

Spring 2011, Volume 7, Number 1



The Esoteric Quarterly

A publication of the School for Esoteric Studies

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



The School for Esoteric Studies

345 S. French Broad Avenue, Suite 300. Asheville, North Carolina 28801, USA.
www.esotericstudies.net/quarterly; e-mail: editor@esotericstudies.net.



The Esoteric Quarterly

The Esoteric Quarterly is published by the School for Esoteric Studies. It is registered as an online journal with the National Serials Data Program of the Library of Congress. International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) 1551-3874.

Further information about *The Esoteric Quarterly*, including guidelines for the submission of articles and review procedures, can be found at <http://www.esotericstudies.net/quarterly>. All correspondence should be addressed to **editor@esotericstudies.net**.

Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief: Donna M. Brown (United States)

Review Editor: Joann S. Bakula (United States)

Editor Emeritus: John F. Nash (United States)

Alison Deadman (Tennessee)

Judy Jacka (Australia)

Gail G. Jolley (United States)

Barbara Maré (New Zealand)

Katherine O'Brien (New Zealand)

Webmaster: Dorothy I. Riddle (Canada)

Copyright © *The Esoteric Quarterly*, 2011.
All rights reserved.

Copies of the complete journal or articles contained therein may be made for personal use on condition that copyright statements are included. Commercial use without the permission of *The Esoteric Quarterly* and the School for Esoteric Studies is strictly prohibited.

The Esoteric Quarterly

Contents

Volume 7, Number 1. Winter 2011

	Page		Page
Features		The Origins and Nature of Consciousness, Part Three: Toward a Holographic Metaphysics of the Human Heart	47
Editorial	5	Christopher P. Holmes	
Publication Policies	6	An Interview	
Poems of the Quarter: “Spring” and “I Am That One” by Alan Jacobs	7	An Interview with Carol Parrish-Harra	63
Picture of the Quarter: “The Journey” by Gerrit Greve	8	The Fundamentals of the Work	
Quotes of the Quarter	9	Recollection	66
Advertisements	11	Book Reviews	
Articles		<i>The Need for a Sacred Science</i>	68
Theosis: A Christian Perspective on Human Destiny	15	By Seyyed Hossein Nasr	
John F. Nash			
The Second Epistle of Peter Compared to Bailey’s Integration Technique for the Second Ray	35		
Zachary F. Lansdowne			

The mission of the *Esoteric Quarterly* is to provide a forum for the exploration of esoteric philosophy and its applications. Full-length articles and student papers are solicited pertaining to both eastern and western esoteric traditions.

We also encourage feedback from readers. Comments of general interest will be published as Letters to the Editor.

All communications should be sent to editor@esotericstudies.net.



“The Miracle,” by Nicholas Roerich. Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow.

2012 A TIME OF TRANSITION

During the festivals of Easter (Aries full moon), Wesak (Taurus full moon) and Goodwill (Gemini full moon), the School for Esoteric Studies holds a subjective group conference. For 2011 our topic deals with the energetic changes expected in 2012 and the opportunities for disciples. Each participant receives a set of study materials and a meditation outline, as well as a final report compiled from the results.

The conference is open to the spiritual community, and a \$15 payment will cover materials and postage. If you wish to participate please let us know.

School for Esoteric Studies

375 S. French Broad Avenue
Asheville, NC 28801

Email: info@esotericstudies.net - www.esotericstudies.net

Contrast, Comparison and Consilience

One of the first steps on the path of occultism is the ability to grasp certain principle differentiations. The ability to discriminate, to examine the clear contrasts, as well as comparisons or analogies, is an important method of study by which “the sparks of Truth are struck.” However, the occultist is also occupied with the expression of unity and synthesis so that the separate parts are reconciled into a basic whole. The goal is not to give the appearance of unity, but to reveal the timeless energy of the One Life contained within diverse forms.

All three of the articles in this issue compare, contrast and then link different traditions, theories and disciplines, to reveal differences, parallels and relationships as well as an underlying consilience. Such an approach reveals the foundational truths in diverse faiths and theories. It also provides a healing connection across traditions and disciplines and promotes the unity of knowledge and wisdom.

Our first offering, by John Nash, explores the little known concept of *theosis* or deification. His article provides a chronological overview of the most significant influences on Christian thought regarding divinization and the possibility for a redeemed humanity to participate in the life of the Divine. Nash traces the contrasting views, fluctuations and evolution of divinization theology beginning with the ante-Nicean period up to its contemporary re-emergence. He explores eastern and western theological views on how one might achieve such a profound transformation. Also included is a discussion on purgatory or “the intermediate state” which church fathers conceived as a means of achieving theosis beyond the grave. The article concludes with a synthesis of Christian and esoteric teachings that sheds a new light on Christianity’s relevance in the coming age.

The second article in this issue, by Zachary Lansdowne, seeks to bridge the gap between Christian epistolary and esoteric teachings by investigating two distinct but related formulas by which we can facilitate the integration of the personality and Soul. Lansdowne’s article spotlights the *Second Epistle of Peter*, a New Testament text conferring step by step instructions that enable Christians to escape the world’s corrupting influences and become partakers of the divine’s essence. The author harmonizes passages from this little known text with Alice Bailey’s Technique of Integration for the Second Ray in an effort to demonstrate that Biblical passages contain descriptions of discipleship and Initiation and are based on the same archetypal ideals and patterns of integration. Lansdowne’s commentary represents a step forward in revealing Christianity’s esoteric significance.

The next article is part of a continuing series of articles by Christopher P. Holmes discussing the heart doctrine and the mysterious zero point. In this article, Holmes explores the holographic model of creation and its relationship to consciousness and the Self. He contrasts and correlates the mystical experiences of Yogananda and the esoteric teachings of Helena Blavatsky with Karl Pribram’s holographic model of the mind/brain and David Bohm’s theory on unbroken Wholeness and the Implicate Order. Pribram’s psychological model, while revolutionary, is shown to be limited and incomplete. Bohm’s “ideas suggest the existence of rich playground for a holographic mind, heart or human being.” Blavatsky’s provocative synthesis of religion, philosophy and science provides an alternative paradigm of “holographic space based on a zero point of *lux* originating in the multi-dimensional Aether of the heart Space.”

In addition to the full length articles in this issue, we include an interesting interview with long-time esotericist, Carol Parrish-Harra. Also included is a short paper on *Recollection* or self-remembering. The practice of “recollection” is based on the establishment of an inner attitude that allows us to be in a continual state of realization. It touches upon five particular points of recollection during the day that enable us to create a “living continuity of sensed relationship” between the personality, the Ego and the greater whole.

This issue contains a book review—*The Need for a Sacred Science*—by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, dealing with the perennial philosophy or the sacred sciences and their pertinence to the physical sciences and the modern predicament. This important work is part of Nasr’s ongoing attempt to revive the traditionalist’s metaphysical worldview and to show its universal application to the macrocosm and microcosm.

We also offer two non-dualist poems: *Spring* and *I am That One* by Alan Jacobs. Mr. Jacobs is a life-long student of Gurdjieff, J. Krishnamurti and Douglas Harding. His collection of sacred poetry, *Myrobalan of the Magi*, can be ordered directly from XLIBRIS at <http://www.xlibris.com>.

Finally, we direct your attention to our *Picture of the Quarter* which features the work of internationally acclaimed artist, Gerrit Greve. The inspired painting in this issue is from the deeply meditative *Dreaming-Journey Series*. We are grateful to the artist for giving us permission to highlight his work. We look forward to showcasing additional paintings from his collection of *Sacred Works*. For additional information on the artist visit: <http://gerritgreve.com>.

In the previous issue this editorial noted that Dorjie Jipa’s article on *Sensa: Archetypal Symbolism, Part One* would be followed by *Sensa: The Lost Language of the Mysteries, Part Two*. We are sorry to say that the latter article has been delayed. We hope to publish “Part two” in the Summer Edition.

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, and/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 analysis from a wide range of perspectives and traditions. We discourage dogmatism or any view that characterizes any tradition as having greater truth than a competing system.

Neither will we allow our journal to be used as a platform for attacks on individuals, groups, 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 an author finds abhorrent. We will not reject an article for publication simply on the grounds that it contains a reference to an objectionable source.

An issue of concern in all online journals is potential volatility of content. Conceivably, articles could be modified after the publication date because authors changed their minds about what had been written. Accordingly we wish to make our policy clear: We reserve the right to correct minor typographical errors, but we will not make any substantive alteration to an article after it “goes to press.”

