical actions taken, or simply by energies emitted through the astral body. The spiritual seeker therefore willingly imposes on self the requirement to examine all reactions before embracing them. Consistent and successful effort in this direction earns the seeker the right to take the Second Initiation.

This is inasmuch to say that Second-Degree initiates are those who have learned to calm the waters of the astral or emotional plane through their own persistent efforts at regular meditation and moment to moment self-regulation. It is in this way that is brought about the ending of emotional storms, a definite point of attainment associated with this stage in evolution.⁵⁷ Violent and intense emotional reactions such as anger, resentment, spite, unwarranted suspicion, fierce competitiveness, unreasoning affectional passion, depression and despair are all confronted by and hence greatly reduced in the Second-Degree initiate, as is the tendency to seek a target upon which to transfer guilt, shame, and blame. The Second Initiation thus marks a definite point of psychological maturity and consequent poise.

As a result of the quieting and organizing of the solar plexus and the subduing of the astral body thus attained, the light of the soul is enabled to shine through the personality with much greater clarity and power. Thus, the Second-Degree initiate evidences a marked level of spiritual aspiration, right aspirational focus, greater outward directed divine love energies, and a sincere longing to add to the

truth, beauty, and goodness of the world in service to the Plan.⁵⁸ He or she is much more aware of the need in the world than are those at an earlier stage on the Path,⁵⁹ so much so that one of the hallmarks of this stage is a tendency to be somewhat overwhelmed via the sentient response mechanism as it registers the degree of suffering extant. This discomfort is an issue that will be addressed as the Path unfolds, bringing with it proper perspective and wise methods for ameliorating conditions of concern. The virtue here, however, is that the Second-Degree initiate has attained to a state in which the good of the greatest number takes precedence over the advantage of the few.⁶⁰

Even so, the keenly sensitive astral body of the Second-Degree initiate, though much tamed and purified, still contains the capacity to over-react, and this it will occasionally do in response to what are regarded as distressing world conditions. However, there is a difference between this sort of astral reaction and the more primitive and essentially possessive upwellings characteristic of those on earlier stages of the Path, for the astral upsets of the Second-Degree initiate are frequently tinged with and in fact driven by an underlying idealism of a fairly refined nature. This nascent idealism leads to acute pain upon perceiving the divergence between the ideal and the apparently "real." Individuals caught in such dilemmas are frequently to be encountered in metaphysical environments. It is therefore well to be aware of the landmarks proclaiming the Second-Degree initiatory status.

Second-Degree initiates seek mental polarization⁶¹ through meditation and study, for they realize that the mental plane is the next field of endeavor and that a durable mental stability is much needed in the effort to counteract the effect of the polar opposites to be found on the astral plane. These opposites interact constantly and beget in the individual a nearly unending fluctuation of mood between happiness and misery, satisfaction and non-satisfaction, assurance and doubt, courage and fear, and more.⁶² Such mood states are the manifestations of the very dualities which must be surmounted to pass this the Second Initiation, which signifies a degree of mastery on the as-

tral plane. A constant point of spiritual focus is thus needed to weaken the claims of the astral plane upon the individual.

Influence from the astral plane is of course not entirely without merit. When acting from its higher subplanes, it begets the kinder human sentiments and the genuine longing for contact with emissaries of pure truth and higher energies which Second-Degree initiates espouse. However, the generally deceptive appearances of the astral plane must still be seen through, and this requires a shift from a devotional approach to an intellectual one.⁶³ Thus, those who have fully taken the Second Initiation are much involved with the attainment of mental polarization, which accomplishment takes place between the Second and Third Initiations.⁶⁴

Thus, from the more rational point of view adopted by the Second-Degree initiate, the outlook is less irritated, less mood-driven, less judgmental, and less given to infatuation than is the point of view in earlier stages on the path. This is so for the many reasons already given and for the important fact that Second-Degree initiates have learned to leaven their point of view with the recognition of the Divine in all things and all persons,⁶⁵ not just those of a particular religious or political persuasion, thus disengaging themselves from any overly rigid or fanatical belief system.⁶⁶ Thus, it might be said that freedom from fanaticism of any kind is one of the most noticeable of all landmarks signifying the status of the Second Degree.

Because of the more placid condition of the astral body, the Second-Degree initiate arrives at a certain degree of ability to gather helpful and clarifying information from the higher worlds. According to the Tibetan Master, the initiate of this degree "...can read the akashic records and ascertain the past, thereby enabling himself to work intelligently in the present..."⁶⁷ In other words, he or she arrives at the ability to gather knowledge of past lives, reincarnational cycles, and karmic issues, thereby the more wisely to manage present situations.⁶⁸

The widespread interest in past lives evidenced by the New Age movement would seem to answer to this feature of the Second Initiation very well, suggesting that many in this movement are within range of taking this initiation, or in fact have already done so. This conclusion would seem to be consistent with the emerging norms in the New Age movement, such as unconditional love, forgiveness preferred over bitterness, acceptance of the doctrine of reincarnation, and a nearly universal tendency to seek answers for present challenges in information from higher worlds. Thus, the popularity of the New Age movement might suggest that there are many who are now attracted to the fundamental standards of the Second Initiation.

The Third or Transfiguration Initiation

The Third-Degree initiate has attained an even more profound degree of spiritual self-recollectedness, having reached this initiation from "a level tableland of experience and of consciousness, and not from the heights of aspiration, or from fanatical sacrifice, or from the standpoint of a devotion which handicaps,"⁶⁹ all of which are characteristic of the more astral point of view dominating the previous stage on the Path. Instead, the Third Gate is passed by virtue of having attained a significant clarity devoid of the more gross glammers and illusions to which the soul is subject during incarnation.⁷⁰

The name of this initiation reflects that fact. Called the Transfiguration, it marks a radical departure from the dominance of the threefold personality vehicle which has been in effect for the unit since the ancient past.⁷¹ According to the Tibetan, the word transfiguration in this context refers to the fact that, at the Third Initiation, "the personality is irradiated by the full light of the soul," while at the same time, "the three personality vehicles are completely transcended; they have become simply forms through which spiritual love may flow out into the world..."⁷² In fact, the astral body is said to "disappear" at this initiation, the buddhic vehicle becoming the main instrument of sentience.⁷³

Thus, the initiate is liberated from the “alluring imprisonment of the three worlds,” or the physical, astral, and mental planes, as never before.⁷⁴ This occurs as a result of strenuous efforts to master the dynamics of the mental plane and to complete the submergence of the personal point of view in the greater need of the whole.⁷⁵ The initiate is freed from the thralldom of the lower mind and can function at will on the plane of buddhi, or the intuition.⁷⁶ Further, the light of the monad first makes contact with the mental body at this initiation,⁷⁷ affording the initiate a much enhanced perception of freedom, bliss, and infinity as they are known by the monad.

From this new perspective, self consciousness gives way to group consciousness,⁷⁸ and all sense of separateness dissolves in the face of identification with the Life Aspect in all things.⁷⁹ This radical leap forward in consciousness allows the initiate, according to the Tibetan Master, to “...enter somewhat into the state of consciousness of our planetary Logos, sense His destiny, and vision fleetingly the wonder of the consummation.”⁸⁰

Obviously, this is not a casual occurrence, but rather one founded on thorough preparation.

This initiation requires the careful training of the mind nature so that it can rightly receive and distribute energies,⁸¹ the implication being that any Third-Degree initiate shall evidence a marked degree of mental poise, self-control, focus, and sensitivity to the world of energies.

Passage through this gate also requires the acquisition of occultly scientific knowledge.⁸² Efforts in this direction culminate in the revelation accorded at the Third Initiation, which involves the secrets of physical plane electric-

ity and the methods by which thought directs the many levels of divine substance to become form.⁸³ Further, the nature of our Planetary Logos is unveiled at this, the Transfiguration Initiation.⁸⁴ Clearly, knowledge of this nature places a great deal of power in the hands of the Third-Degree initiate, but he or she is entirely groomed for this by the standards of thought and behavior which must be in place, such that no misuse of powers can result.⁸⁵

All these attainments reflect the fact that the Third Initiation is an encounter with the Fifth Ray, The Ray of Science and Concrete Knowl-

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Thus, the Third-Degree initiate is

likely to present the appearance of a highly knowledgeable individual who is not easily befuddled by complexity or thrown into a tailspin by relatively ephemeral conditions. He or she is likely to demonstrate, on the other hand, a marked degree of purposeful thought and activity, especially in pursuit of the higher things of life, even if he or she is not overtly a student of metaphysics or occultism. Many fields of study will suffice for the training and right expression of the Third-Degree initiate,

including conventional mathematics and science, for these disciplines seek to get at the principles behind manifestation, in keeping with the interests of the Third Initiation in the deeper secrets of existence.

In keeping with the decidedly mental and intellectual character of the Third Degree, the Tibetan has equated this initiation with the Third or Aryan Race,⁹¹ that lengthy period during which the Human Kingdom is destined to unfold and actualize its mental potential. This is as compared to the unfoldment of the physical nature during the Lemurian period and the astral during the Atlantean, or the First and Second races respectively, for the first three initiations parallel the large developments of the first three entirely human races.⁹²

Each of the races and initiations involves a great discovery concerning the fullness of divine potential. Whereas the great discovery at the heart of the Second Initiation concerns the reality of Divine Love, the analogous discovery at the core of the Third Initiation concerns Divine Purpose.⁹³ Once this initiation is taken, the Will or Purpose Aspect dominates the initiate,⁹⁴ causing a marked distinction from those at this grade and those at any lower level. A small hint in this direction can be gathered from the fact that because of attunement to the Purpose Aspect through the monad, the Third-Degree Initiate can to some extent appreciate the objectives of the Planetary Logos⁹⁵ and can via that channel even respond to energies coming from the Solar Logos.⁹⁶

As might be thus expected then, the service range of the Third-Degree initiate is much broader in scope than is that of the Second-Degree initiate, for those who have passed through the Transfiguration demonstrate, according to the Tibetan, an ability to "...work wisely, intelligently and harmoniously with many diverse types, and to co-operate in large plans and wield wide influence."⁹⁷

The significant advance in effective occult functioning and reliability of character consequent with this initiation qualify the initiate to cooperate with Hierarchy as never before. Third-Degree initiates are very much less likely to introduce personality complications

into any work with which they may be charged, unlike the more temperamental Second- and First-Degree initiates, for the Third-Degree initiate is able to interact with all persons and conditions on the basis of an even-handed approach constituted of equal parts divine regard and appropriate objectivity. As a result, not much in the way of a clean-up effort on the part of higher-degree initiates will be necessitated when an initiate of this degree is sent into a situation. The Third-Degree initiate can be trusted in ways not possible in regard to First- and Second-Degree initiates, who are in the first case still prey to emotional storms, fits of competition, jealousy, and in the second, to blunders inspired by overzealous idealism and excess affectional sentiment. The Third-Degree initiate is more impersonal and pragmatic than either of these, and therefore less likely to misjudge human character. This clear vision helps in wisely navigating organizational and other social environments into which the Third-Degree initiate may be sent for various purposes under the Plan.

Since arrival at the Third Degree signifies the first genuine availability of the worker in dependable collaboration with efforts toward manifestation of the Plan, this initiation is considered by Hierarchy the first step of real significance, "The First Hierarchical Initiation."⁹⁸ It is also the first point at which the initiate is definitely linked with the Great White Lodge on the star Sirius, thus rendering this initiation the First Sirian Initiation⁹⁹ as well.

Attainment of this initiatory level, though challenging, is promised by the Tibetan as an achievable goal. He estimated that the number of seekers who would have taken the Transfiguration Initiation by the end of the twentieth century would be in the thousands,¹⁰⁰ with "many more initiates of the third degree than ever before" present in incarnation by that time.¹⁰¹

The Master even encouraged effort toward this initiation, voicing an appeal for the Fourth or Human Kingdom to take its seeking beyond the soul to make connection with the life aspect¹⁰² through the monad, which process is begun in earnest at the Transfiguration Initiation. Further, he stated that the major work of

the Christ upon reappearing would address potential to take this and the next initiation, nourishing the spiritual aspirants of the world so that they will be enabled to take the Third and even the Fourth Initiations.¹⁰³

And finally, the Tibetan gave the sign of approval from Hierarchy that initiations beyond the Second are relevant for seekers in the twentieth and twenty first centuries, stating in the mid -twentieth century, “Students today have made much progress towards the control of the personality, and the disciples in the world are now so numerous that the hierarchical emphasis is today upon the states of consciousness which follow the third initiation.”¹⁰⁴

These states of consciousness are inevitably bound up with perception of the nature of the monad, for as the Tibetan has said, the Third or Transfiguration Initiation represents the point at which personality or form life is finally transcended. Following that, the monad becomes the object of desired attainment, its spiritual pressure being increasingly felt by the progressing point of light.¹⁰⁵ The initiate is then, according to the Tibetan, no longer concerned with the development of sentiency toward cultivation of a more greatly loving heart, as in the First and Second Initiations, but is instead preoccupied with the fusion of the individual will with the divine will and with the mechanics of service to the Plan.¹⁰⁶

Thus, present and future times are likely to be conditioned by the presence of initiates who, having some time past integrated the Love-Wisdom aspect of existence, now have their sights trained upon the Will nature. This type of focus will present the appearance of a seeker who is steady in pursuit of service objectives, able quickly and easily to identify the non-essential and set it aside, advised about the key concepts in science and metaphysics, who even attains on occasion to a greater perception of cosmic bliss via the monad, and who is decidedly non-sentimental though thoroughly dedicated to the dissemination of goodwill to all. It will be a psychology relatively new to the world, nevertheless, one which deserves to be recognized as a valid step on the way.

[To be continued.]