Additionally, we expect authors to disclose any prior publication of an article, adapted from a book or any another source, at the time of its submission.

Poems of the Quarter

Spring by Alan Jacobs

The spring sun streams through my window frame
Opening wide to limitless vasts of sapphire blue,
Red roses sparkling, diamonds of dew,
My heart hymns praises to Him without a Name
An equal love for Self and all, the same.
I drew the curtains of my room, enlarge the view,
From tattered folds a powdery dust soon flew
Across the scene, obscuring sunlight's flame.
As cloud did clear I saw each dusty grain
A world held in solar radiant beam,
Universes in Brahman's mighty magic dream.
My mind fell into heart, no words explain,
I am the light, the sun, the room, the view
The dust, the Self, and Brahman; so are you.

I am That One By Alan Jacobs

Pure, as the mountain stream after a fall of April snow
Conscious as he who wakens from deepest sleep, aglow
Aware as the cat who senses all before she prepares to go
Blissful as a babe in arms fondled like an endearing doe
Alone, I AM

Self-existent

Here in the Heart from where I AM is found
Now, in the Heart from where I AM is ground.
I am space for this beautiful place to happen in, and
My Earth is a grain of sand on Being's strand
Whatever's on the screen, whatever wave the spectral band,
Goodly Air, stormy Sea or merely mediocre Land
All is in me, this I truly recognize and understand.

I am not a tortured victim in a tormented world
A twin-holed meat ball, hairily curled,
I am no thing, no name, no body, no word,
I am single-eyed and feeling very headless
There's no thing on these shoulders, mind's no longer restless
Where I'm seeing from is a boundless window, frameless.



The Journey 115

By Gerrit Greve

www.gerritgerritgreve.com

Quotes of the Quarter

While God's inner essence is forever beyond our comprehension, His energies, grace, life and power fill the whole universe, and are directly accessible to us... The essence signifies the whole God as he is in himself; the energies signify the whole of God as he is in action... The essence-energies distinction is a way of stating simultaneously that the *whole* God in his outgoing love has rendered himself accessible to man. By virtue of this distinction... we are able to affirm the possibility of a direct or mystical union between man and God—what the Greek Fathers termed the *theosis* of man, his “deification.”

Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York, 1995)

The idea behind all sacred writing is to convey a higher meaning than the literal words contain, the truth of which must be seen by Man *internally*. This higher, concealed, inner, or esoteric, meaning, cast in the words and sense images of ordinary usage, can only be grasped by the understanding, and it is exactly here that the first difficulty lies in conveying higher meaning to Man. A person's literal level of understanding is not necessarily equal to grasping psychological meaning. To understand literally is one thing; to understand psychologically is another... Higher meaning can only be given to those who are close to grasping it rightly. This is one reason why all sacred writings—that is, writings that are designed to convey more than the literal sense of the words—must be concealed, as it were, by an outer wrapping. It is not a question of misleading people, but a question of preventing this higher meaning from falling in the wrong place, on lower meaning, and thereby having its finer significance destroyed.

The object of all *sacred* writings is to convey higher meaning and higher knowledge in terms of ordinary knowledge as a starting point. The parables have an ordinary meaning. The object of the *parables* is to give a man higher meaning in terms of lower meaning in such a way that he can either think for himself or not. The parable is an instrument devised for this purpose. It can fall on a man literally, or it can make him think for himself. It invites him to think for himself. A man first understands on his ordinary, matter-of-fact or natural level. To lift the understanding, whatever is taught must first fall on this level to some extent, to form a starting point. A man must get hold, of what he is taught, to begin with, in a natural way. But the parable has meaning beyond its literal or natural sense. It is deliberately designed to fall first on the ordinary level of the mind and yet *to work in the mind* in the direction of lifting the natural level of comprehension to another level of meaning. From this point of view, a parable is a *transforming* instrument in regard to meaning. The parable is also a connecting medium between a lower and a higher level in development of the understanding.

Maurice Nicoll, *The New Man: An Interpretation of Some Parables and Miracles of Christ* (London: Stuart & Richard, 1950)

While all the Mysteries recognized the heart as the center of spiritual consciousness, they often purposely ignored this concept and used the heart in its exoteric sense as the symbol of the emotional nature. In this arrangement the generative center represented the physical body, the heart the emotional body, and the brain the mental body. The brain represented the superior sphere, but after the initiates had passed through the lower degrees they were instructed that the brain was the proxy of the

spiritual flame dwelling in the innermost recesses of the heart. The student of esotericism discovers ere long that the ancients often resorted to various blinds to conceal the true interpretations of their Mysteries. The substitution of the brain for the heart was one of these blinds.

The three degrees of the ancient Mysteries were, with few exceptions, given in chambers which represented the three great centers of the human and Universal bodies. If possible, the temple itself was constructed in the form of the human body. The candidate entered between the feet and received the highest degree in the point corresponding to the brain. Thus the first degree was the material mystery and its symbol was the generative system; it raised the candidate through the various degrees of concrete thought. The second degree was given in the chamber corresponding to the heart, but represented the middle power which was the mental link. Here the candidate was initiated into the mysteries of abstract thought and lifted as high as the mind was capable of penetrating. He then passed into the third chamber, which, analogous to the brain, occupied the highest position in the temple but, analogous to the heart, was of the greatest dignity. In the brain chamber the heart mystery was given. Here the initiate for the first time truly comprehended the meaning of those immortal words: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." As there are seven hearts in the brain so there are seven brains in the heart, but this is a matter of superphysics of which little can be said at the present time.

Manly P. Hall, *The Human Body in Symbolism, The Secret Teaching of All Ages* (San Francisco: H.S. Crocker Company, 1928)

In the Heart is a spot which is the last to die, a spot marked by a tiny violet light; that is the seat of Life, the center of all, Brahma; the first spot that lives in the fetus, and the last that dies. When a Yogi is buried in a trance, it is this spot that lives, though the rest of the Body be dead, and as long as this remains alive the Yogi can be

resurrected. This spot contains potentially mind, life, energy and will. During life it radiates prismatic colors, fiery and opalescent.

The Heart is the center of the Spiritual Consciousness, as the Brain is the center of Intellectual Consciousness. But this Spiritual Consciousness cannot be guided by a person, nor can its energy be directed by him, until he is completely united with Buddhi-Manas. Until then, it guides him—if it can. That is, makes efforts to reach him, to impress the lower Consciousness, and those efforts are helped by his growth in purity. Hence the pangs of remorse for wrong done, the prickings of Conscience, reproaching for evil, inciting to good. These come from the Heart, not from the Head. In the Heart is the only manifested God; the other two are invisible. And it is this manifested God that represents the Triad, Âtma-Buddhi-Manas.

Helena Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, (Madras, India: Vasanta Press, 1888)

The gist of the holographic paradigm is that there is a more fundamental reality. There is an invisible flux not comprised of parts, but an inseparable interconnectedness. The holographic paradigm is one of reciprocal enfolding and unfolding of patterns of information. All potential information about the Universe is holographically encoded in the spectrum of frequency patterns constantly bombarding us.

In this dynamic model there are no "things", just energetic events. This "holoflux" includes the ultimately flowing nature of what is, and all possible forms. All the objects of our world are three-dimensional images formed of standing and moving waves by electromagnetic and nuclear processes. This is the guiding matrix for self-assembly and for manipulating and organizing physical reality.

Iona Miller and Richard Alan Miller, *Helix to Hologram, An Ode on the Human Genome* (Nexus Magazine, September 2003)



Monthly Meditations for World Service

at the time of the full moon

*

A website rich in resources for all who share in meditation
work for world service during the full moon period

*

New commentaries each month from
**Joann S. Bakula, Michelle Pearce, Steve Nation,
Malvin Artley and Jon Darrell-Rew.**

Archives from 2004 include papers from Glenys Lowery,
Jan Nation, Phillip Lindsay and others.

*

Hundreds of pages dedicated to meditation at the time
of the full moon from a variety of perspectives.

www.worldservicegroup.com

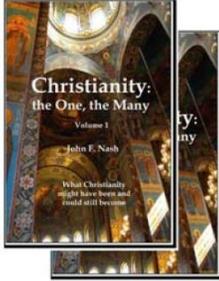


Service-Growth

www.servicegrowth.net

Supporting Spiritual Development

A web portal linking you to groups, initiatives, and resources that support a
quantum shift in human consciousness and individual spiritual growth.



**Christianity:
The One, the Many**

*What Christianity
might have been and
could still become*

by *John F. Nash*
Xlibris, 2007

**The rich history of Christianity
and a bold vision of its future.**

"Encyclopedic in its coverage."
"A masterpiece of research, insight and faith."
"A must-read for believers and nonbelievers alike."
"Now I know there's a place in Christianity for me."

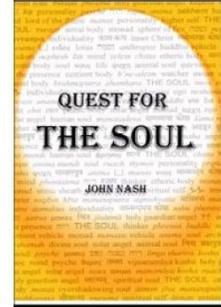
Two volume set.
Paperback \$39.98, hardback \$59.98.

**For ordering information see:
www.uriel.com/bookstore.**

**Quest for
the Soul**

*The Age-Old Search
for Our Inner
Spiritual Nature*

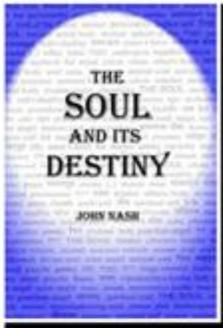
by *John Nash*



"A masterpiece that weaves together the history of the soul through past ages up to the present time... This living history of the soul creates understanding and meaning of our purpose in life. Its kaleidoscopic view makes it essential reading for all students of human evolution. The book is a classic for all seeking closer relationship with the soul."

302 pages. Price \$18.75
1stBooks Library, 2004.
ISBN: 141403251X

**For ordering information see:
www.uriel.com/bookstore.**



**The Soul
and Its
Destiny**

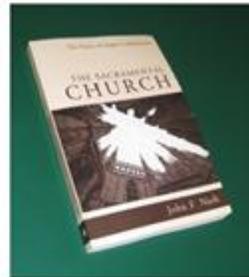
by *John Nash*

The soul's sacred journey,
from the teachings of Alice
Bailey, the major
Theosophists, and others.

"For those who aspire to grow in knowledge on the spiritual path, this is a great gift for the soul's journey onward. New insights are greater understanding of the unity of all, and a desire to serve others. . . A labor of love."

320 pages. Price \$20.75
AuthorHouse, 2004.
ISBN: 1418402753

**For ordering information see:
www.uriel.com/bookstore.**



**The
Sacramental
Church**

*The Story of
Anglo-Catholicism*

by *John F. Nash*

"Is there a Catholic tradition in Anglicanism? What are its origins? Are Anglo-Catholics real Anglicans/Episcopalians? What is their relationship with Roman Catholics? Has Anglo-Catholicism betrayed the Reformation? *The Sacramental Church* answers these and many other questions in a very readable style for non-specialists interested in religious history."

292 pages. Price \$34.00
Wipf & Stock, 2011.
ISBN: 9781608997893

**For ordering and other information
see: www.sacramentalchurch.com.**

Principles of Abundance for the Cosmic Citizen

Principles of Abundance
for the Cosmic Citizen



ENOUGH FOR US ALL
VOLUME ONE
Dorothy I. Riddle

ENOUGH FOR US ALL
VOLUME ONE

Dorothy I. Riddle

Principles of Abundance is a thoughtful and engaging book that translates the findings of quantum physics and metaphysics into practical tools that we can use to transform ourselves, our communities, and our world view.

Lots of practical exercises help us shift from scarcity to abundance, from fear to joy.

The *Enough For Us All* series reflects the breadth of Dr. Riddle's awareness and her ability to integrate disparate fields into a meaningful whole with practical strategies for moving forward.

256 pages. \$14.95

AuthorHouse, 2010. ISBN: 9781449079253

For ordering information, see:

www.EnoughForUsAll.com

Positive Harmlessness in Practice

Positive Harmlessness
in Practice



ENOUGH FOR US ALL
VOLUME TWO
Dorothy I. Riddle

ENOUGH FOR US ALL
VOLUME TWO

Dorothy I. Riddle

Positive Harmlessness in Practice explores what we mean by "doing no harm" and helps us build our "harmlessness muscle" through exercises and a three-step daily practice. A Harmlessness Scale™ helps us identify our habitual ways of behaving so that we can shift to automatic patterns of harmlessness.

The *Enough For Us All* series reflects the breadth of Dr. Riddle's awareness and her ability to integrate disparate fields into a meaningful whole with practical strategies for moving forward.

288 pages. \$15.95

AuthorHouse, 2010. ISBN: 9781452036311

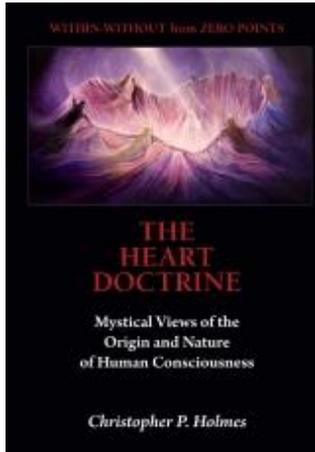
For ordering information, see:

www.EnoughForUsAll.com

Within-Without from Zero Points:

The Heart Doctrine

Mystical Views of the Origin and Nature of Human Consciousness



By Christopher P. Holmes

The Heart Doctrine, book one of the **Within-Without Series** explores the mysteries of human consciousness, the spiritual nature of the heart, and the question of existence of an ‘I’ within the individual—a divine spark, a Monad, a jivatma, a quantum self or a ‘god spark.’

The Within-Without Zero Point series puts forth an original perspective on consciousness studies and a theoretical model of ‘intelligent design’—allowing for a novel view of the relationship between science, religion and mysticism.

285 pages. \$24.95

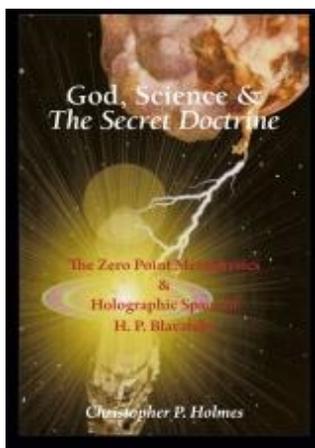
Zero Point Publications 2010. ISBN: 978-0-9689435-0-2

For ordering information, see:

Available through Amazon.com or www.zeropoint.ca

God, Science & The Secret Doctrine

The Zero Point Metaphysics & Holographic Space of H. P. Blavatsky



By Christopher P. Holmes

God, Science & The Secret Doctrine explores the cosmogenesis and metaphysics of H. P. Blavatsky and the archaic *Stanzas of Dzyan*—in light of newest theories in physics and science. Includes material on zero point origins and dynamics, seven dimensional hyperspace, creation physics and holographic theory.

“... a lucid and provocative book. It unseals many of the *Secret Doctrine* mysteries as it weaves the seeming opposites of spirit and science into a new synthesis.”
Donna Brown, forward

322 pages. \$24.95

Zero Point Publications 2010. ISBN: 978-0-9689435-6-4

Available through Amazon or ordering information, at:

www.zeropoint.ca

Theosis: a Christian Perspective on Human Destiny

John F. Nash

Summary

The concept of *theosis*, or deification, has roots in Greek philosophy and was discussed by the early Christian church fathers. It enjoyed ongoing support in the mystical theology of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, especially among contemplatives of the hesychastic tradition. While theosis did not find fertile ground in the intellectual environment of the West, a low level of interest can be detected throughout the centuries, and attention has increased in recent times.

Orthodox theologians articulate a doctrine of theosis that envisions a profound transformation of human nature, made possible by Christ's incarnation. Answers to how, when and where we might achieve theosis are proposed in the Orthodox literature and, more surprisingly, in the writings of Methodist and Anglican churchmen. These latter speak of an "intermediate state" of healing—contrasting with the Roman Catholic penitential purgatory—providing opportunities for spiritual growth after physical death. An understanding of theosis helps bridge the gulf between Christian and esoteric perspectives on the human condition and destiny. New fluidity in theological opinion and increasing interest among esotericists raise hopes of a synthesis of teachings. This article presents an account of theosis and related issues with the objective of stimulating further study and insight.