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age I*, Lucis, 1944, pp. 780-781.
² Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, Lucis, 1922, p. 71.
³ *Ibid.*, p. 72.
⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology II*, Lucis, 1942, pp. 177-178.
⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age II*, Lucis, 1955, p. 690.
⁶ *Initiation, Human and Solar*, p. 74.
⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 74; *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 981.
⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 179.
⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour, A World Problem*, Lucis, 1950, p. 264.
¹⁰ Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, p. 73.
¹¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, Lucis, 1960, p. 107.
¹² *Ibid.*, p. 709.
¹³ *Discipleship in the New Age II*, p. 633.
¹⁴ See *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 699, where the Tibetan stated that though there are nine initiations total, only seven apply directly to our Earth evolution.
¹⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, Lucis, 1951, p. 241.
¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 503.
¹⁷ *Discipleship in the New Age II*, p. 431.
¹⁸ *Initiation, Human and Solar*, p. 13.
¹⁹ *Discipleship in the New Age I*, p. 685.
²⁰ *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 341.
²¹ *Esoteric Astrology*, p. 286.
²² *The Rays and the Initiations*, pp. 534-535.
²³ *Ibid.*, p. 341.
²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 549.
²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 735.
²⁶ As the Tibetan has stated in *The Rays and the Initiations*, pp. 338, 340, and 567-656, the seven initiations relevant to our planetary evolution are encounters with the ray energies in the following manner:

First Initiation	7 th Ray
Second Initiation	6 th Ray
Third Initiation	5 th Ray
Fourth Initiation	4 th Ray
Fifth Initiation	1 st Ray
Sixth Initiation	3 rd Ray
Seventh Initiation	2 nd Ray

The associations follow an obvious pattern for the first four initiations, with the First Initiation

starting at the Ray which correlates to the most dense level of manifestation, and then working back through the rays (and related planes) in numerical order. The final three initiations of the seven associated with our planetary evolution then recapitulate and mirror the process whereby the synthesizing schemes in our planet absorb the gains of evolution into unity. This the schemes do in the following order: the Saturn scheme blends with the Uranus scheme, and then the result merges with the Neptune scheme. If the Saturn scheme is accorded Ray 3, the Uranus Ray 1, and the Neptune Ray 2, then the merging of 1 and 3 first and the remaining into 2 fairly well describes process underlying the final three initiations, which first reconcile Rays 1 and 3, and then end on the major note of the solar system, with Initiation 7 representing an encounter with the Second Ray and all its correlates.

- 27 *Discipleship in the New Age II*, p. 434.
 28 *Initiation, Human and Solar*, p. 97.
 29 *Esoteric Astrology*, pp. 613-614.
 30 *Ibid.*, p. 614.
 31 *Ibid.*, p. 614.
 32 *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 532.
 33 *Ibid.*, p. 436-437.
 34 *Discipleship in the New Age I*, p. 716.
 35 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, Lucis, 1953, p. 152.
 36 *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 385.
 37 *Initiation, Human and Solar*, p. 82.
 38 Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, Lucis, 1934, p. 352.
 39 *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 571.
 40 *Esoteric Astrology*, p. 169; *Discipleship in the New Age I*, p. 716.
 41 *Initiation, Human and Solar*, p. 84; *The Rays and the Initiations*, pp. 152, 572.
 42 *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 445.
 43 *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 567.
 44 *Ibid.*, pp. 567, 572.
 45 *Ibid.*, p. 665.
 46 Alice A. Bailey, *The Destiny of the Nations*, Lucis, 1949, pp. 149-150.
 47 *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 385.
 48 *Ibid.*, pp. 579, 648.
 49 *Ibid.*, p. 571.
 50 *Ibid.*, p. 569 – 570.
 51 *Ibid.*, p. 672.
 52 *Ibid.*, p. 667.
 53 *Ibid.*, p. 333.
 54 *Esoteric Astrology*, p. 169.
 55 *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 683.

- 56 *Initiation, Human and Solar*, p. 85.
 57 *The Rays and the Initiations*, pp. 577-578, 674.
 58 *Initiation, Human and Solar*, pp. 84, 85; *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 677-678.
 59 *Ibid.*, p. 86.
 60 *Ibid.*, p. 86; *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 678.
 61 *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 667.
 62 *A Treatise on White Magic*, p. 293.
 63 *The Rays and the Initiations*, pp. 667, 677.
 64 *Ibid.*, p. 600.
 65 *Ibid.*, p. 679.
 66 *Ibid.*, p. 127.
 67 *Initiation, Human and Solar*, p. 170.
 68 *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 738.
 69 *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 127.
 70 *Esoteric Astrology*, pp. 383-384.
 71 *The Rays and the Initiations*, pp. 684-686.
 72 *Ibid.*, p. 278.
 73 *Ibid.*
 74 *Discipleship in the New Age II*, p. 397.
 75 *Initiation, Human and Solar*, pp. 82-90.
 76 *A Treatise on White Magic*, p. 383.
 77 *Initiation, Human and Solar*, pp. 82-90; *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 593.
 78 *Esoteric Astrology*, p. 620.
 79 *A Treatise on White Magic*, p. 299.
 80 *Ibid.*
 81 *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 691.
 82 *Ibid.*, pp. 691-692.
 83 *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, pp. 872 – 873; *Initiation, Human and Solar*, pp. 167, 168, 170.
 84 *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 358.
 85 Alice A. Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*, Lucis, 1950, p. 87.
 86 *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 688.
 87 *Initiation, Human and Solar*, p. 86.
 88 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
 89 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
 90 *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 689.
 91 *Esoteric Astrology*, p. 169.
 92 On the Lemurian, Atlantean, and Aryan races as the first strictly human races, see *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 272.
 93 *Esoteric Astrology*, pp. 300, 606; *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 349.
 94 *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 713.
 95 *Discipleship in the New Age I*, p. 726.
 96 *Esoteric Psychology I*, p. 156.
 97 *Initiation, Human and Solar*, p. 121.
 98 *The Rays and the Initiations*, pp. 41, 81, 385, 687.
 99 *Discipleship in the New Age II*, p. 159; *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 687.
 100 *Discipleship in the New Age II*, p. 337.

¹⁰¹ *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 473.

¹⁰² *Esoteric Healing*, p. 587.

¹⁰³ Alice A. Bailey, *The Reappearance of the Christ*, Lucis, 1948, pp. 86 – 87.

¹⁰⁴ *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 511.

¹⁰⁵ *Esoteric Astrology*, p. 606.

¹⁰⁶ *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 34.

Invoking the Solar Angel: Vajrasattva Meditation in the Ageless Wisdom Tradition

David Reigle

Summary

The Master Djwhal Khul outlined the main elements of occult meditation in his letters on this subject. One of the main such elements is mantra, which he predicted would some day supersede all preliminary meditation. Since the 1970s, a number of mantras used for meditation have become available to the world. One of these, the Vajrasattva mantra, has been used for the past millennium in Tibet, and before that in India, as the standard preliminary meditation. Evidence is provided here that *Vajrasattva* is what the Ageless Wisdom Tradition calls the Solar Angel. Thus, this meditation would invoke the Solar Angel, something that should be done at the beginning of each meditation session. The actual Vajrasattva mantra is provided here in the original Sanskrit. This important occult meditation is the first one taught in Tibet, and should be the first one taught in the future schools of meditation for which Djwhal Khul prepared the world.

Introduction

The Solar Angel,¹ variously referred to as the Higher Self, Ego, Soul, Solar Deva, Agnishvatta Pitri, Manasaputra, etc., lives its own life on its own plane. For the Solar Angel to bring the lower self under control, we are told in the Alice Bailey writings, is a thing distasteful to it, as its tendency is to rest content with consciousness and aspiration on its own plane.² When, therefore, a person undertakes to meditate, and thereby open from the personality side a channel to the Solar Angel, there is a need to somehow call or attract the attention of the Solar Angel at the beginning of each meditation session.

To do this effectively, one must call the Solar Angel in its own language. Human speech, as we know it, cannot reach the Solar Angels, the

Fire Devas of the mental plane.³ Theirs is the “Deva-vani,” the “language (*vāṇī*) of the gods (devas),” otherwise known as Sanskrit. This refers specifically to Sanskrit as the language of mantras.⁴

We read in *Letters on Occult Meditation* that mantras “will some day be in common use among the students of occult meditation,” and that they “are now in use among those privileged to use them.”⁵ This privilege has from time immemorial belonged to the people of India, and for the last millennium, also to those of Tibet. Indeed, the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul (D.K.) goes on to say that “mantrams are much more in use among orientals and in the eastern faiths than at present among occidentals. As the power of sound is more completely understood and its effect studied, these mantrams will be adopted in the occident.”⁶

Regarding these mantras, D.K. continues, “Some of them are very old and when enunciated in the original Sanskrit have unbelievably powerful effects.”⁷ When mantras were adopted by the Tibetans from the Indians, the mantras were retained in the original Sanskrit, not translated into Tibetan. This was due to the widespread knowledge in the East of the power of mantras in Sanskrit, the “language of the gods.” In recent decades many of these original Sanskrit mantras have become available in the occident. D.K. did not give any mantras in his *Letters on Occult Meditation*, but closed the 1920 letter quoted above by

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pointing out that the subject of mantras was included because they “will some day supersede all preliminary meditation.”⁸

The Vajrasattva Meditation

In the Tibetan tradition of occult meditation, the first meditation taught is the Vajrasattva meditation, or Vajrasattva mantra recitation. This is then regularly used as a preliminary meditation in the more advanced meditation practices. Occult meditation in the Tibetan tradition is called tantric meditation, being distinguished from non-tantric meditation by the use of visualization;⁹ and we note that D.K. says that the use of visualization will characterize all meditation in the new age.¹⁰ The primary part of the Vajrasattva meditation is recitation of the 100-syllable Vajrasattva mantra. Recitation of this mantra may be done with or without the accompanying visualizations. This mantra and its meditation have now become available in the West.¹¹

Vajrasattva is depicted as a white deity, who in meditation is visualized as sitting a little above one’s head. This is just where the Ageless Wisdom Tradition locates the soul or Solar Angel. About this the Master Kuthumi (K.H.) writes, using Sanskrit terms, “neither Atma nor Buddhi ever were *within* man,” but “always remained without the body; that it floated and overshadowed so to say the extreme part of the man’s head.”¹² This was in reply to a query about the Buddha’s famous teaching, “Remember that there is within man no abiding principle.” Exoteric Tibetan Buddhism thus does not teach the existence of the soul or Solar Angel. Vajrasattva is there taught as the manifestation of the collective purity of the Buddhas;¹³ so Vajrasattva meditation or recitation is used as the preemi-

nent practice of purification. “Vajra-sattva” simply means “diamond being.” The adjective “diamond” is used in tantric writings to signify the indestructible or ultimate nature of something, the true reality behind the appearance. Like a diamond, this is hard to penetrate. So Vajrasattva is the essential or true nature of a “being,” or person. The Ageless Wisdom Tradition teaches that the “solar Angels concern his [man’s] own essential nature,”¹⁴ and describes “the solar Angel, who is the true man.”¹⁵ Vajrasattva, then, would here not be a particular deity, but rather would be the Solar Angel. As such, Vajrasattva would refer generically to any and every Solar Angel. We will proceed on this assumption.

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Letters on Occult Meditation enumerates different kinds of mantras for various purposes, including mantras to evoke the Solar Angel or Ego: “Mantras that evoke the God within, and work specifically on the Ego.”¹⁶ Is the Vajrasattva mantra such a mantra? Mantras normally include Sanskrit seed-syllables, such as the familiar “om,” which cannot be translated. But such is the beauty of Sanskrit that the vast major-

ity of mantras also have a straightforward grammatical meaning. This meaning of the Vajrasattva mantra is:

Om. Vajrasattva, keep [your] pledge. As Vajrasattva, stand near [me]. Be steadfast toward me. Be well pleased with me. Be well fulfilled on account of me. Be attached to me. Grant me all accomplishments; and in all actions make my thought beneficent, *hūm*. *Ha ha ha ha hoḥ*. O Blessed One, Diamond-nature of all the Buddhas, do not abandon me. Be of diamond-nature, O great pledge being.¹⁷

Since Sanskrit is so different from English, it is not possible in a single translation to adequately reflect the meaning of the original San-

skrit. The first sentence, “keep [your] pledge,” does not mean only “fulfill your promise,” but also uses “pledge” in a technical sense.

“Pledge,” in tantric writings, is a technical term used along with “being,” together meaning an imagined being, one that is visualized in meditation. This is in contradistinction to a “wisdom being,” which is the actual being. A pledge being is imagined or visualized by the meditator, and then the actual or wisdom being is invited to merge into and become one with it. Thus, the meditator visualizes the pledge being Vajrasattva, and then requests the wisdom being Vajrasattva, the real Vajrasattva, to merge into and become one with the visualized Vajrasattva. Vajrasattva, as noted above, is visualized as sitting above one’s head. All this, of course, is from the standpoint of the human practitioner. If, however, the meditator were a Solar Angel, the Ego, a human would be its pledge being, what it visualizes in meditation.¹⁸ The Ageless Wisdom Tradition does teach that “the Ego... is in deep meditation during the whole cycle of physical incarnation.”¹⁹ In the phrase, “keep [your] pledge,” the word that I have translated idiomatically as “keep,” more literally means “keep watch over, protect, preserve, guard.” So the request to Vajrasattva to “keep [your] pledge” also means “watch over [your] pledge,” what you visualize in meditation, the human being entrusted to your care, your charge or ward, or put more poetically, your reflection or shadow.

In this perspective, the meaning of the remaining phrases of the Vajrasattva mantra, “stand near,” etc., is self-evident. The straightforward grammatical meaning of this invocatory mantra is, I believe, quite sufficient to show its nature. It would indeed be, in the Ageless Wisdom Tradition, a mantra to invoke what is there called the Solar Angel.

With the successful invoking of the Solar Angel, the task of the preliminary meditation is complete, and one may proceed to further stages of meditation, stages wherein the Solar Angel responds. Thus, for example, the first of the fifteen “Rules for Magic” given by the Tibetan Master D.K. is:

The Solar Angel collects himself, scatters not his force, but, in meditation deep, communicates with his reflection.²⁰

The Solar Angel or Vajrasattva, meditating from its side, is said to send out “streams of energy” that are typically registered as “higher impulses” to its “reflection,”²¹ a human being, to it a pledge being. From the standpoint of the human practitioner involved, the real wisdom being Vajrasattva has merged with the visualized pledge being Vajrasattva. The meditating Solar Angel has infused its energy into its human pledge being, endowing it with its wisdom, thus making it for the moment a wisdom being in truth. So invoking the Solar Angel evokes in turn a response, and meditation proceeds.

It is obvious that an accomplished meditator has learned how to successfully invoke the Solar Angel, with or without the use of a mantra. But for most of us, this is not an easy thing to do. For ages an efficient way to do this by the use of a mantra, or magical formula, has been available in the East. Mantras were not available outside their home in India, land of the “twice-born” (*dvija*), and neighboring China and Tibet, because these magical formulae were too liable to be misused for selfish ends. As put in records quoted by H. P. Blavatsky:

Whenever made too public, the Good Law of Cheu [magical powers] fell invariably into sorcery or “black magic.” The Dvijas, the Hoshang [Chinese monks] and the Lamas could alone be entrusted safely with the formulae.²²

But since the 1970s such formulae have become available to the rest of the world, largely due to the displacement from Tibet of many lamas, or teachers. We are thus now in a position to use such a mantra as the Vajrasattva mantra, to efficiently invoke the Solar Angel as part of our preliminary meditation, as was foreseen by the Tibetan Master D.K.