Introduction

This article traces the emergence of the doctrine of *theosis*, or "deification," and its development in eastern and western Christianity. It also examines the concept of

an "intermediate state"—a term coined by John Wesley—in which progress toward theosis can continue after physical death. Few western Christians, or, for that matter, esoteric students, would recognize the term "theosis." Yet it has been a traditional belief in Eastern Orthodox Christianity since patristic times, and influential western churchmen also have explored the concept. Through theosis, proponents argue, man can share in the divine nature or perhaps recover his primeval divinity. Man can, in a very real sense, become "the image and likeness of God." Theosis' strongest supporters argue that deification was part of God's original purpose for humankind and that "redemption"—viewed in a more positive light than simply atoning for sin—was preordained by the creative act. Our opportunity to achieve theosis was established by Christ's incarnation and continued through its extension in the Eucharist. These various issues will be discussed in detail in the pages ahead. Before proceeding, however, it will be useful to step back and examine contrasting attitudes toward the human condition and human destiny.

A major stumbling block to building a viable system of Christian esotericism has

About the Author

John F. Nash, Ph.D., is a long-time esoteric student, author, and teacher. Two of his books, *Quest for the Soul* and *The Soul and Its Destiny*, were reviewed in the Winter 2005 issue of the *Esoteric Quarterly*. His latest book, *The Sacramental Church*, will be published shortly. Further information can be found in the advertisements in this issue and at <http://www.uriel.com>

been the difference in the ways the human condition and human destiny are depicted by mainstream western Christianity and by the ageless wisdom extending through Plato and the Neoplatonist to Alice Bailey and beyond. In the Pythagorean tradition, Plato (c.428–348 BCE) taught that the human soul incarnates in a series of bodies to gain wisdom before returning to the divine realm. In the *Phaedrus* he spoke of the “beatific vision” whose beauty and glory await us at the end of our incarnational cycle.

Plato divided the soul into a higher aspect, the *nous* (“rational mind”), and a lower aspect, the *psyche*. The latter term, as Plato used it, meant the principle that animates the body; “etheric nature” would be a better translation than the conventional “soul.”¹ Platonic philosophy regarded the *nous* as belonging to the divine world of Forms. A Form (*Eidos*) is a perfect, eternal archetype or thoughtform. It is the “real” thing, and what we experience in the phenomenal world is but an imperfect, transient manifestation or “shadow” of that Form. Our body, in particular, is “less real” and much less important than our *nous*.

Plato also theorized that the whole of reality was triune in nature. His successors in the Platonic school built upon that concept to develop a model of the human constitution consisting of *nous*, *psyche*, and *soma* (“body”). As a modern commentator explained:

Plato’s trichotomy is the starting point of later views. A common division is into rational, irrational, and vegetative spheres For Middle Platonism the soul derives from the *nous* but has powers that enable it to work on matter; the *nous* affects the *psyche*, and the *psyche* the *soma*. On this view the *nous* is the innermost core . . . Pythagoreans see two souls. They equate the logical soul with the *nous*, while the alogical soul is the garment that it puts on in its descent through the spheres. In sum, the *psyche*, in distinction from the *nous*, undergoes a

certain devaluation, since it cannot denote pure spirituality.²

The *nous* and *psyche* acquired divine correspondences in the trinity proposed by Plotinus (c.204–70 CE), the leading exponent of Neoplatonism. Plotinus’ trinity, consisting of *Monad* (“the One”), *Nous* (“Divine Mind”), and *Psyche* (“World Soul”), was hierarchical. The two latter were successive emanations from the *Monad*, and in a further process of emanation *Psyche* birthed the manifest universe. Human beings participated in the two lower aspects of the trinity, while also having a *soma* on the physical plane. The *nous* was sometimes identified with the *pneuma* (“spirit”), a divine and eternal element in man; in other accounts the *nous* was regarded as forming a bridge between the *psyche* and *pneuma*.

Modern esoteric philosophy built upon those foundations to construct a detailed understanding of the human constitution consisting of monad, soul (or Ego, capitalized), and personality. The monad is regarded as a fragment of the logocentric essence, comparable with the *atman* of Vedantic Hinduism. “We believe,” Helena Blavatsky wrote, “that every human being is the bearer, or Vehicle, of an Ego coeval with every other Ego; because all Egos are of the same essence and belong to the primeval emanation from one universal infinite Ego. Plato calls the latter the *logos* (or the second manifested God).”³ In the teachings of Alice Bailey the soul is considered to be the seat of awareness, the architect of successive personalities, and the driving force behind progress on the evolutionary path. The personality embraces the dense physical, etheric, sentient (“astral”), and lower mental vehicles.⁴ Comprehensive discussions of the human constitution are readily available in the literature.⁵

Platonic and Neoplatonist philosophy influenced early Christianity. By the fifth century, however, Christian theologians had rejected Plotinus’ hierarchy in favor of a trinity of coequal hypostases, or “persons”:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*Pneuma*).⁶ The Son was “begotten” by God the Father, and the Spirit emerged from the Father—or jointly from the Father and Son—by “spiration,” a term that can be understood in the sense that the Spirit is the “Holy Breath.”⁷

By the sixth century Christianity was also moving away from Platonic psychology. The Second Council of Constantinople (553 CE) declared that each soul is individually created by God sometime between conception and birth;⁸ that is, the soul is only *semi-eternal*: immortal but created in time. The Fourth Council of Constantinople (869) decreed that man “has one rational and intellectual soul” and spoke of that soul “animating the flesh.”⁹ Thus the *nous* and *psyche* were conflated into a single entity and denied contact with the divine *Pneuma*. Man nominally was created in the image and likeness of God, but that likeness stopped short of a triune constitution and a share in the divine essence; it also stopped short of divine origin and destiny.

Augustine of Hippo (354–430), considered the greatest of the western church fathers, built upon the work of Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria to assert that the universe was created, not by emanation, but *ex nihilo* (“from nothing”). That assertion launched western Christianity onto the belief that humanity, along with the rest of the manifest universe, was separate from the Divine. Only a small step was then needed to conclude that humanity was corrupt and mired in sin. Augustinian pessimism steadily gained momentum and reached its zenith when John Calvin proclaimed man’s “total depravity.”¹⁰ Calvin further declared that only a small elect was predestined to be saved, whereupon his followers came to the logical conclusion that the rest of humanity must be predestined to damnation.¹¹

The western Christian view of human destiny generally was not as bleak as it might have been. Predestination made only limited inroads into the Christian mindset. Emphasis was also placed on the redeeming force of grace, a gift of God freely bestowed on all

who accepted baptism and obeyed the Commandments. Great saints emerged to serve as role models of righteousness. Nevertheless, as one writer complained, western Christianity “has been unable to free itself from the sin–grace dialectic.”¹² One might add that it has also been unable to free itself from an intellectually based theology.

A contrasting picture of both the universe and man emerged among the eastern church fathers and continued in Eastern Orthodoxy Christianity. Throughout the centuries eastern Christianity retained at least a limited sense that creation was accomplished through emanation. Importantly for our theme it also held out the possibility of a much more optimistic future. Through Christ’s incarnation, humanity gained, if only *in potentia*, some kind of divine status. Thus was born the doctrine of theosis.

This article’s main purpose is to make theosis and related concepts accessible to esoteric students. A few parallels with modern esoteric teachings are identified to show directions that future research could take. Rich opportunities exist to create a synthesis of understanding of human destiny that could appeal to both the religious and the esoteric communities. An important resource for the present study was *Partakers of the Divine Nature* (2007), a collection of essays edited by Michael J. Christensen & Jeffrey A. Wittung, that was reviewed in the Winter 2011 issue of the *Esoteric Quarterly*. We shall also quote liberally from patristic writings and the work of eastern and western theologians.

The Concept of Theosis

The pharaohs of ancient Egypt claimed to be incarnations of the god Horus. In the Homeric period of Greek history it was believed that heroes who performed exemplary feats received the gift of immortality and would reside with the gods on Mount Olympus. Later Greek culture rewarded prominent civic figures with divine status. For example, the fourth-century BCE Philip II of Macedon, was raised to divine status in a

process referred to as *apotheosis*—a word from which *theosis* eventually derived. Philosophers were particularly valued in Greek society. Socrates was deified soon after his death, and as late as the fourth century CE the Neoplatonist Iamblichus declared Pythagoras a god.¹³ Roman emperors claimed to be deities and were revered accordingly.¹⁴

The Hebrew Bible affirmed divine potential not just for kings and prophets but for all devout Jews. The psalmists wrote: “Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye [are] gods”¹⁵ and “I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.”¹⁶ In the New Testament Christ referred to those passages when he asked “Is it not written in your law . . . Ye are gods?”¹⁷ Moreover, we read in the prologue of the fourth gospel: “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory”¹⁸—implying that “the flesh” was in some sense capable of receiving the Word and responding to the glory. Apprehension of and response to the divine glory came to be considered key ingredients of theosis.

Whether Paul believed in theosis is disputed, but he famously proclaimed: “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”¹⁹ Other statements suggesting the possibility of human transformation include: “we all . . . beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.”²⁰ The *Epistle to the Hebrews* referred to “the spirits of just men made perfect.”²¹ Most often cited in support of theosis is a passage in *2 Peter*:

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be *partakers of the divine nature*.²²

Theosis in the Patristic Writings

In the emerging theology of Christianity the eastern church fathers were inspired more by Platonic philosophy than were their western brethren, and stronger connections were maintained with the ageless wisdom. It was among the eastern fathers that we find the earliest work on theosis.

Second-century CE church father Irenaeus commented on humanity’s steady progress from creation through the recovery from sin to successive stages of sanctification. Man, he said, “should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord. For God is He who is yet to be seen, and the beholding of God is productive of immortality.” Immortality, he added, “renders one nigh unto God.”²³ To cite the work of Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in Roman Gaul, might seem to undermine the assertion that theosis was the product of eastern Christianity. We should remember, however, that the Gallic church owed its lineage to the East; Irenaeus was born in Asia Minor and was a student of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna.

The Alexandrian and Cappadocian schools produced the greatest wealth of patristic writings on theosis. Among the Alexandrians were the second-century Origen and the fourth-century Athanasius. Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria, famously built upon *John* 1:14 to declare: “He [the Logos] was made man that we might be made god.” As a modern writer explained: “More clearly than any Christian writer before him, Athanasius makes a direct identification between deification and divine sonship.”²⁴ Origen’s work will be mentioned later.

Notable among the Cappadocian fathers were Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great, and his brother Gregory of Nyssa, all of whom lived in the fourth century. Gregory of Nazianzus, accomplished poet and theologian, coined the word *theosis* after experimenting with various terms suggestive of “making a god.”²⁵ He suggested that individuals of special sanctity might ascend to

the divine light, even in their lifetimes. As a metaphor of the illuminating power of the divine light, Gregory of Nazianzus described the sun as “the most beautiful of all visible things” and “just so is God . . . himself the highest of all objects of thought.”²⁶ The reference to thought suggested belief that it was the *nous* that was capable of ascension.

Gregory of Nyssa was more cautious with regard to timing; he considered it more likely that theosis could be attained only after the resurrection of the body. Christian teachings asserted that the body will be raised to rejoin the soul prior to the Last Judgment. Gregory emphasized that theosis was a gift of God; our bodily resurrection and theosis ascension were made possible by Christ’s. On the other hand, he stressed that eventual theosis was the very purpose of humanity’s creation.²⁷ Our destiny was to become “priests of the cosmos, rendering by [our] dynamic engagement with the world’s order, a degree of divine life, a sacred blessing as it were, to all the fabric of God’s created existence.”²⁸ The strong implication was that Christ’s incarnation was not a repair mission, a response to humanity’s failure, but was preordained “from the beginning” as the means to unlock humanity’s latent capability.

Gregory of Nyssa’s understanding of theosis received a boost when the Council of Chalcedon (451) decreed that Christ, the Son of God, was a single *hypostasis*, or “person,” with distinct divine and human natures. The conventional interpretation was that the hypostatic union of natures was necessary for redemption: the human nature to identify with man’s failure and the divine nature to make a sufficient atonement to the Father. Gregory’s interpretation was that, when “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,”²⁹ human nature was exalted, even deified. “Redemption,” as a commentator on Gregory’s work remarked, “was more than the forgiveness of sin, rather a profound reworking and *anakephalaiosis* [“recapitulation”] of the terms of ordinary humanity, into a divinely graced life-form that would experience an ascentive metamorphosis.”³⁰

Theosis, the commentator continued, means the refashioning of “the very boundaries of creaturely existences.” The human *nous* could become a divine hypostasis, comparable in some way with the hypostases of the Trinity.

A notable contribution to the doctrine of theosis was made by Maximus the Confessor (580–662). Maximus resigned his position in the court of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius to pursue a vocation as a monk in Carthage, North Africa. He was influenced by Neoplatonist philosophy and especially by the work of the Pseudo-Dionysius.³¹ Interpreting the Chalcedon decree, Maximus viewed Christ’s incarnation as a reciprocal coming-together of the divine and human natures, not diminishing either but creating a new, higher synthesis.³² Driving that reciprocity was ecstatic love—a realization that Jalaluddin Rumi would famously explore six centuries later. Along with Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus leaned toward the universalist view that all rational souls would eventually be saved. Origen was accused of teaching that even Satan might be saved.

The Copts agreed that Jesus Christ was a single person but rejected the Chalcedon doctrine of distinct natures. Inspired by the work of Cyril, late patriarch of Alexandria,³³ they believed that Christ’s two natures were merged. They also used Cyril’s teachings to develop a strong sense of theosis. The leading exponent of Coptic theosis was the 12th-century Egyptian theologian Bulus al-Bushi. Writing in Arabic he presented a detailed argument that man participated in the merged divine–human nature. Emphasizing the role of the Eucharist in theosis, Bulus drew upon a passage in the fourth gospel that was incorporated in eastern and western liturgies:

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For

my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.³⁴

A modern writer commented: “Bulus derives his conclusion that the act of partaking in the eucharistic bread grants us a participation in the life-giving, divine body of Christ.”³⁵

The eastern church fathers and their successors were not unanimous on the precise meaning of theosis, and some did not discuss the concept at all. Nevertheless, a consensus emerged that man potentially could participate in the divine nature—or perhaps return to the primeval divinity—in this life or the hereafter. In its most complete form theosis envisioned man becoming a divine hypostasis—not an ontological one, like the persons of the trinity, but an hypostasis of adoption, appropriate to our creaturely nature. “Weaker” forms envisioned “living in Christ” or some kind of union with Christ.

Theosis in Eastern Orthodoxy

A form of contemplative prayer gained wide popularity among ascetics in the Greek Orthodox Church. Known as *heschasm* (Greek: hesychia, “stillness” or “silence”), it may date back to the fourth century. The practice involves extended periods of solitary meditation. Timothy Ware, a future bishop, explained that the hesychast “is one who devotes himself to the prayer of silence—to prayer that is stripped, so far as is possible, of all images, words, and discursive thinking.”³⁶ Despite the intent to avoid verbal formulas, hesychastic practice was often accompanied by silent repetition of the Jesus Prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”). Recitation was often synchronized with inhalation and exhalation of the breath. Hesychasm has been compared with the South Asian disciplines

of mantra yoga and *pranayama*. Practitioners, most of them monks or hermits, reported heightened states of consciousness, profound mystical experiences, and a sense of the divine light. Hesychasm came to be regarded as the royal road to theosis.

Hesychastic prayer came under attack in the 14th century from critics influenced by western scholasticism, notably Barlaam of Calabria, Barlaam asserted that contemplation was worthless and that the only way to God lay through the intellect. Plato might have agreed with him, but the Neoplatonist who valued mystical experiences would certainly have disagreed. Hesychasm’s critics further asserted that it was impossible for finite beings to gain knowledge of a transcendent, unknowable God. Claims to have seen the divine light were blasphemous.

Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), a monk of Mount Athos in Greece and later archbishop of Thessaloniki, emerged as the champion of hesychasm and its related theology. He cited hesychasm’s origins in antiquity and quoted liberally from the church fathers on the theological issues. Gregory agreed that the *essence* (Greek: *ousia*) of God can never be known, even in the hereafter, but he insisted that knowledge of God’s “uncreated energies” or “uncreated light,” was possible in both this life and the next. “Uncreated” became an important concept in Orthodox theology, with the connotation that the energies proceeded *ontologically* from God’s very being, rather than from any specific action God might take. We might explain the process by analogy with electromagnetic energy radiating from the sun; that is just what the sun is and does. The uncreated light was manifest in Christ’s transfiguration on Mount Tabor, an event to which Eastern Orthodoxy attaches much greater significance than the western church does. The hesychast, Gregory argued, was granted an experience of the same light and thereby gained true spiritual knowledge of God.

Gregory Palamas’ theology of divine essence and energies and his explanation of the divine light had lasting influence on

Eastern Orthodox thought, and he is listed in the eastern calendar of saints. His work did not end the controversy, however, and “Palamites” and “anti-Palamites” have continued to debate the merits and propriety of hesychasm. Yet both parties maintained the mystical orientation that has always characterized Eastern Orthodox theology.