Here, then, transliterated from the original Sanskrit, is the Vajrasattva mantra. Please note that transliteration does not represent cor

rect pronunciation. It is a way to accurately depict the 49 devanagari letters used for Sanskrit with the 26 roman letters. Once the correct pronunciation of these 49 letters is learned, something now easily enough possible, the mantra can be pronounced correctly from the roman transliteration.²³

om vajrasattva, samayam anupālaya,
vajrasattvatvenopatiṣṭha, dṛḍho me
bhava, sutoṣyo me bhava, supoṣyo me
bhava, anurakto me bhava, sarva-
siddhim me prayaccha, sarva-karmasu
ca me cittaṃ śreyaḥ kuru hūṃ, ha ha ha
ha hoḥ, bhagavan sarva-tathāgata-vajra,
mā me muñca, vajrī-bhava mahā-
samaya-sattva, āḥ.²⁴

An old and powerful mantra such as this seems to be effective even when pronounced incorrectly. But to be most effective it should be pronounced as correctly as possible. The vowels are the most important. The short “a” is pronounced like English “u” in the word “but.” Thus, the first syllable of “vajra” rhymes with “judge.” The first syllable of “sattva” rhymes with “hut.” The long “ā” is pronounced like “a” in “father.” The Sanskrit word “me” is pronounced like the English word “may.” The short “u” is like in “put,” not like in “united.” The long “ū” is pronounced “oo.” The short “i” is like in “kit.” The long “ī” is pronounced “ee.” The vowel “ṛ” is pronounced “ri.” The “o” is like in “go.” The “ṣ” and “ś” are pronounced “sh.” The “ṭh” is pronounced “ta,” and aspirated; it is not like the English “th” sound. The “c” is pronounced “ch.” Of the untranslatable mantra syllables, “hūṃ” rhymes with “room.” Some modern books in English give this syllable as “hung” rather than

“hūṃ,” since the final “ṃ” is to be nasalized, as it is in “om.” But it is not pronounced like the English word “hung.” The “ha,” repeated four times, is like “hut” without the final “t.” In “hoḥ,” and also in “āḥ,” the “ḥ” is an “h” sound followed by an echo of the short form of the preceding vowel, here “u” and “a,” respectively. So “hoḥ” is like “ho” followed by a faint “hu” sound. These five, “ha ha ha ha hoḥ,” are the seed-syllables of the five wisdom energies.

Mantric Effectiveness

The effectiveness of mantras, of course, does not depend on correct pronunciation alone. D.K., concluding his letters on mantric forms, says:

[F]or those wishing to embark on the practice of occult meditation, there is no better choice than the Vajrasattva meditation, the invoking of the Solar Angel. Just as it is the first meditation taught in the Tibetan tradition of occult or tantric meditation, so it should be the first meditation taught in the “future schools of meditation”

The first step towards the attainment of these mantras is the acquirement of the faculty of occult meditation, for it is not the sounding of the words alone that bring about the desired end but the mental concentration that visualises the results to be attained. This must be accompanied by the will that causes those results to be dominated by the one who chants the sounds. These mantric forms are dangerous

and useless apart from the concentrated mental equilibrium of the man, and his power to control and vitalise.²⁵

To acquire the faculty of occult meditation is to acquire the faculty of visualization. The Vajrasattva meditation normally includes both recitation of the mantra and visualization. In this visualization, the one hundred syllables of the mantra encircle and slowly revolve around the syllable “hūṃ” at the heart of Vajrasattva, who is sitting above one’s head. From all of them flows a purifying nectar, purging one of all negativities. While this meditation is regu-

larly used as a preliminary meditation, it is also used on its own as a complete, independent meditation. Used in this way, the Vajrasattva meditation is the preeminent practice of purification found in the Tibetan tradition, as was noted earlier. Thus Vajrasattva, known in the Ageless Wisdom Tradition as the Solar Angel, or the Ego, can be invoked and meditated on to stabilize one's vibration at a higher level, which results in the throwing off or purification of all that is lower. This process is described by D.K. as follows:

Let him then raise his vibration as high as may be, and aim next at lifting it clear of the mental body into the causal, and so bring in the direct action of the Ego upon the lower three vehicles. As long as he can keep his consciousness high and as long as he holds a vibration that is that of the Ego on its own plane, the mental body will be held in a state of equilibrium. It will hold no lower vibration analogous to the thoughtforms circulating in its environment. The force of the Ego will circulate throughout the mental ovoid, permitting no extraneous geometrical units to find entrance, and the dangers of inhibition will be offset. Even more will be done,—the mental matter will in process of time become so attuned to the higher vibration that in due course that vibration will become stable and will automatically throw off all that is lower and undesirable.²⁶

Therefore, for those wishing to embark on the practice of occult meditation, there is no better choice than the Vajrasattva meditation, the invoking of the Solar Angel. Just as it is the first meditation taught in the Tibetan tradition of occult or tantric meditation, so it should be the first meditation taught in the “future schools of meditation”²⁷ outlined by the Tibetan Master D.K. in his *Letters on Occult Meditation*. Unlike when those letters were written, this is now possible.

¹ See: *The Divine Plan: Written in the Form of a Commentary on H. P. Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine*, by Geoffrey A. Barboraka, Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 3rd ed., 1972,

pp. 133-134: “These lofty Beings are therefore termed the Lords of the Flame, or Sons of Mind—Mānasa-putras—or again Solar Gods. In fact they are called by so many different names in *The Secret Doctrine* that a list will prove advantageous: Solar Fathers, Solar Ancestors, Solar Angels, Solar Devas, Solar Pitris, Mānasaputras, Mānasa, Mānasas, Mānasvin, Mānasa Dhyānis, Dhyānis, Spiritual Dhyānis, Fire Dhyānis, Sons of Mahat, Sons of Manas, Mind-born Sons, Sons of Mind, Sons of Fire, Sons of Wisdom, Lords of Wisdom, Lords of the Flame, Agnishvāttas, Agnishvāta Pitris, 3 Higher Classes of Pitris, Incorporeal Pitris, Vairājas, Kumāras, Holy Sons, Holy Yogis, Holy Ascetics, Holy Virgin-born, Virgin Ascetics, Lhas (the equivalent Tibetan term), Solar Lhas.”

See also: *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, by Alice A. Bailey, New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1925, p. 1125: “As we know, the Sons of Mind or the incarnating jivas are the returning nirvanis of a previous logocic incarnation.”

² *Letters on Occult Meditation*, by Alice A. Bailey, New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1922, p. 37: “The Ego seeks to bring about the desired end... by frequent attempts to definitely control the lower self, a thing distasteful to the Ego, whose tendency is to rest content with consciousness and aspiration on its own plane. Forget not that the Ego itself has somewhat to wrestle with.”

³ *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, pp. 679-680: “We start here upon the consideration of the Agnishvattas, or the Fire devas of the mental plane, and are thus launched upon the most stupendous subject in connection with our planetary evolution; it is the one having the most occult significance for man, for these solar Angels concern his own essential nature, and are also the creative power by which he works... The question of these Fire Dhyānis and their relation to man is a most profound mystery, and the entire matter is so clothed in intricate legends that students are apt to despair of ever arriving at the desired, and necessary clarity of thought.”

⁴ *Letters on Occult Meditation*, p. 162: “Mantric forms are collections of phrases, words, and sounds which by virtue of rhythmic effect achieve results that would not be possible apart from them.” See also the fuller definition found in *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 926 fn. *The Secret Doctrine*, by H. P. Blavatsky, 1888, vol. 1, p. 464: “The magic of the ancient priests consisted, in those days, in addressing *their gods in their own language*. ‘The speech of the

men of the earth cannot reach the Lords. Each must be addressed in the language of his respective element’—is a sentence which will be shown pregnant with meaning. ‘*The Book of Rules*’ cited adds as an explanation of the nature of that *Element*-language: ‘It is composed of sounds, not words; of sounds, numbers and figures. He who knows how to blend the three, will call forth the response of the superintending Power’ (the regent-god of the specific element needed). Thus this ‘language’ is that of *incantations* or of MANTRAS, as they are called in India, sound being *the most potent and effectual magic agent, and the first of the keys which opens the door of communication between Mortals and the Immortals.*”

⁵ *Letters on Occult Meditation*, p. 162.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁹ Tantric meditation is distinguished from the more standard meditation, taught in the sutras, by its use of “deity yoga.” Deity yoga is the visualization of oneself as a divine form, i.e., as a “deity,” and in a divine residence. Tsong-kha-pa considers this visualization, or deity yoga, to be the distinguishing feature of tantric or occult meditation. See on this: “Reason as the Prime Principle in Tsong kha pa’s Delineation of Deity Yoga as the Demarcation Between Sūtra and Tantra,” by Jeffrey Hopkins, in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1984, pp. 95-115.

¹⁰ *Discipleship in the New Age*, by Alice A. Bailey, vol. 1, New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1944, p. 89: “All the new processes in meditation techniques (for which the New Age may be responsible) must and will embody visualisation as a primary step.” *The Rays and the Initiations*, by Alice A. Bailey, New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1960, p. 252, listing some of the newer truths brought out to modern esotericists: “A presentation of the newer type of meditations, with its emphasis upon visualisation and the use of the creative imagination.”

¹¹ The Vajrasattva meditation may be found in at least thirteen books published in English since 1970. These are listed in the article, “The Vajrasattva Mantra: Sanskrit Edition and English Translation,” by David Reigle, available at: www.easterntertradition.org. Three of these are listed here:

How to Meditate: A Practical Guide, by Kathleen McDonald, London: Wisdom Publications, 1984, pp. 178-186: “Vajrasattva Purification” (a read-

ily available introduction giving the practice in short form).

The Confession of Downfalls: The Confession Sutra and Vajrasattva Practice, ed. Brian C. Beresford, Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1993, 2003; first ed., 1980, published as *Mahayana Purification* (gives shorter and longer forms of the practice).

Becoming Vajrasattva: The Tantric Path of Purification, Lama Thubten Yeshe, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2nd ed., 2004; first ed., 1995, as *The Tantric Path of Purification: The Yoga Method of Heruka Vajrasattva* (a whole book on the practice, including more advanced materials).

¹² *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, compiled by A. T. Barker, (1st ed., 1923); 2nd ed., 1926; 3rd ed., 1962; chronological ed., 1993; letter no. 127: 2nd ed. p. 455; 3rd ed. pp. 447-448; chron. ed. p. 217; For the original statement that gave rise to this query, see letter no. 16: 2nd ed. p. 111; 3rd ed. p. 108; chron. ed. p. 199.

¹³ See: *The Tantric Path of Purification: The Yoga Method of Heruka Vajrasattva*, Lama Thubten Yeshe, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995, pp. 141-42 (2nd ed., 2004, with new title: *Becoming Vajrasattva: The Tantric Path of Purification*): “Who is Heruka Vajrasattva? We consider him to be a manifestation of the unity of fully developed male and female energy, the complete purity of the state of enlightenment. Out of their great compassion and limitless love, the buddhas and bodhisattvas have manifested their collected purity in the archetypal image of Vajrasattva so that we can identify ourselves with him. We have to understand that the qualities of Vajrasattva are already within us. But our realizations, method, and wisdom are limited. They have to be developed through identification with the limitless, pure energy of the archetype.”

¹⁴ *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 680; fuller quotation given in note 3 above.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 964.

¹⁶ *Letters on Occult Meditation*, p. 186.

¹⁷ Translation by myself. The existing translations known to me are, I believe, not entirely accurate, due to faulty source materials. See the full word-by-word analysis in my article listed in note 11 above.

¹⁸ Thus, in another mantra, the human meditator says: “*Om*. Vajrasattva, O pledge, behold! *Hoh*. You are the pledge; I am the pledge. You and I are the pledge”; showing that it goes both ways. See: *Sādhanamālā*, ed. Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, vol. 1, Baroda: Oriental Insti-

tute, 1925, p. 101: om vajrasattva samaya
drśya hoḥ samayas tvam samayo 'ham sama-
yas tvam aham jaḥ hūm vaḥ hoḥ.

¹⁹ *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 998.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 997, and also found in *A Treatise on White Magic*, by Alice A. Bailey, New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1934, pp. xii, 51. Compare also, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, pp. 771-772: "As the solar Angels continue sounding out the mantram which is the basis of their work, the lunar Pitris respond to certain sounds in that mantram (not all by any means at first) and gather out of those sounds the formula under which their work must proceed."

²¹ *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p. 998: "This solar meditation is cyclic in nature, the Pitri involved sending out to his 'reflection' rhythmic streams of energy, which streams are recognised by the man concerned as his 'higher impulses,' his dreams and aspirations."

²² Quoted in "Tsong-kha-pa.—Lohans in China," *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 14, Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1985, p. 427; first published in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 3, 1897, p. 409. The bracketed material is Blavatsky's.

²³ See: *Sanskrit Pronunciation: Booklet and Audio*, by Bruce Cameron Hall, at: <http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/ts/hallskt.htm>

²⁴ Sanskrit edition by myself. The existing editions known to me are, I believe, not entirely accurate, due to faulty source materials. See my article listed in note 11 above. Note that I have separated the words according to meaning. When visualized as one hundred syllables, they must be separated slightly differently, as follows:

om va jra sa ttva sa ma ya ma nu pā la ya
va jra sa ttva tve no pa ti ṣṭha ḍṛ ḍho me
bha va su to ṣyo me bha va su po ṣyo me
bha va a nu ra kto me bha va sa rva si
ddhi mme pra ya ccha sa rva ka rma su ca
me ci ttaṃ śre yaḥ ku ru hūm ha ha ha ha
hoḥ bha ga van sa rva ta thā ga ta va jra
mā me mu ũca va jri bha va ma hā sa ma
ya sa ttva āḥ.

²⁵ *Letters on Occult Meditation*, p. 189.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

²⁷ See: "On the Future Schools of Meditation," by David Reigle, *The Esoteric Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 1, Winter 2006, pp. 17-28.

The Mind: Its Nature and Function

Jacqueline Watts

Summary

The mind plays a vital role in the evolution of man. This article draws upon several sources, western and eastern, to examine the structure and functions of the mind and understand its role in the evolutionary process.