Best-known of 20th-century Palamites was the academic theologian Vladimir Nikolayevich Lossky (1903–58). Exiled from Russia in the 1920s, Lossky moved to Paris and graduated from the Sorbonne. Tragic as his exile was from a personal standpoint, it became a platform from which he brought Orthodox mystical theology to a western audience.

Lossky agreed with Gregory of Nyssa that deification could be attained only after death, but he insisted that the necessary preparation must be done in this life.³⁷ Like Gregory Palamas, Lossky regarded contemplative prayer as the best preparation for theosis. But he regarded ecstasy as merely a beginner’s response to the contemplative experience, and he warned against “giving any particular image to the Godhead.”³⁸ Lossky explained the uncreated light seen by contemplatives as “the visible quality of the divinity, of the energies or grace in which God makes Himself known. It is not a reality of the intellectual order Nor is it a quality of the sensible order. The divine light, being given in the mystical experience, surpasses at the same time both sense and intellect.”³⁹ The light “is proper to God by His nature: eternal, infinite, existing outside space and time.”⁴⁰

Lossky related the hesychastic experience to the receipt of divine love, expressed by the triune Godhead and communicated by the

Holy Spirit. But the “Love of God is necessarily bound up with love of one’s fellow man. That perfect love will make a man like Christ, for; in his created nature he will be united with the whole of humanity.”⁴¹ As a result, contemplation could not be separated

from the impulse to serve. Citing Maximus, Lossky declared that contemplation without action “differs in no way from imagination, from fantasy without any real substance.”⁴²

The theologian who did the most detailed work on theosis was Sergei Nikolaevich Bulgakov (1871–1944). A Russian Orthodox priest, he also fled to Paris, but he and the much younger Lossky were never close; they even belonged to competing branches of the émigré Orthodox Church. Lossky

disagreed with key areas of Bulgakov’s teachings, particularly those relating to Sophia, the divine feminine hypostasis of wisdom. Ecclesiastical authorities eventually forced Bulgakov to retract certain of those teachings as heretical.⁴³ Most of his work on theosis was never seriously challenged, however, and his and Lossky’s work can be viewed as complementary.

Bulgakov agreed with Gregory of Nyssa that Christ’s incarnation was motivated not only by humanity’s need for redemption but more importantly by God’s plan to glorify humanity. In response to the plan, “Man desires to become a son of God and enter into that glory of creation, and he is predestined to this. Out of natural man, he is called to become a god-man.”⁴⁴ That goal became possible when divine and human nature were united in Christ. The glorification of Christ’s humanity was begun at the incarnation and completed when Christ ascended into heaven. “The God-Man’s earthly humanity follows His Ascension to heaven, first the Most

[T]he eastern understanding of theosis reminds us of Platonic and modern esoteric teachings that anticipate a return to the divine realm after the sojourn in physical existence. Importantly ... theosis has a group implication; it is not to be regarded as a reward for individual sanctity but as an event that unites the whole of humanity more firmly with the Trinity.

Holy Mother of God, and then the entire Church in the age to come. This is the deification of humanity. . . . The Father saves and deifies the world through the Son, the God-Man, and it is through the Son that He sends the Holy Spirit into the world.”⁴⁵ Christ’s mother Mary, Bulgakov declared, has already achieved “perfect theosis.”⁴⁶

Bulgakov reiterated Bulus al-Bushi’s assertion that the Eucharist both symbolizes and facilitates the approach to theosis: “Christ who sits in Glory at the right hand of the Father is the same Christ who institutes the Last Supper and personally offers communion to His disciples. And He has continued to do this from that time forward, as the Church attests in its liturgical prayer.”⁴⁷ Bulgakov also agreed with Lossky on the important role of the Holy Spirit: “Divine humanity in process of being accomplished presupposes the union of the divine and human natures, or of divine and created Wisdom, in the one hypostasis of the Logos. But this union has to be effected by the Holy Spirit, more than that, *is* the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁸ Reference to Wisdom revealed Bulgakov’s interest in sophiology.

In another work Bulgakov discussed humanity’s approach, or perhaps return, to the divine image in which it was created. Identification with the divine image, he declared, “is the task and goal of creation. God creates future ‘gods by grace’ for inclusion in the multihypostatic unity of the Holy Trinity and in the unity of the divine life.”⁴⁹ Bulgakov came close to suggesting that a divine *nous* or *pneuma*, distinct from the *psyche*, could be restored in the human constitution. “Man,” he declared, “is created as the god-man in the sense that, in his creaturely psycho-corporeal essence, he contains a spirit of divine origin.”⁵⁰ Only a degree of ambiguity saved him from direct confrontation with the Fourth Council of Constantinople.

When Bulgakov lay dying, he seemed to undergo a personal transfiguration. The nuns caring for him reported: “We were

witnesses in an amazing spectacle. [His] face had become completely illuminated. It was a single mass of real light. . . . The phenomenon was so extraordinary and joyous that we nearly cried from inner happiness. This lasted for about two hours.”⁵¹

Theosis in the West

The western church valued its contemplative religious orders. And Meister Eckhart, Catherine of Siena, John of the Cross, and many others spoke of the sense of union with God. According to John of the Cross (1542–1591), such union comes to pass when God grants the soul this supernatural favor, that all the things of God and the soul are one in participant transformation; and the soul seems to be God rather than a soul, and is indeed God by participation; although it is true that its natural being, though thus transformed, is as distinct from the Being of God as it was before, even as the window has likewise a nature distinct from that of the ray, though the ray gives it brightness.⁵²

Based on their experiences, the great mystics stressed the distinction between mystical and rational knowledge. The former, which they declared to be superior, afforded experience of the divine light and knowledge of God beyond what reason, even reason enlightened by faith, could offer. The western mystics were careful to avoid any suggestion that they actually took on the divine nature; the Creator–creature divide was too strong, despite the argument that Christ’s incarnation had bridged that divide. On the other hand, the semblance of being divine happened in their own lifetimes.

Significant as we now regard them, the writings of the western mystics received relatively little attention in their own time. Western Christianity was theologically oriented and its theology intellectually based. When western apologists discussed theosis at all, they approached it from an intellectual standpoint. As a result their discussions lacked the force and passion of direct experience—and also guaranteed that statements conformed to established dogma.

The early scholastic, Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109), proposed an ontological proof for the existence of God. Anselm, a Benedictine monk of Burgundian birth who became archbishop of Canterbury, defined God as “that than which nothing greater can be conceived.” Few people at the time would have suspected that he was discussing theosis. With increasing interest in theosis, however, attempts have been made to show that Anselm’s proof implied perfection in creation: “The acknowledgement of who God is, is equally rooted in a clear and distinct perception of who we are as creatures in light of that end for which God created us.”⁵³ Perhaps Anselm considered the possibility that perfection might be the end-point in creaturely human destiny.

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), considered the greatest of the scholastics, wrote extensively on the topic of grace, and in the process provided some support for theosis. In a reference to *2 Peter*, he wrote: “The gift of grace surpasses every capability of created nature, since it is nothing short of a partaking of the Divine Nature.”⁵⁴ However, Aquinas was more interested in the beatific vision, which—in a departure from its Platonic origins—he believed to be attained when the soul is reunited with the body and sees God “face to face.”⁵⁵ The relationship between grace and theosis was discussed in more detail by the 20th-century Jesuit scholar Karl Rahner. Rahner asserted that grace “accomplishes in humanity a divinizing participation in God’s being.”⁵⁶ Moreover, grace is “the innermost and enduring deification of the world.”⁵⁷

Protestantism became openly hostile toward contemplation and mysticism, and whatever elements of mystical theology might have survived in the Church of Rome were soon suppressed in the new churches of the West. Notwithstanding, bold attempts have been made to find evidence of theosis in the works of Martin Luther and John Calvin.⁵⁸ To do so, it was necessary to reexamine their writings and distinguish their own comments from what became Lutheran and Calvinist dogma. It was also necessary to

dilute the notion of deification from participation in the divine nature to some kind of “union with Christ.” Even then the outcome has not been persuasive. Calvinist teachings on the depravity of fallen human nature can more easily be depicted as the very antithesis of theosis.