Introduction

In *The Mental Body*, A. E. Powell says: “Manas comes from the Sanskrit word *man*, the root of the verb *to think*. It is the Thinker in us, spoken of vaguely in the West as mind. Manas is the immortal individual, the real “I.”¹

Alice Bailey’s *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* states that “man is Spirit or the Self, working through matter or the Not-Self, by means of intelligence or manas.”² Therefore, manas or mind, as previously stated, is incorporated in or works with the spirit, which is the individual man. This supports the statement that “individualization is literally the coming together (out of the darkness of abstraction), of the two factors of Spirit and matter by means of a third factor, the intelligent will.”³ Viewing this in terms of the Trinity, one can say that the First Aspect (Father/Spirit) works its way through the Second Aspect (Son/form) by means of the Third Aspect (Holy Spirit/Intelligent Activity). Manas or mind is this intelligent activity.

Layers and Functions of Mind in Human Beings

In *Kosas: The Structure of the Mind*, the Ananda Marga philosophy explains the mind by dividing it into layers called *kosas*.⁴ Using this model, let us explain human beings in terms of the functioning of the mind. That which we call the physical body is the outermost or sixth layer of the mind according to the Ananda Marga model; but since I know that the mind can exist independently of the form body, I reject this description. Alice Bai-

ley says that the physical body is the vehicle through which the mind functions. Bailey’s description is more acceptable for me. My continuing reference to “layers of the mind” means “layers where the mind functions.” The functioning of the other five layers of the mind determines the condition (health) of the physical body because mind works from within outward.

The fifth layer of the mind, called the *kama*, or astral layer, presides over our relationship with the exterior world. The *kama* layer of the mind is the “conscious mind.” It senses the exterior world and helps our sensory and motor organs to react to it. All of average man’s actions and reactions to stimuli in the physical world are functions of the *kama*/astral layer of the mind.⁵

Progressing further inward, the next layer of mind known as the “subconscious mind” governs the storing of memory. This subconscious mind, which functions in the lower mental body, is equipped to process and recall stored data. The subconscious mind is active during our periods of sleep. It witnesses our dreams. It is also the subconscious mind that experiences pleasure and pain.⁶

The average person functions only on the physical, *kama*/astral, and lower mental layers of the mind. Yet, there exist other layers that are collectively known as the “causal mind” or the “unconscious mind.” This innermost part of the mind is rarely experienced by ordinary beings because the functions of the conscious

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and subconscious mind override the unconscious mind. Thus, the unconscious mind is in a quiescent state for most of us.

The causal mind, which is the mind functioning in the higher mental or causal body, deals with intuitive capabilities. It is also the storage facility for all knowledge (past, present and future). For this reason, it is sometimes called the “collective unconscious.” The information stored in the “collective unconscious,” or causal mind, is not limited to the experiences of one individual, as is the memory data in the subconscious mind. The causal mind houses the data for all places, times, and experiences.

The existence of our causal mind accounts for the omniscience of the monad, a higher aspect of our self.⁷

The Ananda Marga model recognizes three layers of the causal mind. In the first layer, the desire for spiritual realization originates. True discrimination (the ability to know what is permanent and what is transitory) is located in this first layer. The renunciation of and non-attachment to transitory physical objects resides in the second layer of the causal mind. The third and final layer houses the pure “I” feeling.

At this point of awareness, the aspirant knows that only a thin veil separates him from Atman, the pure witnessing consciousness (God).⁸

Evolution in Terms of Functioning of the Mind

We have traced the essence of a human being back to its source (God). Man’s evolution necessitated movement of his spirit essence away from the originating source. This movement is made possible by manas/mind using the physical body through which to grow. Humanity is now at a stage in evolution where, having attained new heights in physicality, the human kingdom is ready to

return to its original spirit nature, thus ushering in a new kingdom of existence. This kingdom is new and improved because the returning spirit, on reaching its destination, will be endowed with the consciousness of divinity. It will be aware of, and prepared to use, the powers of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.

Let us reflect for a minute on the return trip to the source. Manas/active intelligence is the energy propelling this effort to completion. The object of the trip is to become more and more aware of the working of the mind within

the individual; in other words, to expand consciousness. Beginning with the physical body, man stretches to become aware of his connection to the source. Due to the heaviness of the bodies encasing him, he must work hard to move the coarse matter and allow finer energies to come forth and replace them. This process of changing the coarse energies of the physical, astral and mental bodies to fine spiritual energies is called “transmutation” and is brought about by the descent and movement of manas in the

aforementioned layers of the body. As each layer is purified, consciousness is gained on it and man becomes more powerful.

The results of the movement of manas explain why Edgar Cayce considered mind to be the builder in evolution. The movement of manas leads it to blend with other elements. When manas (the Third Aspect of the Trinity) blends with other Aspects of the Trinity, man makes massive leaps forward in evolution. The blending of manas (Third Aspect) with spirit (First Aspect) produces love (Second Aspect) which gives rise to form. The blending of manas with both the First and Second Aspects

Humanity is now at a stage in evolution where, having attained new heights in physicality, the human kingdom is ready to return to its original spirit nature, thus ushering in a new kingdom of existence. This kingdom is new and improved because the returning spirit, on reaching its destination, will be endowed with the consciousness of divinity.

will liberate man from the physical plane existence that we know, and enable him to live free of the body. Man will live wholly as a spirit being, thus completing this stage of his evolution. Alice Bailey explains the synthesizing of the Aspects of the Trinity in terms of the blending of three fires: fire by friction (Third Aspect), solar fire (Second Aspect), and electric fire (First Aspect). The results of this blending are expressed by Sarah Leigh Brown as follows:

Toward the end of this (third) solar system the three fires will blend as one; the human being takes the fifth initiation; matter and spirit are at one and the spirit can slip free of the form at will.⁹

Brown offered a comprehensive but simplified description of evolution in *Cosmic Fire Revealed*. As you read the following description, please note that in humanity manas, or mind, is the vibratory energy or fire which effectuates the adjustment of matter by the spirit. On higher levels, a planetary Logos, who is perfected manas, works through wisdom or *buddhi*, and a solar Logos works through will. In Brown's words:

Evolution is simply the continuing adjustment of the form/matter by the Life/Spirit so that the form may serve ever more adequately as an expression of this Spirit within. Each succeeding life cycle brings the form under greater control and to a capability of higher serving. In the final cycles the form is perfected and the fusion of Spirit and matter is completed, thus achieving the goal of the entire scheme of evolution.

A human being, a planetary Logos, and a solar Logos must each attain this mastery and union. Each unit of consciousness, whether human, planetary, or logoic, has its place within a higher consciousness, evolving within its own vehicle.

Evolution, then, is merely a term expressing the gradual development of the potential of that particular unit, until mastery of heat and light brings about perfected relationships with its kind.¹⁰

Closing Statement

In closing, I affirm the truth of the saying: "As Above, So Below." It is clear to me that the evolution of man is only one small step in a vast evolutionary scheme. Yet, each step follows the same pattern as the step above it. If God is at one end of the evolutionary spiral, Earth's humanity is in the middle, and the lower kingdoms are at the other end. Having evolved using the same pattern and substance as God, man is made in his image and likeness, as the sages have proclaimed throughout the ages. BECAUSE GOD IS, I AM.

¹ Powell, Arthur E. *The Mental Body*. Wheaton, IL, USA: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2000, p. 34.

² Bailey, Alice A. *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*. Lucis Publishing Company, 1925, pp. 397-398.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

⁴ "Kosas: The Structure of the Mind." Articles on The Spiritual Philosophy of Ananda Marga. www.anandamarga.org: 2000.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁹ Brown, Sarah Leigh. *Cosmic Fire Revealed*. Tahlequah, Oklahoma: Sparrow Hawk Press, 200, p. 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

The Beasts of *Revelation*: Glamour and Maya

Zachary Lansdowne

Abstract

The *Revelation of St. John*, sometimes called the *Apocalypse* or *Book of Revelation*, is the last book of the Bible. It has been a mystery ever since it first appeared about 2000 years ago because it is written entirely in symbols. This article uses a psychological approach of interpretation that takes every symbol as representing some aspect of an aspirant who is on the spiritual journey. Using this approach, we show that the two beasts depicted in chapter 13 of *Revelation* can be interpreted as representing the concepts of glamour and *maya*.

Psychological Interpretation

The traditional approaches to interpreting *Revelation* could be characterized as “external-temporal,” because they assume that the various episodes denote events that occur in the external world at definite past or future times. A few commentators, however, have used a psychological approach. For example, Helena P. Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society, made the following point: “The fact is . . . the whole *Revelation*, is simply an allegorical narrative of the Mysteries and initiation therein of a candidate, who is John himself.”¹

Edgar Cayce, the well-known medium, made a similar point:

Why, then, ye ask now, was this written (this vision) in such a manner that is hard to be interpreted, save in the experience of every soul who seeks to know, to walk in, a closer communion with Him? For the visions, the experiences, the names, the churches, the places, the dragons, the cities, all are but emblems of those forces that may war within the individual in its journey through the material, or from the entering into the material manifestation to the enter-

ing into the glory, or the awakening in the spirit.²

When interpreted psychologically, the meaning that emerges from the *Revelation* is similar to the teachings of the Ageless Wisdom, such as found in Theosophy or the writings of Alice A. Bailey. Although Bailey did not give her own analysis of *Revelation*, she spoke highly of its value and accuracy:

In the *New Testament*, John, the beloved disciple, was privileged to gain a cosmic picture and a true prophetic vision which he embodied in the *Apocalypse*, but he is the only one who so achieved and he achieved because he loved so deeply, so wisely and so inclusively.³

Blavatsky and Cayce interpreted only a few symbols in *Revelation*, and neither attempted a verse-by-verse analysis of any chapter. Based on the psychological approach, we give a verse-by-verse analysis of chapter 13 and show that the two awesome beasts depicted in that chapter can be interpreted as the concepts of glamour and *maya* from the Bailey writings.

Glamour

The first verse in chapter 13 of *Revelation* is:

Rev. 13:1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.⁴

About the Author

Zachary Lansdowne, Ph.D., served as President of the Theosophical Society in Boston. His latest book: *The Revelation of Saint John*, which provides a verse-by-verse analysis of the entire *Revelation*, has just been published.

A Commentary on the Book of the Revelation interprets standing on the sand of the sea to be the “detached state of observation.”⁵ This quotation is an interpretation that a study group made based on Cayce’s messages, so it is not from Cayce himself.

Bailey says, “Water is the symbol of the emotional nature,”⁶ and so the beast from the sea is the adversary that the aspirant must eventually face and overcome on the emotional level. *A Commentary on the Book of the Revelation* says that this beast symbolizes “emotional urges for expression of selfish desires.”⁷ Bailey uses the term glamour to denote the emotional adversary: “Glamour, in its turn, veils and hides the truth behind the fogs and mists of feeling and emotional reaction.”⁸

The vital body is an energetic counterpart of the physical body and has been given many other names: “biofield” in alternative medicine; “golden bowl” in the Bible (*Ecclesiastes* 12:6); and “etheric double” or “etheric body” in Theosophy. The vital body is discussed in several Hindu Upanishads, where its Sanskrit name is *pranamayakosha*, and it is called the “meridians” in Chinese medicine.

What are the seven heads of the beast? In yoga philosophy, the seven major chakras are the principal energy centers in the vital body. Each chakra is a center of authority, as Bailey explains: “Each of the seven major centres governs or conditions . . . the area of the physical body in which it is found.”⁹ The seven heads are taken as the seven major chakras, because the numbers match and because a head has the shape of a chakra and is a center of authority.

Horns are symbols of power and dominion, since they are the chief means of attack and defense for animals endowed with them (*Deuteronomy* 33:17). Because desires are the emotional forces that move us into activity, the horns are taken as desires. What does ten mean? Ten patriarchs are mentioned before the Flood (*Genesis* 5), the Egyptians were visited with ten plagues (*Exodus* 7-12), and there are ten commandments (*Exodus* 34:28). The *New Bible Dictionary* concludes: “The number 10, therefore, also signifies completeness.”¹⁰

Accordingly, the ten horns represent the full range of desires. In addition, having horns with crowns means that fulfilling desires is the paramount goal.

Blasphemy is a translation of the Greek word that means slander, verbal abuse, or evil speaking. Although the English word means “contempt for God,” the original Greek word is not necessarily concerned with God.

What does the name of something signify? John L. McKenzie says, “It is a widespread cultural phenomenon that the name is considered to be more than an artificial tag which distinguishes one person from another . . . but it is thought to tell something of the kind of person he is.”¹¹ The Bible often uses a personal name as an indication of the bearer’s nature. For example, 1 *Samuel* 25:25 states: “for as his name is, so is he.” A change in the personal name often indicates a change in the person, such as the change from Abram to Abraham (*Genesis* 17:5). Thus, the name of something could symbolize its nature.

Consequently, *Rev.* 13:1 has the following meaning: *From a position of detachment, the aspirant studies his emotional nature and learns about glamour, which is the aggregate of his emotional reactions. Glamour controls the seven chakras and the full range of desires. It gives paramount importance to fulfilling desires, and is judgmental in nature.*

Rev. 13:2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

The beast in this verse is a composite of the four beasts of *Daniel* 7:4-7, which also come up from the sea: a winged lion, a bear, a four-headed leopard, and a beast with ten horns. *A Commentary on the Book of the Revelation* interprets the leopard as “treacherous,” feet of a bear as “blundering,” and mouth of a lion as “boastful.”¹²

What is the dragon? *Rev.* 12:9 equates the dragon with “Satan.” The original Hebrew word for Satan means “adversary,” which is the translation used in *Numbers* 22:22.

Charles Fillmore interprets Satan to mean “the deceiving phase of mind in man that has fixed ideas in opposition to Truth.”¹³ Accordingly, the dragon is taken as illusion, which is the aggregate of false beliefs accepted by the mind. Bailey says, “*The Problem of Glamour* is found when the mental illusion is intensified by desire. . . . It is illusion on the astral plane.”¹⁴

Thus, *Rev. 13:2* has this meaning: *Glamour is also treacherous, blundering, and boastful. Illusion gives glamour its power of deception, controls the personality via glamour, and makes glamour the authority for judging the worth of whatever is perceived.*

Rev. 13:3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

This verse depicts the false form of redemption offered by feelings. Robert Perry gives a related description: “We feel that the past wounded us and we would desperately like to heal those wounds. But the past is gone. It cannot be changed. What, then, to do? We will bring the past into the present. We will put on a play that re-enacts the past. This time, however, we will change the ending. This time there will be a happy ending. We will be the hero, we will get the love and recognition denied us the first time around. All injustices will be rectified, all wrongs made right, and we will be redeemed.”¹⁵

Bailey says that the “*Solar Plexus Centre* . . . is the outlet—if such a word can be used—of the astral body into the outer world, and the instrument through which emotional energy flows.”¹⁶ In this verse, the wounded head is

taken as the solar-plexus chakra, and the “world” as the emotional, or astral, body.