Anglicanism, which sought to position itself somewhere between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, was more sympathetic to theosis. Bishop Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626), one of the Caroline Divines, spoke of “The great promise of the Old Testament . . . that He [Christ] should partake of our human nature; and the great and precious promise of the New, that we should . . . partake of His divine nature.”⁵⁹ Our opportunity to do so was established by Christ’s incarnation and continued through its extension in the Eucharist.

John Wesley (1703–91), whom history remembers as the founder of Methodism, in fact remained an Anglican clergyman throughout his ministerial life. He was inspired by the work of Clement of Alexandria and also studied theosis in its Eastern Orthodox context. Wesley supported the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, but he also insisted that even after a person’s justification “sin remains in him, yea, the seed of all sin, till he is sanctified.” Throughout life, Wesley declared, “a believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace.”⁶⁰ Wesley and his hymn-writer brother Charles believed that sanctification, which was “freely given us” by God, could make a Christian “perfect in love.” Their doctrine of sanctification, affirmed by later generations of Methodists, became “a domesticated (or democratized) version of the more ancient doctrine” of theosis.⁶¹ We shall see later that John Wesley also shared important insights on when deification might be achieved.

Richard Meux Benson (1824–1915), who founded the Society of St John the Evangelist, an Anglican religious order, pursued the theme of theosis as “glorification of the creature.” Glorification was made possible

by Christ's incarnation, which itself was the preordained outcome of creation:

Creation by the Word implies the incarnation of the Word as necessary to the glorification of the creature by the Word, so as to justify according to our finite experience and contemplation the act of Eternal wisdom from whence creation sprang. The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation meets this necessity and shows the moral purpose of Creation in its successive developments to be worthy of the wisdom of God.⁶²

Arthur Michael Ramsey (1904–88) studied Eastern Orthodox theology for many years before becoming archbishop of Canterbury in 1961. He too approached theosis from the standpoint of divine glory. That glory was expressed openly in the transfiguration but was manifest throughout Christ's time on earth, even in the crucifixion. Moreover, Ramsey declared that God "who created the world for his glory will glorify His creatures and lead them to glorify Him. The end is a new creation, forged from out of the broken pieces of a fallen creation, filled with glory and giving glory to its maker."⁶³ Participation in the divine glory can come in a variety of ways, notably through the Eucharist, which "unites those who partake with the glory of Christ as He now is—risen [and] ascended."⁶⁴ "[T]he eucharistic worship of the Church," Ramsey explained, "is on its godward side a participation in God's glorifying of the Father, and on its manward side a receiving of God's glory—the glory of the Cross."⁶⁵

Meetings between Ramsey and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople led to formation of Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussions (AOJDD), an ecumenical commission that met from 1973 through 1989. The commission examined a range of theological issues and published several "agreed statements." Its Moscow Statement of 1976 addressed the topic of theosis, beginning with the general comment that:

God is both immanent and transcendent. By virtue of the divine self-revelation,

man experiences personal communion with God. By faith and through obedience he shares truly in the divine life and is united with God the Holy Trinity. By grace he enjoys the pledge and first-fruits of eternal glory.⁶⁶

The commission affirmed a tradition of support for theosis in both East and West: "To describe the fullness of man's sanctification and the way in which he shares in the life of God, the Orthodox Church uses the Patristic term *theosis kata charin* (divinization by grace)."⁶⁷ "Anglicans," the report continued, "do not reject the underlying doctrine which this language seeks to express; indeed, such teaching is to be found in their own liturgies and hymnody." Part of that hymnody, of course, was the work of Charles Wesley. Despite its affirmation of theosis the commission felt compelled to include a warning: "[H]owever close this union [with God] may be, there remains always an all-important distinction between God and man, Creator and creature, infinite and finite."⁶⁸ Whether Bulgakov would have agreed is an interesting question.

The topic of theosis also came up in the AOJDD's Dublin Statement of 1984. The commission affirmed that members of the church "are united with Christ and with each other through participation in the Eucharist." "Through this union," it added, "they are being conformed to his true humanity, filled with his divinity, and made 'partakers of the divine nature.' In its totality the Church incorporates both living and departed in the communion of the saints."⁶⁹ The statements of the AOJDD and similar ecumenical commissions provide semi-authoritative summaries of the beliefs of both sides and show the extent to which eastern and western theological opinion has converged over the last 100 years.

Clearly, theosis is not unknown in the West. But it has had virtually no impact on religious beliefs and practices, and few western Christian clergy or laypersons would know what the concept means. Even in the scholarly circles where theosis has been explored,

it is a weaker concept than in the eastern churches. Notwithstanding some variation, theosis is generally interpreted in the West as becoming *like* God or Christ rather than becoming divine. Attempts have recently been made to link theosis with Carl Jung's theory of individuation.⁷⁰

The Intermediate State

Most of us are unlikely to achieve theosis in this life. Gregory of Nyssa, Vladimir Lossky, and others insisted that it is attainable only after death. Yet there is also a sense that one's entire life is the pathway to deification. If theosis is possible for more than a tiny fraction of the human family, further opportunities must exist where the process can be completed.

Church father Irenaeus suggested that opportunities for spiritual growth extend beyond the grave. A century later, Origen (185–254), Plotinus' classmate in the Neoplatonic school of Ammonias Saccas, took up the theme and laid the groundwork for what became the doctrine of purgatory. Purgatory (Latin: *purgare*, "to cleanse or purify") was viewed as a place or state where the soul could be cleansed prior to entry into heaven. Belief in continued growth encouraged the practice of prayers for the dead.

Over the course of the Middle Ages, notions of purgatorial cleansing gathered steam and also took on an increasingly punitive quality, culminating in the 14th century with the vivid images in Dante Alighieri's *Purgatorio*.⁷¹ The mature doctrine was outlined by the Council of Florence (1431–37), and reaffirmed by the Council of Trent a century later. Purgatory was declared to be a state of temporal punishment for sins which had been forgiven by the sacrament of penance, but which still required "satisfaction." Foresighted people could invest in indulgences and chantry masses in the hope of

reducing their sentences in purgatory.⁷² Well-wishers could pray for their souls with similar hopes.

Eastern Orthodox Christianity never embraced the doctrine of purgatory, but it retained the notion of continued opportunity for spiritual growth, including growth toward theosis. A modern writer explained: "[I]t is the Orthodox understanding that sanctification continues on, in some way, into the world beyond—especially in the beginning stages of the next life. The Church believes that our prayers for the departed can help them in this process of healing and purification."⁷³ The same writer explained the continued sanctification as a process of "cleansing and purifying," adding: "This purification process in no way involves undergoing punishments for confessed and repented sins. To the Orthodox, God's boundless love and mercy make such an idea quite preposterous."⁷⁴ The nature of the post-mortem experience was rarely discussed in the older Orthodox literature. Unexpectedly, we find the most extensive discussions in the West.

The Protestant Reformers rejected the notion of purgatory, partly because it lacked scriptural support and partly because of distaste for chantries and indulgences. Neither did they allow any further opportunities for spiritual growth. A person's fate, they insisted, was sealed at the point of death—with the consequence that praying for the dead was pointless. Official Protestant doctrine offered a stark heaven–hell dichotomy, with no provision for borderline cases.⁷⁵ Whether the wicked deserve hell, or the righteous merit heaven, continues to be debated by moral theologians. The doctrine of double predestination, in which certain souls were predestined to be saved and the rest to be damned, further complicated considerations of divine justice.

A viable alternative to purgatory was suggested by John Wesley. Wesley sought to counter the prevalent evangelical belief in “instant conversion” by emphasizing progressive sanctification throughout life and also after death. Sanc-

tification might continue in an “intermediate state” between death and the resurrection of the body. Following Orthodox precedents, the intermediate state was not punitive, like the purgatory of the Council of Florence; it was a state of rapid learning. We shall learn more about God’s nature and works “in an hour,” Wesley wrote, “than we could in an age, during our stay in the body.”⁷⁶ “We cannot tell,” he added, “how we shall then exist, or what kind of organs

we shall have: the soul will not be encumbered with flesh and blood; but probably it will have some sort of ethereal vehicle.”⁷⁷

Wesley’s concept of intermediate state was slow to gain acceptance in the Church of England. An 18th-century colleague,

Augustus Toplady, condemned it as “your new-fangled doctrine of the intermediate state of departed souls.”