Consequently, *Rev. 13:3* has this meaning: *The aspirant realizes that his solar-plexus chakra, under the influence of glamour, seems wounded by the past, but can also feel redeemed by the present. The emotional body, following the lead of glamour, desires external circumstances that engender this feeling of redemption.*

Rev. 13:4. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

This verse parodies the praise of God found in such passages as *Exodus 15:11*: “Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods?” Bailey writes, “Many good people today . . . deify their glammers and regard their illusions as their prized and hard won possessions.”¹⁷

Rev. 13:4 has this meaning: *All desires accept without question the false beliefs that lie behind glamour and give it power. All desires act as though glamour were an infallible*

guide, rather than something that can or should be overcome.

Rev. 13:5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

What is the meaning of 42 months? This period of three and a half years could be represented as the following sum: a year and two years and half a year. This period has its origin in *Daniel 7:25*, in which the power of evil is said to last “until a time and times and the dividing of time.” Robert H. Mounce says, “The temporal designation of 42 months . . . became a standard symbol for that limited pe-

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riod of time during which evil would be allowed free rein.”¹⁸ In this verse, the period of 42 months represents the length of time that the aspirant suffers from glamour due to his own decisions.

Rev. 13:5 has this meaning: *Glamour appears attractive because it offers self-aggrandizement and judgments of others. The aspirant will continue to give glamour its power as long as he believes that it is attractive and worth maintaining.*

Rev. 13:6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

Specialness claims that some people in the world are better than others. *A Course in Miracles* asks: “For what is specialness but an attack upon the Will of God?”¹⁹ A tabernacle of God is a dwelling-place of God on earth (*Exodus 25:8-9*). Paul, in *1 Corinthians 3:16*, indicates that human beings are such dwelling-places: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

Rev. 13:6 has this meaning: *Glamour’s boast of privilege is a slanderous attack on God and God’s nature, for all human beings are created equal and are spiritually united.*

Rev. 13:7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Arthur E. Powell writes: “The causal body owes its name to the fact that in it reside the causes which manifest themselves as effects in the lower planes. For it is the experiences of past lives, stored in the casual body, which are the cause of the general attitude taken up towards life.”²⁰ The Bible refers to the casual body as the “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (*2 Corinthians 5:1*). The saints of all religions are known for possessing and expressing wisdom. Within a human being, the causal body has the function of storing and expressing wisdom, and so the saints in this verse are taken as symbolizing the causal body.

The personality of a human being has many parts, namely, the mental, emotional, vital, and physical bodies. In this verse, “all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” refers to these parts.

Thus, *Rev. 13:7* has the following meaning: *Glamour distorts and subverts even the wisdom of the causal body, and it controls all parts of the personality.*

Rev. 13:8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Bailey says, “The elemental of earth . . . is the sum total of the many lives which form the physical body.”²¹ Similarly, *A Commentary on the Book of the Revelation* considers earth to be a symbol of the “physical body.”²² This meaning is justified by *Genesis 2:7*, which states that “the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground.” Accordingly, “all that dwell upon the earth” refers to feelings that are identified with the physical body.

The name of a feeling is taken as its underlying belief, because that belief determines the nature of the feeling. The foundation of the emotional world is the set of all such beliefs.

The plane of divine ideas is a repository for the thoughts of God, and it is sometimes called the “buddhic plane,” “archetypal plane,” “plane of the intuition,” or “world of ideas.”²³ In this verse, the “book of life” is taken as the plane of divine ideas, because a book is also a repository for thoughts.

What is the Lamb? In the Bible, a lamb is sometimes used as a symbol for innocence (*Jeremiah 11:19*, *Luke 10:3*). In this verse, the Lamb is interpreted as the soul, or higher self, of a human being, because the soul is the voice of innocence in our minds. Similarly, Cayce interprets “the Lamb” as “the mind, spiritual” and as “the Christ-Consciousness,” both of which are synonyms for the soul.²⁴

Bailey says “the soul is consciously aware . . . of the thoughts of God” and it is “possible for the soul to act as the intermediary between the plane of divine ideas and the mental plane.”²⁵ This quotation shows that the plane of divine ideas is accessed by the soul, and so it is con-

sistent with the phrase “the book of life of the Lamb.”

Thus, *Rev. 13:8* has the following meaning: *All feelings of identification with the physical body pay homage to glamour, yet such feelings are based on beliefs that are inconsistent with divine ideas. The soul can convey divine ideas to the aspirant, but the aspirant’s beliefs, which are the foundation of his feelings, cause him to ignore or forget about the soul.*

Rev. 13:9. If any man have an ear, let him hear.

In this verse, “hear” is a translation of the Greek word that sometimes means hear with the ear of the mind, or understand, as in *John 8:43, 47* and *1 Corinthians 14:2*.

Rev. 13:9 has this meaning: *If the aspirant has the capacity to understand the following key points, let him do so.*

Rev. 13:10. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

In this verse, killing is interpreted as hatred, as in *1 John 3:15*: “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.” The sword is interpreted to be what *A Course in Miracles* calls the “sword of judgment.”²⁶ Thus, the message of this verse is similar to that of *Luke 6:37*: “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”

Biblical patience is a self-imposed restraint in face of opposition or oppression. For example, God is said to be “slow to anger” (*Nehemiah 9:17; Psalms 103:8*). In the context of self-observation, patience is taken as a self-imposed restraint on all reactions, such as fear or pride, that could interfere with self-inquiry. Paul, in *2 Corinthians 13:5*, International Children’s Bible, encourages this kind of observation: “Look closely at yourselves.”

The “faith of saints” is interpreted as the perception of the divinity within others. Joel S. Goldsmith describes this practice: “When I look at a person, I must not look at his outer

human appearance and love that. I must look through him and realize that in the midst of him God is, and that God is living his life.”²⁷ Bailey describes this practice as the “definite and sustained effort to sense the Presence throughout the Universe in all forms and in all presentations of truth.”²⁸

Thus, *Rev. 13:10* has this meaning: *Whoever is angry with other people will be held captive by guilt. Whoever condemns other people will suffer from self-condemnation. Herein lies the wisdom of being detached from emotions and perceiving the essential divinity within other people.*

Maya

Rev. 13:11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

The beast from the earth is the adversary that the aspirant must eventually face and overcome on the physical level, because the earth is the physical body. Bailey uses the Sanskrit word *maya* to denote this adversary: “*Maya* is predominantly (for the individual) the aggregate of the forces which control his septenary force centres to the exclusion, I would emphasise, of the controlling energy of the soul.”²⁹ The beast’s lamb-like appearance shows that *maya* is a false prophet in the sense of being a counterfeit version of the soul. Its two horns symbolize the two powers of *maya*.

Consequently, *Rev. 13:11* has the following meaning: *Next, the aspirant studies his physical nature and learns about maya, which is the aggregate of his compulsions. Maya is a false prophet with the powers of both glamour and vitality, and it embodies illusion.*

Rev. 13:12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Bailey distinguishes between glamour and *maya*: “In the case of glamour, the forces of a man’s nature are seated in the solar plexus. In the case of *maya*, they are seated in the sacral centre. Glamour is subtle and emotional.

Maya is tangible and etheric.”³⁰ Here, etheric is a synonym for the vital body.

Rev. 13:12 has this meaning: *More specifically, maya has glamour’s power of deception as well as the vital energy that causes the physical body and all self-images that are identified with that body to seek the false form of redemption offered by glamour.*

Rev. 13:13. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

Bailey refers to “the plane of mind, of which the symbol is fire.”³¹ In this verse, “heaven” is taken as the plane of mind, and so “fire” represents thoughts. Bailey says that maya gives energy to mental illusion: “*Maya* is vital in character and is a quality of force. It is essentially the energy of the human being as it swings into activity through the subjective influence of the mental illusion or astral glamour or of both in combination.”³²

Thus, *Rev. 13:13* has this meaning: *Maya has the power of manifestation, because it can make thoughts come down from the mind and appear outwardly as physical behavior.*

Rev. 13:14. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

Bailey notes the close relationship between maya and identification with the physical body: “The average man . . . believes himself to be the form, the medium through which he attempts to express his desires and ideas. This complete identification with the transient creation and with the outer appearance is maya.”³³

In this verse, an image of the beast is a fantasy of wish-fulfillment. According to *Proverbs* 6:16-18, one of the “six things doth the LORD hate” is “An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations.” *A Course in Miracles* says, “There is no fantasy that does not contain the dream of retribution for the past.”³⁴

Thus, *Rev. 13:14* has the following meaning: *Maya reinforces feelings of identification with the physical body by fulfilling desires fostered by glamour. Maya encourages fantasies of using the physical body for self-glorification. Each of these fantasies contains a dream of retribution for the past.*

Six represents illusion on the mental level. Sixty (6 times 10) represents glamour... Similarly, six hundred (6 times 10 times 10) represents maya... Accordingly, 666 symbolizes the Great Illusion—the composite of illusion, glamour and maya.

Rev. 13:15. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

Bailey says, “Potencies produce precipitation.”³⁵ Thus, a strongly felt fantasy precipitates a glamour from the emotional body down to the vital body, which means that it is transformed into a compul-

sion. The reference to killing in this verse is interpreted as a form of hatred, which is also the interpretation made in *Rev. 13:10*.

Rev. 13:15 has this meaning: *Maya gives vital energy to any strongly felt fantasy, resulting in an impulse to act out that fantasy and to resent anything that blocks its fulfillment.*

Rev. 13:16. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

The “right hand” is a symbol of strength, as in *Exodus* 15:6: “Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.” The “forehead” is a symbol of mind or consciousness, as in *Jeremiah* 3:3: “thou hadst a whore’s forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.”

Rev. 13:16 has this meaning: Maya compels all parts of the physical body—whether minor or great, healthy or sick, voluntary or involuntary—to use their strength and consciousness to act out strongly felt fantasies.

Conclusions

Rev. 13:17. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

In ancient times it was widely believed that numbers are the essential elements of all things. For example, this doctrine can be found in Plato's *Timaeus* (53b) and in the *Wisdom of Solomon* (11:20). Bailey says, "The mathematics which underlie the construction of a bridge . . . are the bridge itself, reduced to its essential terms."³⁶ Here, the mathematics refers to the numbers that characterize the architectural pattern, or blueprint, of the bridge. In this verse, the "number" of glamour is taken as illusion, because illusion underlies the construction of glamour and is the essence of glamour.

Rev. 13:17 has this meaning: The aspirant would not value external things unless he were affected by maya, or glamour, or illusion.

Rev. 13:18. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Six is a numerical symbol of illusion, which can be arrived at in two ways. First, the dragon in *Rev. 12:3* symbolizes illusion and has 24 features: 7 heads, 10 horns, and 7 crowns. According to ancient Greek numerology, the digits of a decimal number can be added together to obtain an equivalent number.³⁷ Thus, as Bailey points out, "the number 24 . . . in its turn equals 6."³⁸ Second, William E. Vine says, "six . . . sometimes suggests incompleteness, in comparison with the perfect number seven."³⁹ For examples, see *Job 5:19* and *Proverbs 6:16*.

The number in this verse can be written as the sum of the three numbers obtained from its decimal expansion: "Six hundred and sixty and six" (American Standard Version). Here,

six represents illusion on the mental level. Sixty (6 times 10) represents glamour, which is the product of illusion and the desire-generating process of the emotional body, because ten signifies completion of a process. Similarly, six hundred (6 times 10 times 10) represents maya, which is the product of illusion, the desire-generating process of the emotional body, and the energizing process of the vital body. Bailey speaks of "the Great Illusion, in its three forms of illusion, glamour and maya."⁴⁰ Accordingly, 666 symbolizes the Great Illusion—the composite of illusion, glamour and maya.

This verse describes a principle of wisdom and encourages us to understand it. Such understanding might include Bailey's point: "A deep distrust of one's reactions to life and circumstance, when such reactions awaken and call forth *criticism, separateness* or *pride*, is of value."⁴¹ Such understanding might also include Krishnamurti's point: "Ignorance of the ways of the self leads to illusion; and once caught in the net of illusion, it is extremely hard to break through it. It is difficult to recognize an illusion, for, having created it, the mind cannot be aware of it."⁴²

Consequently, *Rev. 13:18* has the following meaning: *Here is a key principle of wisdom: illusion operates throughout the personality, pervading the mental body as false beliefs, the emotional body as glamour, and the vital body as maya. Understanding this principle implies deeply distrusting all reactions of the personality to life and circumstance, because illusion cannot even be recognized as illusion without the illumination of the soul.*

¹ H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, vol. II (1877; reprint; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1976), p. 351.

² J. Van Auken, *Edgar Cayce on the Revelation* (Virginia Beach, VA: A.R.E. Press, 2000), pp. 158-159.

³ A. A. Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem* (1950; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company), p. 137.

⁴ All Biblical verses come from the King James Version (KJV) unless stated otherwise.

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- ⁵ *A Commentary on the Book of the Revelation Based on a Study of Twenty-Four Psychic Discourses by Edgar Cayce* (1945; reprint; Virginia Beach, VA: A.R.E. Press, 1969), p. 163.
- ⁶ A. A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (1934; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), p. 250.
- ⁷ *A Commentary on the Book of the Revelation Based on a Study of Twenty-Four Psychic Discourses by Edgar Cayce*, p. 163.
- ⁸ Bailey, *Glamour*, p. 241.
- ⁹ A. A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (1953; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1978), p. 194.
- ¹⁰ *New Bible Dictionary* (third edition; Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1996), p. 834.
- ¹¹ J. L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (1965; reprint; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), p. 603.
- ¹² *A Commentary on the Book of the Revelation Based on a Study of Twenty-Four Psychic Discourses by Edgar Cayce*, p. 163.
- ¹³ C. Fillmore, *The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* (1931; reprint; Unity Village, MO: Unity School of Christianity, 1995), p. 575.
- ¹⁴ Bailey, *Glamour*, p. 21.
- ¹⁵ R. Perry, *Relationships as a Spiritual Journey* (West Sedona, AZ: The Circle of Atonement, 1997), p. 40.
- ¹⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, pp. 169-170.
- ¹⁷ Bailey, *Glamour*, p. 45.
- ¹⁸ R. H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (revised; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), p. 215.
- ¹⁹ *A Course in Miracles* (second edition; Glen Ellen, CA: Foundation for Inner Peace, 1992), vol. I, p. 501.
- ²⁰ A. E. Powell, *The Causal Body and the Ego* (1928; reprint; Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1978), p. 89.
- ²¹ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, p. 215.
- ²² *A Commentary on the Book of the Revelation Based on a Study of Twenty-Four Psychic Discourses by Edgar Cayce*, p. 141.
- ²³ I. K. Taimni, *Self-Culture* (1945; reprint; Adyar, Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1976), pp. 7-9; Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, pp. 456-458.
- ²⁴ Van Auken, *Edgar Cayce on the Revelation*, p. 196.
- ²⁵ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, pp. 456-457.
- ²⁶ *A Course in Miracles*, vol. I, p. 664.
- ²⁷ J. S. Goldsmith, *The Gift of Love* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 16.
- ²⁸ Bailey, *Glamour*, p. 180.
- ²⁹ Bailey, *Glamour*, p. 148.
- ³⁰ Bailey, *Glamour*, p. 149.
- ³¹ A. A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (1960; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), p. 82.
- ³² Bailey, *Glamour*, p. 26.
- ³³ Bailey, *Glamour*, p. 242.
- ³⁴ *A Course in Miracles*, vol. I, p. 348.
- ³⁵ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, p. 551.
- ³⁶ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, pp. 455-456.
- ³⁷ M. P. Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* (1928; reprint; Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 1975), p. LXIX.
- ³⁸ Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 79.
- ³⁹ W. E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985), p. 579.
- ⁴⁰ Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 183.
- ⁴¹ Bailey, *Glamour*, p. 82.
- ⁴² J. Krishnamurti, *Commentaries on Living, First Series* (1956; reprint; Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1970), p. 82.

Discipleship and Disillusionment

John Nash

Summary

A student may engage in esoteric work for many years, consistently demonstrating commitment, selflessness and detachment, only to be confronted by the devastating sense that the work no longer has meaning and value. Plunged into deep depression, guilt, sense of failure—even anger—the student desperately seeks answers, guidance and new direction.

This article explores what may be a more common situation than we have supposed. It seeks to understand the causes of such crises and develop ways to deal with them. Among the possible causes is crystallization of the forms through which the esoteric work has been expressed. Perhaps the disciple is being guided to new areas of work. The article is addressed both to disciples who may be experiencing crises and to counselors to whom they may turn for help. Both must avoid condemnation and blame and instead show compassion, patience and understanding. The hope and expectation is that the individual will emerge from the crisis with new wisdom and once again will become a productive disciple.

The Ideal and Reality

The ideal portrayed by esoteric schools and eagerly embraced by every new student is someone who maintains a rhythm of spiritual discipline, including daily meditation; reads and re-reads the literature of the particular esoteric system, discovering new meaning each time; and selflessly devotes his or her life to group service of steadily increasing responsibility. With superb detachment and humility, the disciple labors on cheerfully through every challenge. No matter how much the individual shuns the spotlight and downplays the significance of his or her work, that individual shines as a role model for co-workers at every stage of development. The disciple is progressing to

ever higher levels of consciousness, in communion with and encouraging countless others sensitive to the same vibration. Most of us know, or at least have heard of, individuals who express that worthy ideal. The world is truly blessed by their lives.

We probably also know people who, after years of dedicated work, suddenly withdraw into the shadows. Unable to understand what has happened, plunged into deep depression, wracked by guilt, and sometimes consumed by anger, these individuals desperately seek answers and guidance. Sadly, they often have nowhere to turn. Perhaps, to a greater or lesser degree, we ourselves are experiencing such a crisis but are reluctant to confide in friends or colleagues because of shame, or because we fear that to reveal our plight would undermine their commitment. Or perhaps we are still in a state of denial, knowing in our hearts that something is seriously wrong but refusing to acknowledge it.

Individuals who have been involved in esoteric work for many years, particularly those engaged in discipleship training, face many challenges, external and internal. The external challenges may be daunting, but in most cases they are easy to understand. They may even enhance the disciple's resolve to climb the highest mountain and conquer the fiercest enemy. The internal ones, by contrast, are more subtle and have the potential to undermine the whole basis of the work. The Spanish mystic John of the Cross described periods of aridity

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in his spiritual life, giving them the picturesque name “dark nights of the soul.”¹ Those dark nights, sometimes stretching out into dark winters, were periods when he was filled with doubts about the validity of the path and about his own worthiness and commitment. Every student is warned to expect such periods of aridity and is reminded that the darkest night is always followed by day, and the coldest winter by spring. Students who have been on the path for a number of years have usually weathered many such periods. They are regarded as tests of the person’s moral fiber and commitment.

We do not know how severe the crises were that John of the Cross faced. Crises vary in intensity, and good judgment must obviously be used to avoid overreaction. But the types addressed in this article are serious.

They are situations in which individuals recognize that their paths have become meaningless; long-studied teachings have lost their power; meditation has become difficult or impossible; and customary service activities are resented or neglected altogether. The experience is not just a phase in the normal ebb and flow of psychological health; it has all the characteristics of permanency. It is accompanied by profound disillusionment with the very essence of the esoteric principles to which the individual had dedicated his or her life. The state of depression may be as deep-seated as the enthusiasm and fulfillment that marked earlier stages on the path.

Sense of Failure

Those who have been in discipleship training may also experience considerable guilt.

Manuals of discipleship training, especially those communicated by the masters, stress the urgency of the work to be undertaken and the dire need for trained workers. The notion that “every pair of hands counts” puts considerable pressure on people sensitive and responsive to the need. Few disciples today work alone. Emphasis has shifted in recent decades to group service, and the individual is likely to feel considerable guilt about letting down the team. Whether or not dropouts are criticized by co-workers, they come under intense self-criticism.

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For disciples knowledgeable of the Planetary Hierarchy and who have responded to its call, guilt will stem from a perceived inability to contribute to the ashram’s work and a corresponding betrayal of the master’s trust. After all, when chelas are admitted to the ashram, the master invests much energy in them and takes appreciable risk, exposing the ashram to the possibility that the newcomers might “harm the group... or be antagonistic to the Master’s vibration.”²

Alternatively, the guilt may stem from a sense of having failed to meet the schedule offered, implied or demanded by the particular esoteric system. We sometimes read that spiritual opportunities are offered once in a lifetime, and that missed opportunities are lost forever. The schedule may be for the expansion or intensification of service or for the expansion of consciousness, including the attainment of specified milestones. The occult literature identifies series of initiations: graded expansions of consciousness, available to peo-

ple in ashramic service—or, at least in the past, available to those pursuing their own spiritual development. The goal in humanity's present stage of development, albeit in the far distant future for most of us, is attainment of master- or adeptship:

[C]oncentrated and persistent pursuit of the ideal of perfection quickens the processes of growth. If continued with complete steadfastness, such a pursuit hastens the achievement of adeptship or perfection through successive initiations.³

But no matter where we ourselves might be now, the point is often made that humanity is in a period of history when accelerated development is possible and initiations can be attained more rapidly than would ordinarily be possible. The literature, or at least our reading of it, may suggest that any self-respecting person should be on a fast track and be checking off initiations, perhaps even more than one in a given lifetime—in this lifetime.

Pitfalls in Esoteric Work

Esoteric organizations have not infrequently been criticized for the emphasis placed on initiation and for the creation of an environment in which members competed with one another in their claims—valid or more likely invalid—to have “taken” prestigious initiations. It is sad that such abuses may have occurred. But let us assume that the disciple-in-crisis has moved beyond the propensity for such inappropriate attitudes and behavior. The attainment of an initiation is understood to be a matter of the utmost confidentiality to be discussed only with a trusted spiritual adviser, or with the master himself in one of those rare, life-changing encounters. Any suggestion of competitiveness is unthinkable; the responsible disciple does not compare him- or herself with others whose karma and dharma are unknown. But what about the person's own expectations?

We are told that the first three initiations are marked by definite memories of a ritual in the presence of the officiating hierophant. These initiations “have always to be taken when in a physical body and upon the physical plane, thus demonstrating initiate consciousness through both mind and brain.”⁴ We also un-

derstand that “in a group of disciples... the large majority have already taken the first initiation [and] many, many lives can elapse between the first initiation and the second—long, long interludes of silent and almost unapparent growth.”⁵

So perhaps the disciple attained the first initiation in a previous life; but what about the second, third, and later ones? Is the present lifetime one of “unapparent growth” or no growth at all? Not being aware of an initiation would suggest that the individual did not attain one. At a time when everyone else is perceived to be advancing steadily on the initiatory path, perhaps the disciple falls into that sorry category of well-intentioned but deluded individuals with unrealistic expectations:

Many people are regarded as initiates who are only endeavoring to be initiate. They are not, however, real initiates. They are those well meaning people whose mental understanding outruns the power of their personalities to practice. They ... are working towards the goal. They are mentally in touch with the ideal and with the Plan. They are aware of forces and energies utterly unknown to the majority. Their only mistake is in the realm of time, for they affirm prematurely that which some day they will be.⁶

Or perhaps everything the disciple has been taught about the initiatory path is untrue. The prospect that the teachings studied for so long might be false could be even more threatening than personal failure. The individual probably outgrew the religious beliefs of his or her early life. The day came when it became clear that those beliefs, while not necessarily false, were simplistic, comprising a partial view of a much larger truth. The abandonment of religious faith may have provoked a crisis not unlike the kind currently under discussion.⁷ But since then the disciple discovered the larger truth. He or she felt privileged and blessed to have found the way into a select group entrusted with teachings of a higher order. If these teachings cannot be relied upon, where else is there to go? Such a perception can evoke not just guilt but anger, a sense of betrayal.

Recuperation

Clearly, disciples who experience crises of disillusionment may simply be learning much-needed lessons in overcoming glamour, illusion and spiritual ambition. But this does not always seem to be the case. Numerous cases indicate that even people who have been conscious of, and careful to avoid, the pitfalls—disciples who have devoted years to selfless, detached esoteric work—can experience devastating crises. Indeed the numbers seem to be growing.

Hopefully the disciple will summon up the courage to confide in a trusted co-worker or spiritual counselor. Conventional psychics are unlikely to be of help because the disciple has moved in consciousness beyond the personality levels to which psychics have access. But a good counselor will have intuitive ability of a higher order and may be able to discern the underlying causes and suggest possible solutions. The counselor must handle the situation in a nonjudgmental and compassionate manner. At a time when the individual is already wracked by deep depression, disillusionment and guilt, the last thing he or she needs to be told is that the crisis was brought on by personal failure, faulty attitudes or unrealistic expectations.⁸ Nor should the individual be told to “snap out of it,” or “pull yourself together!”

The support of loved ones—and in the present context that primarily means co-workers—is urgently needed. Co-workers can play an important role in the individual’s recovery and rehabilitation. It is natural that they will feel the loss of a valued colleague. However they must set aside feelings of having been abandoned or betrayed. Co-workers who are fortunate enough to not be experiencing a crisis, need to be supportive of the one who is, however little they may understand why it has happened.

The disciple-in-crisis must also be nonjudgmental and compassionate toward him- or herself. Where there is some measure of “guilt,” there must be self-forgiveness. Self-criticism must be avoided or deferred until later. Typically, the individual does not understand what is going on any more than co-workers do. He

or she needs rest, time to recuperate, and an opportunity to regain a sense of purpose and self-worth.

Rest does not necessarily mean idleness, which might simply result in brooding. Physical activity may be appropriate, in which the energy previously put into esoteric work can be grounded, while the mind is allowed to relax and become receptive to soul impressions. And here we assume that the soul will act as a clearing house for impressions from senior disciples or other guides to whom supervision of the individual’s work may have been entrusted. To rest may be as valid a stage in the disciple’s development as the long period of active work that has come to an end. While everything currently looks gloomy, the sky may soon clear and the disciple will see the present situation in its proper light.

With or without outside help, the individual may emerge from depression, shake off the dust, and return to the meditation practices, study, and service activities undertaken in the past. On the other hand the crisis may be a sign that the work is no longer necessary or appropriate. It is important that the disciple and/or counselor set aside all expectations of what the final outcome may be—except the expectation and the affirmation that things will work out for the best.

Meditation

Meditation can take many forms, not necessarily requiring regular daily sessions. In the past it may have been beneficial, even essential, for the person to use a particular form of scripted meditation and commit to a daily rhythm. But the time may have come when that form of meditation is no longer useful or effective. Quiet reflection, stillness and silence may be more beneficial for a while. To discontinue long-used meditation practices is not to deny that they ever had purpose or value. Meditation exercises are important not so much in themselves as in the degree to which they help open up conscious links between the personality and higher aspects of our being. Meditation also serves to place us in right relationship to the world and the lives around us.

Perhaps the disciple-in-crisis is being led to another form of meditation or to some other way to communicate with the higher self. Music, art, dance, manual labor, walking in the woods, standing by the seashore, or something else may take its place, enabling the individual to advance in ways that would otherwise have been impossible. In any event, for someone who has meditated for years, the links may already be open and are unlikely to be shut down. The soul may be able to send energy and impressions to the brain at any time during the day or night.

Service

In the overall scheme of things, one person's contribution to the "ashram's work," for a period of weeks, months or even years, may or may not be significant. The ability to serve varies over time according to opportunity as well as to the disciple's state of consciousness. There may be times when we cannot serve as we would like to. But then again it is not for us to judge the impact or significance of what we have

done in the past or can do now. Judgments of that nature must be left those whose vision is greater than our own. Furthermore, "service" covers a wide range of activities. How often have we heard students say something like: "I don't have time for service because I'm a single parent caring for four children and a mother with Alzheimer's." It is unlikely that an individual whose life has been dedicated to esoteric work will stop serving in any way. The disciple will find new ways to serve, shifting, for instance, from working in a soup kitchen to spending time with a lonely relative or with nursing-home residents. Even small acts of service may meet a critical need at the time they are provided.

Importantly, none of us was ever expected to implement Hierarchical Purpose single-handedly. Certainly, we would not want to shirk our responsibilities; but we do not work alone, and many tasks can be undertaken later or done by others. Even the most-valued player on a team can take time out or be sidelined by sickness or injury. Perhaps, after a period of rest, the disciple will return and pick up where he or she left off, with renewed strength—even with greater wisdom and un-

derstanding of the work. On the other hand, the person may never go back to the same work; and that may be perfectly appropriate too. One way or another, essential tasks will get done.

We have only a limited grasp of Hierarchical work; even the most advanced of us only works on the fringe of an ashram. To believe that we understand the master's intent, even as it might relate to ourselves, betrays dangerous arrogance.

What is assumed to be the ashram's mission

may in fact be only a small part of the total effort, or it might now have a lower priority than hitherto. The disciple may have been guided to stop what he or she was doing in order to be groomed for tasks more closely aligned with future ashramic purpose. Perhaps the individual is simply being redirected to some other kind of work in order to gain new experience.

Teachings

Esoteric teachings are dispensed to serve the needs of particular groups of people at particular points in time. A body of teachings is tailored to the prevailing concerns, beliefs, phi-

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osophical mindset, scientific knowledge, and opportunities. Truths are explained in ways that can be comprehended and acted upon then and there. Also, over time, certain truths may be emphasized and others played down. In a dynamic world environment, such as the early 21st century, an explanation or emphasis that was appropriate 50 years ago may be less appropriate today—and might be quite inappropriate in another 50 years. Alternative bodies of teachings may even be given concurrently, each with its own emphasis, purpose, and intended audience. Each body of teachings represents a portion—possibly a very small portion—of that universal, eternal Truth whose content and significance only a Logos can grasp.

If teachings studied for many years become sterile or meaningless, that may be a sign that the individual needs to explore some other area of knowledge. Perhaps he or she has learned as much as is possible from those teachings at the present stage of development. Now a different perspective may be appropriate, a different approach to truth. No master, like the Master Morya, who dictated the *Agni Yoga* books, or the Master Djwhal Khul who dictated the books of Alice Bailey, would ever consent to his teachings becoming dogma, which people question at their peril.⁹ Rather, the masters of wisdom understand our questioning, our need from time to time to stand back, reflect on what has been learned, or explore contrasting teachings. Perhaps for the next several months or years the individual should study Buddhism, Taoism, Sufism, Huna, Jewish mysticism, academic philosophy, the humanities, mathematics, medicine, finance, the natural environment, or world poverty. The ashram may urgently need an expert in one of those fields and does not have one.

At some time in the future the student may return to the original teachings with new perspectives, along with new ability to put them to good use. Esoteric knowledge is of questionable value unless it can be expressed in service. Alternatively, perhaps the student is being led permanently—to the extent that we can use that term—to a more comprehensive body of teachings.

The Way Forward

Some factors that can provoke spiritual crises of the type under consideration have already been mentioned. Another factor may be declining health or adverse external circumstances. Yet another may be the increasing influence of the disciple's soul ray, requiring a shift toward esoteric work more closely related to that ray. Crises often are just the physical manifestation of events taking place at higher levels of our being.

By why could the process not have been more gradual and orderly? Why did it have to be so unexpected and traumatic? One possible answer is that the disciple's very commitment to the esoteric work may have stifled early warning signs that would otherwise have been apparent. The forms through which the work was expressed may have become crystallized to the point where, lacking flexibility, they had to be destroyed to allow the indwelling life to expand and grow.

Whatever the reasons, the advice to the individual should be to relax, live in the moment, and await soul guidance. During the period of reflection and recuperation, the individual should avoid specific expectations. It is just as inappropriate to say: "I am giving myself three months off and then will return to the work of the last 20 years," as to say: "Under no circumstances will I ever return to it." The future must be a clean slate on which the soul can write whatever it wants to tell us. Otherwise the underlying—and largely unconscious—processes of reflection and regeneration cannot take place.

Disciples-in-crisis may feel moved to make dramatic statements of the end of an era by disposing of books or artifacts linked to the esoteric system to which they were committed. They may even be tempted to make far-reaching—and potentially regrettable—lifestyle changes. Precipitous actions of that kind may have short-term therapeutic value, but caution is a better strategy. Better to put the books in storage than to discard irreplaceable reference sources. Better to take temporary leave from a teacher, service group, or

institution than to burn bridges which would be hard to rebuild. Better to not quit one's job or leave home. Longer-term decisions can be made later.

On the other hand, it may be wise for the disciple to take a leave of absence from an esoteric institution whose teachings now seem meaningless or through which he or she now feels unable to serve. Continued active involvement is likely to be unproductive and could exacerbate feelings of failure, guilt or resentment. Trying to serve under those circumstances might do more harm than good. Particular types of service may have been recommended by teachers or encouraged by the institution; but there may be alternatives that do not carry as much psychological baggage.

Whatever the circumstances, service should never be undertaken with the objective of spiritual growth; it must never be made into a tool of self-interest. To quote Jiddu Krishnamurti: "[Y]ou must give yourself to the service of the world because you love it, and cannot help giving yourself to it."¹⁰

The chief executive officer of a multinational corporation once said that an enterprise should not view profit as its ultimate goal. If the enterprise employs motivated employees to produce and sell high-quality, useful products to satisfied customers, profits will come naturally and automatically. Similarly, spiritual progress should never be allowed to become a goal; it must be understood as a by-product of everything else we do. Whether or not we have correctly understood the notion of an initiatory path, or indeed whether or not it has been correctly taught, where we might be on that path is not our concern. At the end of the present lifetime we may find out that we have attained an initiation, but meanwhile the matter should be of no interest to us.

We should never become attached to a particular esoteric system—still less should we confuse it with the Plan, Purpose or Divine Will. Reality is bigger than any system of teachings, any esoteric school, and any understanding we or anyone else might have of ultimate human purpose. Even to reject an esoteric path entirely does not mean the end of spiritual

growth; instead it may mean the beginning of far greater and more rapid growth.

The disciple-in-crisis must strive to release any feelings of regret or anger. The esoteric path which he or she previously followed was not wrong; it may simply not be the right one for the next few years. The very worst that can happen—a very unlikely scenario—is that the individual will make no further progress in this lifetime. Even then, in a future life the soul would pick up where it left off. Writing from her perspective in the western esoteric tradition, Dion Fortune reminded us: "[W]hat is acquired is never lost... In each life we quickly recapitulate the progress we have made... when the tomorrow of a new incarnation dawns."¹¹

Having said that, it will be incumbent on the individual, sooner or later, to evaluate his or her life and to decide what use is to be made of the available opportunities. It is one thing to conclude that an esoteric system, a set of teachings, or particular types of service have become inappropriate; it is quite another to sink into permanent idleness, indifferent to the many needs that press on us from every side. A spiritual crisis can be devastating; but at some point an individual must decide whether he or she wants to play the role of the eternal victim or to step forward with added wisdom onto a new path. Someone trained in discipleship work who declines to use that training to make the world a better place is a tragic loss to all concerned.

The most likely outcome is that, after a period of recuperation, reflection and searching, the disciple will be led to an area of worthwhile esoteric work which will afford opportunities to apply acquired skills, knowledge and wisdom to the implementation of Hierarchical Purpose. Under soul guidance, appropriate forms of meditation, study and service will emerge. The new endeavors may turn out to be more successful and useful than anything the disciple was engaged in before the crisis.

New Realism

The feeling of disappointment and failure, when a phase of life comes to an end, may

be as great as the time, energy and enthusiasm previously invested in it. This is as true of the collapse of esoteric work as it is of a business failure, an election defeat, or a divorce. But life is a *process*, and all crises are best handled by reflecting on the opportunities now provided rather than on what may have been lost or what the final outcome may be. Socrates was condemned by the people of Athens and forced to take his life; Winston Churchill was voted out of office after leading his nation to victory in World War II; Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by a fellow Hindu; Jesus was crucified after preaching love, healing and peace. These were tragic endings, but the lives of those individuals still changed the world. Other people lived, served, and grew in wisdom only to spend their last years in poverty, loneliness, shame, or disdain by the societies they served. In some cases their contribution was eventually recognized, and their place in history assured. But the contributions of countless individuals were never—and never will be—acknowledged.

We should never live and work in expectation of recognition or even in the hope that we shall look back on our lives—at least while still in personality embodiment—with satisfaction. Instead, we should rejoice in the opportunity to live, work, experience and grow. Whether that opportunity lasts a lifetime or only for a few years, the joy should be the same. It does not matter whether the opportunity comes early or late in life, or how long it lasts. If glorious martyrdom is the goal, we may discover that our “crucifixion” is not on a cross but in prison, a homeless shelter, or a psychiatric facility. An advantage of these latter is that we may still be able to do useful work while we are there. As the Existentialists were fond of pointing out, no matter how dire the circumstances, we still make choices.¹²

Discipleship work is an opportunity and a privilege. And it is something that we only partially understand. We are guided to particular types of work, and later we may be guided elsewhere. A necessary part of the process is the surrender of expectations and will to higher purpose. This is the essence of spiritual indifference. We agree to serve and be used—or

not used—as higher powers may see fit. It is not for us to protest that our capabilities are not being fully utilized, or are no longer being utilized. Nor is it our place to insist that we only undertake particular types of work. The masters will not pander to our petty ambitions or conceits.

We embark upon esoteric work in the hope that we can contribute in some small way to the greater good. Yes, we make a commitment to ourselves, to humanity, and to the Planetary Hierarchy; and that commitment is not to be taken lightly. But we must be flexible and allow for our commitment to be expressed not just in what we may be doing now, or what we were doing in the past, but in some completely new direction.

We learn from our experiences, and we carry forward the fruits of that experience to endeavors later in this life and in future ones. Therein lies the basis of our self-worth that may be shaken by a crisis but can never be completely destroyed.

¹ John of the Cross. *Dark Night of the Soul*. Image Books, 1959, p. 156.

² Alice A. Bailey. *Letters on Occult Meditation*. Lucis, 1922, pp. 270-271.

³ Geoffrey Hodson. *The Call to the Heights*. Theosophical Publishing House, 1975, p. 14. Adeptship is the fifth major initiation. The five initiations are compared, in Christian occultism, to the birth, baptism, transfiguration, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

⁴ Alice A. Bailey. *Discipleship in the New Age*, I. Lucis, 1944 p. 95.

⁵ Alice A. Bailey. *Discipleship in the New Age*, I. Lucis, 1944 p. 94.

⁶ Alice A. Bailey. *Esoteric Psychology*, II. Lucis, 1942, p. 13.

⁷ Consider for example Elie Wiesel’s reaction to witnessing the atrocities of a Nazi death camp: “I was the accuser, God was the accused. My eyes had opened and I was alone, terribly alone in a world without God, without man. Without Love or Mercy. I was nothing but ashes now, but I felt myself to be stronger than the Almighty to whom my life had been bound for so long.” *Night*. Hill and Wang, 1972/2006, p. 68.

Wiesel survived the holocaust and went on to earn the Nobel Peace Prize.

- ⁸ Have we not all heard of cancer patients who have been told that they brought the condition upon themselves by sin, or at least by negative thinking?
- ⁹ See the Foreword to the books of Alice A. Bailey, Lucis Publishing Company.
- ¹⁰ Jiddu Krishnamurti. *At the Feet of the Master*. Theosophical Publishing House, 1908, p. 16.
- ¹¹ Dion Fortune. *The Training and Work of an Initiate*. Aquarian Press, 1930, p. 31.
- ¹² For example, Jean Paul Sartre criticized fellow French people who retreated into inaction during the Nazi occupation, claiming impotence in the face of overwhelming odds.

Intelligent Design: An Esoteric Perspective

William Meader

Introduction

Did the universe appear through random events, or is it the product of a vast intelligence? This question has triggered debate among scholars, philosophers and theologians for countless centuries. In contemporary society, science and religion seem to hold these opposite perspectives, and the debate between them rages on. Religion has long viewed the universe as the product of God's creative work, and therefore is of intelligent design. Science, on the other hand, contends that the universe (and life) came into existence through natural laws and evolutionary processes. In the eyes of many scientists, divine intelligence is not needed to explain the complexities of creation. Though these two perspectives may appear irreconcilable, Esotericism sees them both as partial expressions of truth. From this perspective, there is an overarching intelligence that gives design to creation. And, at the same time, the laws of nature are responsible for that design. This is because the laws of nature are an expression of God's intelligence. It is not an intelligence that is separate from the design, but is the design itself and the natural laws that govern it.

Before examining this subject in depth, it should be stated that my intention is not to address the political and educational dispute regarding intelligent design. In the United States, this is an issue that is currently at the forefront of national debate. Sadly, the polarized positions held by both sides seem to be arguing without recognizing the full scope of intelligence. Too often we interpret intelligence through a lens that is biased by our own mental experiences. Stated differently, our understanding of intelligence (either superhuman or subhuman) is prejudiced by our experience with it. Some researchers are coming to the realization that psychometric tests may only be measuring a narrow band of intelli-

gence. The yardstick of measure is too often determined by the prevailing scientific point of view. As such, the current political debate on this subject seems woefully ill-informed.

The One Life

To understand this subject, there is a foundational idea that must be initially grasped. It is a tenet stating that, in the ultimate sense, all things are really One Thing. Sometimes called the Primary Principle, this notion suggests that there is a single universal life force that permeates all of creation. This singularity of life has been called God, Brahman or Allah, to name just a few titles given it by various cultures. From the esoteric perspective, this One Life exists within the subjective and objective (inner and outer) worlds, and its most external expression is the physical universe we see and know. When this principle is fully understood, it becomes apparent that all things are part of its expression. For example, kingdoms in nature, (such as the animal and plant domains) are merely the demonstration of differing categories of this intelligence that have taken form.

If the universe is One Life in outer expression, then its intelligence must underlie everything contained within it. Nothing can escape its all encompassing embrace. Yet due to our limited perception, we still tend to see the Creator and creation as distinct and separate, and that one

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is the cause of the other. As such, creation is normally viewed as an effect of divine intelligence. In our ordinary perception, there appears to be a separation between creation and the intelligence that gave it birth. Yet this is an illusion. Intelligence is not separate from the forms it has produced. It may outwardly seem so, but this is due to our limited capacity to see beyond form and appearance. The intelligence that created the universe is not remote from creation, but is woven into the fabric of creation. For example, the instinctual mind of an animal is not separate from God's creative intelligence. Instead, it is a category of God's intelligence outwardly expressed in animal form.

Admittedly, at first glance this idea may be difficult to grasp. It is particularly challenging for people raised within a Western culture. Historically, the West has been conditioned by the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). In each of these religions, the separation of God from creation has been emphasized. Indeed, these theologies are rooted in this concept. The belief in original sin, as well as repentance and redemption, are central to these religions. They have emerged because of this assumption of separation. Given this, it is not surprising that some scholars have referred these religions as theologies of exile. Esotericism, and most Eastern religions, do not hold this separative view. Instead, the gap between God and creation is understood as merely an illusion. This illusion is due to humanity's preoccupation with form, and its disregard for the living forces underlying form. It is not God and creation that is the basis of reality, but God as creation. Creation is God's intelli-

gence expressed through form. In truth, form would not exist, but for the intelligence that underlies it.

Universality of Intelligence

It is important to therefore realize that intelligence is not confined to what we typically consider as living. Indeed, every attribute we see within creation is a feature of this intelligence in outer display. Objects (forms) have a variety of characteristics related to them. For example, they may display color, texture, and

geometric design, to name a just a few characteristics. These attributes are examples of living intelligence. Emotions and thoughts are attributive, and therefore represent intelligence as well. To experience happiness is to register within consciousness a specific type of intelligence. When looking at the splendor of a sunset, intelligence is realized, and we call it beauty. Intelligence is always revealed through attributes, and everything has attributes. Even the stones we walk upon, the water we drink, and the air we breathe, are part of this intelligence and its livingness. Of course,

this means that God's intelligence permeates the events that are despicable to us as well, such as war, famine and the cataclysms that befall our world. Everything is a part of the One Life, and we, as human beings, are mere cells of intelligence within it, each participating in its incarnational thrust.

Within the scientific community, the theory of evolution is the preferred model for explaining the universe and the development of life. Evolutionary theory is in opposition to the belief in intelligent design, as advocated by religion.

Science contends that consciousness comes forth as a result of physical form. However, Esotericism sees this as an inversion of the truth. It is not the evolution of physical form that determines the development of consciousness, but the reverse. Consciousness is what is evolving, and form naturally changes in response to it. Form is merely the outer garment of consciousness. As consciousness evolves, the outer form responds and adjusts accordingly.

Initially it may appear that Esotericism supports the religious perspective, and therefore opposes evolution theory. Yet this is not the case. Esotericism does embrace the notion of intelligent design. However, unlike religion, it does not hold the assumption of separation. The same can be said about science and its reliance on evolutionary theory. Evolution is a fundamental principle within the esoteric perspective. However, it is not the Darwinian model of evolution that it advocates. Science contends that consciousness comes forth as a result of physical form. However, Esotericism sees this as an inversion of the truth. It is not the evolution of physical form that determines the development of consciousness, but the reverse. Consciousness is what is evolving, and form naturally changes in response to it. Form is merely the outer garment of consciousness. As consciousness evolves, the outer form responds and adjusts accordingly. What science

considers the cause of evolution, occultism sees as merely an effect.

Contrary to the attitude of many scientists and theologians, intelligent design and evolutionary theory coexist and are equally true. When rightly understood, they support and enhance each other. Evolution is indication of life's changing relationship to the intelligence that underlies, conditions, and shapes our universe. All things change and grow. Such changes occur because of life's capacity to realize higher categories of intelligence. This intelligence is always present, and needs only to be discovered. We do not develop intelligence, but evolve into intelligence. At each step in the long journey of life, the mind of God is present, waiting to be realized and implemented through form. Intelligent design is God's knowingness in manifestation. In the deepest sense, it is creation itself.

Book Reviews

The Universe in a Single Atom, by the Dalai Lama. Morgan Road Books, New York, 2005. Hardback, 216 pages. US\$24.95.

The Dalai Lama's name recognition and stature as a teacher guarantee wide readership for all his publications. But *The Universe in a Single Atom* takes his contribution to the thoughtful literature of our time to a new level. Its purpose is to compare modern science to traditional Buddhist teachings—not a unique endeavor, since we are familiar with the work of Fritjof Capra and many others. However, the Dalai Lama's book stands in a class by itself in terms of its authoritative presentation and readability.

Nobody would question the Dalai Lama's exceptional grasp of Tibetan Buddhism and good understanding of the larger field of Indian spirituality. What comes as a delightful surprise is his grasp of modern scientific discovery, whether it be Einsteinian relativity, quantum physics, or neuroscience. With characteristic humility and humor, the author initially attributes his knowledge of science to "reading news coverage of important scientific stories in magazines like *Newsweek*, or hearing reports on the BBC World Service." Clearly he knows much more, and he proceeds to credit discussions with many experts during his world travels and conferences at his residence-in-exile in Dharamsala, India. He also describes the fascination he developed in childhood for mechanical de-

vices—which certainly were not plentiful in Tibet in the 1930s and '40s.

However he acquired his understanding of science, evidently he was a quick learner. He has a grasp of scientific concepts that most of us could envy. Indeed, this reviewer, who has subscribed to *Scientific American* throughout his adult life, learned almost as much about modern science from the book as he did about the various schools of Buddhist thought.

Among the topics discussed in *The Universe in a Single Atom* are biological evolution and human consciousness. The author depicts evolution as a process driven not only by random selection but also by the collective karma of the sentient beings involved. He rejects the notion that sentience could have evolved from inanimate matter. Similarly, he discounts the claims of some neuroscientists that consciousness is a product of the brain, citing Buddhism teachings that consciousness and matter are eternally distinct aspects of reality.

The Dalai Lama stresses that Buddhism places experience ahead of both human reason and scriptural revelation as the primary source of knowledge. Here, “experience” includes not only laboratory experimentation but also the analytical meditation of contemplative Buddhism, which is approached with comparable rigor. He frankly rejects some of the traditional teachings of his religion and remains open to the possibility of further modification of his beliefs in the light of new scientific discovery. To do otherwise, he explains, is to fall into the trap of fundamentalism. At the same time the author is critical of modern science insofar as it promotes the view that the objective universe is the only real one. For him, the subjective universe in which we think and grow spiritually is equally real.

The last chapter presents an impassioned appeal for greater recognition of the ethical dimensions of scientific research, particularly in fields like human cloning whose long-term impact on human evolution are unpredict-

able. The Dalai Lama ends with the following reflection:

Since the emergence of modern science, humanity has lived through an engagement between spirituality and science as two important sources of knowledge and well-being. Sometimes the relationship has been a close one—a kind of friendship—while at other times it has been frosty, with many finding the two to be incompatible. Today, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, science and spirituality have the potential to be closer than ever and to embark upon a collective endeavor that has far-reaching potential to help humanity meet the challenges before us. We are all in this together. May each of us, as a member of the human family, respond to the moral obligation to make this collaboration possible. This is my heartfelt plea.

May it be ours too.

The author confesses to knowing nothing of mathematics, often considered to be the key to scientific understanding. Here, any such weakness may be the very key that makes this personal testimony accessible to the layperson. *The Universe in a Single Atom* is knowledgeable, evocative, and superbly written in a nontechnical, readable style. It is a “must-read” for esoteric students and for all thinking people.

Editorial Staff

Sword Of Shamballa: Mystery of the Return of Christ, by Barbara Domalske. AuthorHouse, 2006. Available from major online retailers or from the publisher at www.authorhouse.com/BookStore. Paperback, 293 pages. US\$19.70.

The teachings of the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul, as every student knows, are not an “easy read.” At most I can read about four pages an hour, since much of my time is spent pondering what I have read. D.K. himself urges others to extract the essentials from his teachings and re-package them anew, for future aspirants and disciples.

Barbara Domalske has done precisely that. *Sword of Shamballa: Mystery of the Return of Christ* is an inspiring synthesis of teachings relating to the Reappearance of the Christ. She manages to synthesize, in under 300 pages, the Tibetan's modern message and the historical Christ's timeless one regarding the ongoing mission of the Christ and his anticipated return this century. Almost every relevant esoteric precept from the Ancient Wisdom teachings is recapitulated in concise, matter-of-fact sentences. Her brevity and style make this book a valuable introduction to the Wisdom teachings. But even amidst this brevity one finds (microcosmically as it were) an echo of the Tibetan's didactic style, with its intentional redundancy. It is appropriate that the author dedicates her book to the Master D.K. and to his master, the Christ.

In addition to restating the existing teachings, Domalske presents some new ideas of considerable merit. The "Sword of Shamballa," which is the book's title, relates to Jesus' seemingly paradoxical statement that he wasn't necessarily bringing peace, at least in the short term, but rather "a sword," which symbolizes war, conflict, and cleavage. The paradox is resolved when one realizes that not everyone will profit from the advent of truth and power, of a light that shines on bad old habits, misdeeds, and selfishness. The numerological values of "sword" and "Sword of Shamballa" (by both the RAN and AN methods) is 7. Thus they point to the seventh-ray energy of the incoming Aquarian Dispensation:

Destroying evil is first-ray work that produces purification and advances second-ray building, so that the seventh ray may bring spiritual energy into contact with substance. Hierarchy constantly works to defeat planetary evil coming from the forces of darkness (p.97).

In other words (and as the Tibetan repeatedly has written) the old, fossilized forms that have outlived their usefulness must be destroyed so that the new forms may serve the New Age. Jesus made a similar comment

about "old wineskins." On pages 103-4, the author writes:

As the Sword of Shamballa works to build the Aquarian Dispensation, new forms will result. This change requires an intelligent human response based on love-wisdom, not violent reactionary fear, terror, hate, or separation. Christ brings Shamballa Energy that initiates humanity into the liberating Aquarian Dispensation. The emphasis will be on life, free from the tomb of matter through right relationship, communion, sharing, and goodwill. The Sword of Shamballa intensifies the light in the world by bringing life more abundantly, revelation, and striking a great blow at world glamour.

Domalske also believes that this idea of the Sword may even replace, or at least complement, the iconography of the Cross in the Aquarian Age.

This number 7 (most often 16/7, or $1 + 6 = 7$, but also 61/7 or 6.1./7) also represents the energy that Domalske feels pervades the book and was a motivating force behind writing it. For example, "Holy Spirit," "Jesus Christ," "Divine Grace," "The Spirit of Truth," "World Servers," "Cosmic Divider," "Sword," "Sword and the Cross," and "Sword of Shamballa" are just a few of the phrases that have the "7" energy. After noticing the preponderance of this "7 energy" in so many key phrases, the author examined other relevant phrases, most of them drawn from the Tibetan's writings, to see if there was any further pattern or confirmation. The results are presented in the Numerology Appendix.

Pythagoras noted that "number" is sacred, and that truth can be ascertained by an attention to numerical relationships, forms, ratios and geometry. Meaningful correspondences regarding triples abound, one obvious example being Action-Reaction-Stasis, Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis, Father-Mother-Son, the Holy Trinity, and so forth. The number 2 is obviously associated with the world of duality in which we live, the play of opposites and the Middle Way. Both 2 and 3 are spa-

tial dimensions, proceeding from the undifferentiated, holistic One, which is no mere quantity but encompasses All.

Not everyone will be convinced by the numerology which is clearly of importance to the author, and a pervasive sub-theme of the book. Many people are troubled by the issue of equivalence in the hundreds of languages spoken and written today. Different languages would obviously—and quite capriciously—give different numerical “energies” to the same reality. Various titles of the Christ can be traced to every number from 2 through 9. For example, “the Teacher” has a value of 3, while “Prince of Peace” has the value 8. Skeptics would argue that you can find a number to make any desired point. On the other hand, a surprising number of titles correspond to the master numbers: 11, 22, 33, and 77. And Domalske can rightly claim that 16/7 phrases and words predominate in her book. Besides, the book’s merit rests on its larger message, even without its numerological correspondences.

From numerology, Domalske turns in Chapter 11 to geometry, presenting a “new thoughtform” in the form of the Prayer Triangle (which she first published in *The Beacon*, May/June 2003). The triangle links the three power points or centers: the Individual (Humanity), Christ (Hierarchy), and the Father (Shamballa). Beginning at the Humanity center, we mentally focus the prayer before directing it to the Christ center. Then in the name, power, and consciousness of Christ, the prayer is filled with Light and Love for transmission to the uppermost Father center. The Father’s response to Humanity completes the third side of the triangle.

As one who is devoted to the teachings of Jesus the Christ, and of the Tibetan through Alice Bailey, I was privileged and delighted to read *Sword of Shamballa*. Barbara Domalske regards these teachings as the “evidence of things unseen,” and the coming Return as a fact inevitable. This reflects her faith as a Christian, and as a student of the Ancient Wisdom, which is evident throughout the work. Reading the book was an experience of almost effortless grace, of re-

minding me of what I already knew, simple truth cascading upon simple truth, refreshing me, and helping me to re-dedicate myself to the service work at hand. Although confident in her knowledge and faith, the author is at the same time humble, like the Tibetan. D.K. suggested that, if students found his teachings helpful, they should use and apply them in daily life. *Sword of Shamballa* helped to re-focus my attention on the Mystery of the Return of the Christ.

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Spiritual Symbolism in the Wizard of Oz, by Javier J. Farias. Doggie in the Window Publications, 2005. Contact the publisher at POB 1565, Duluth, GA 30096 or at www.doggieinthefwindow.biz. Paperback, 199 pages. US\$12.95.

Popular literature—including children’s literature—often contains thinly disguised but profound wisdom. We are already familiar with Temple Richmond’s ongoing work of uncovering the esoteric meaning of the Harry Potter books.¹ Now J. J. Farias shares a delightful study of that old favorite *The Wizard of Oz*.

Most of us know *The Wizard* from the MGM production of 1939, one of the most successful motion pictures ever made—and the one that assured the 16-year-old Judy Garland a place among the immortals of the silver screen. But the story goes back to 1899, to a series of children’s books written by the American author L. Frank Baum. In fact a number of movies were made before the appearance of the 1939 blockbuster. Farias’ interest includes Baum’s life and books as well as the screenwriting and production of the MGM movie. The depth of his analysis becomes clear when he points out subtle details, not only from the book and the movie itself, but also from footage that was cut from the movie. Mr. Farias makes the important

¹ For example, see her article in *The Beacon*, May/June, July/August 2004.

point that Frank Baum was a Theosophist, strongly suggesting that the story's esoteric content is not just a figment of Farias' own imagination but was intentionally planted. What is surprising is that so much of this content made its way into the movie.

Spiritual Symbolism in the Wizard of Oz depicts the story, particularly the yellow brick road, as an allegory for Dorothy's spiritual journey. The drab, monochrome Kansas represent earthly existence, while the "Living Technicolor" of Munchkin Land represents the higher reality of soul existence. Dorothy's companions, according to Farias' description, represent her undeveloped subtle vehicles: the Tin Man her emotional body, the Scarecrow her mental body, and Toto her animating spirit. The Cowardly Lion is her undeveloped will aspect. The Wicked Witch of the West is Dorothy's troublesome ego, while the good witch Glinda is her higher self, urging Dorothy along on her path. Every facet of the story, from the apple trees that are reluctant to surrender their fruit to the flying monkeys, is given esoteric meaning.

Dorothy and her companions pin their hopes for the solution to their problems on the all-powerful but mysterious Wizard of Oz. Farias associates Emerald City, the fortress-like structure where this demigod hides from the world, with the institutional Church. When Dorothy—and the story's readers—discover that the Wizard is just an inept man behind a curtain, they are forced to recognize that solving life's problems and achieving one's spiritual destiny lie solely in one's own hands.

We might take issue with some of the correspondences Mr. Farias suggests. For example, the Emerald City could symbolize a Masonic lodge instead of the Church. But the author's objective is to make us question the obvious, think, and progress on our own spiritual paths. We one cannot but be impressed by the contribution he has made and the insights he has shared. *Spiritual Symbolism* is written in a lively, easy-to-read style that will delight its readers.

Editorial Staff