James Strong (1822–94), Methodist biblical scholar better known for his *Concordance*, provided the most detailed discussion of the intermediate state. In *The Doctrine of a Future Life* (1891) he cited numerous scriptural passages in support of continued consciousness after death. The intermediate state, he said, could be understood as a condition of “enjoyment as in a pleasant dream of interior consciousness.”⁷⁸ The stories of the widow’s son, Jairus’ daughter, and

Lazarus showed that persons could temporarily return from the intermediate state, though they remembered nothing of their experience. Strong pointed to the work of the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg

who claimed ability to see into that realm. As to the length of time spent in the intermediate state, Strong speculated that it could be “immense,” but the soul would experience it “in the twinkling of an eye.”⁷⁹

Assertions that theosis is impossible until after the resurrection create interest in Strong’s remarks on the nature of the resurrected body. In a discussion that the Apostle Paul would have applauded, Strong dismissed suggestions that it will be composed of the same atoms that comprised the mortal body. It will be a glorified body “animated by the same soul” and perfect vehi-

cle.⁸⁰ In Christ’s case, the marks of the crucifixion showed the “minute correspondence” between his resurrected body and the body that died on the cross. However, his glorified body—whose form was anticipated by the transfiguration—was able to pass through closed doors, and he was free from pain, disease, and other human limitations.⁸¹ The glorified bodies of the saints, Strong continued, are evident from the “luminousness” with which they are portrayed. Their bodies are “infused and dominated by their higher mental and moral nature, instead of serving merely as organs for earthly and fleshly purposes.” “Every purpose of creation effected, every ambition realized, every end consummated, nothing will exist to break the even flow of joyful existence.”⁸²

Two nineteenth-century Anglican clergymen lent their support to the intermediate state: John Henry Newman and Lloyd Russell. Newman (1801–90) preached on that topic

[A]comprehensive system of Christian esotericism could appeal to large numbers of practicing Christians whose questions are not being answered by traditional doctrine. It could also appeal to significant segments of the esoteric community who recognize Christianity’s continued relevance in the Aquarian Age and its role in the New World Religion when ‘The living Christ will assume His rightful place in human consciousness.’

in 1836, nine years before he converted to Roman Catholicism. The sermon was based on the passage in *Revelation*, which stated that martyrs “should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”⁸³ Another relevant text was: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord . . . that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”⁸⁴ Newman portrayed the intermediate state as a place where imperfect souls “may have time for growing . . . and perfecting the inward development of the good seed sown in their hearts . . . a time of maturing that fruit of grace.”⁸⁵

Lloyd Russell, vicar of the Church of the Annunciation, Chislehurst, England, preached on the intermediate state in 1885. The departed, he declared, “are in possession of consciousness, memory, and sensibility to pain and pleasure” and must experience “progressive purification of the soul.” Otherwise, he insisted, “we must conclude either that that absolute holiness is not a necessity for admission to Heaven, which is contrary to Scripture, or else that each person when he dies is at once fitted either for the Presence of God or the abode of the lost.”⁸⁶ Issues of divine justice clearly were on his mind.

The subject of the intermediate state was addressed in ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Eastern churches. In its Dublin Statement the AOJDD linked the concept to traditional beliefs in Eastern Orthodoxy. Citing the passage “from glory to glory” in *2 Corinthians*: the commission declared: “[I]n the view of the Orthodox and also of many Anglicans, further progress and growth in the love of God will continue for ever.”⁸⁷ “After death,” the AOJDD emphasized, “this progress is to be thought of in terms of healing rather than satisfaction or retribution . . . [W]e are agreed in rejecting any doctrine of purgatory which suggests that the departed through their sufferings are making ‘satisfaction’ or ‘expiation’ for their sins.”⁸⁸ The commission added: “The traditional practice of the Church in praying for

the faithful departed is to be understood as an expression of the unity between the Church militant and the Church triumphant, and of the love which one bears to the other.”⁸⁹

Synthesis with Esoteric Teachings

Building a synthesis of understanding of human destiny based on Christian doctrine and modern esoteric teachings would require more than agreement on terminology, though that would be a necessary beginning. It would require convergence in longstanding and treasured beliefs—not all uniform within either the Christian or the esoteric traditions. Which opinions on each side should be represented in a synthesis, and what would be the impact of setting others aside? Underlying the whole endeavor would be concern over the salability of any synthesis that might emerge. How many Christians and how many esotericists would be willing to embrace such a synthesis? These various questions cannot all be addressed, still less resolved, here; but a few areas can be identified where progress could be made.

Christian theologians are not unanimous in their understanding of the human condition and the purpose of Christ’s incarnation. One belief is that humanity is hopelessly mired in sin and that Christ died on the cross just to save a few souls from eternal damnation. This article, by contrast, has examined a well-developed belief that humanity has a divine destiny and that Christ’s incarnation was a preordained mission to quicken the approach to that destiny. Gregory of Nyssa and Bulgakov affirmed that the primary purpose of Christ’s incarnation was to effect, what esotericists would call, a major initiation of the human race. Esotericists should not be averse to the notion of theosis, understood as a major stage in human spiritual evolution.

Western apologists generally have viewed theosis as some form of union with Christ or acquisition of Christ-like characteristics

through piety, service, and moral choice. Eastern apologists envision a more profound transformation of human nature and its

future potential. They assert that the quickest way to achieve theosis is through rigorous ascetic and contemplative practices; for them, hesychasm has provided the best way. But the West is not without its own contemplative tradition. In either case, theosis may be attainable by a few individuals in this lifetime. For a greater number it would be attained after physical death, perhaps after the resurrection of the body, which Aquinas assumed to be necessary for the soul to be complete. The possible interpretations of “resurrection” will be discussed in due course.

Christ’s descent into human form, according to the stronger forms of theosis, permanently expanded or transformed human nature. That descent, customarily described by the theological concept of *kenosis*, or Christ’s “emptying” of his divine attributes, and *theosis*, the reciprocal elevation of human nature, were viewed as complementary concepts.⁹⁰ Furthermore, some kind of personal “kenosis” was seen as a prerequisite for theosis. John of the Cross captured that sense of personal kenosis when he spoke of the need to rid oneself “of every mist and stain” of creaturely existence.⁹¹ Esotericists would recognize a comparable need, though the object of the kenosis probably would be the thrall of the lower self.

Esoteric students should find several points of agreement with Bulgakov’s partial reinstatement of the divine *nous*, so long as the *nous* is defined as something more than just the rational mind. Furthermore, the eastern understanding of theosis reminds us of Platonic and modern esoteric teachings that anticipate a return to the divine realm after the sojourn in physical existence. Importantly, as Lossky pointed out, theosis has a group implication; it is not to be regarded as a reward for individual sanctity but as an event that unites the whole of humanity more firmly with the Trinity. Perhaps we see a resonance with the Platonic notion of

shared origins in the primeval divine emanation. Certainly we see resonance with modern esoteric teachings of the future synthesis of humanity.

The Protestant doctrine of immediate disposition to heaven or hell, the Roman Catholic doctrine of a retributive purgatory, and the notion of an intermediate state of healing and continued sanctification represent a significant progression of ideas—though they did not appear in that chronological order. Notions of the intermediate state bring Christian doctrine closest to the understanding of ongoing human progress promoted by esotericists from Plato onward.

Christian apologists were reluctant to speculate on where the soul would reside or what experiences it might have in the intermediate state. Esotericists would want to press Christians to acknowledge the possibility that souls could incarnate in new bodies as part of the healing and sanctification process. It may well be possible to reconcile belief in the intermediate state with belief in reincarnation, and the acquisition of a new body would certainly be one interpretation of “resurrection.” Esotericists would agree with Strong’s comment on the length of time spent in the intermediate state but might challenge his suggestion that the time would pass “in the twinkling of an eye.”

Traditional Christian doctrine in both West and East declares that each individual is granted only one probationary lifetime. But that doctrine may not have been pervasive in early Christianity. Church father Origen, who was influenced by Platonic philosophy, taught that the soul preexisted the body. He may also have believed in reincarnation.⁹² The Second Council of Constantinople was convened in 553 primarily to condemn

Origenian preexistence as heretical. Its declaration is often cited as implying condemnation of reincarnation, but no ecumenical council has formally declared belief in reincarnation heretical. The major denominations continue to promote the one-lifetime doctrine, despite growing belief in a reincarnational cycle among Christians and non-

Christians alike, as a result of the New Age movement and more serious esoteric studies. What changes may be accommodated in the future remains to be seen.

The intermediate state has a strong correlation with the *Bardo*, described at length in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*.⁹³ Indeed the word “Bardo” literally means “intermediate state.”⁹⁴ The Bardo is believed to be a state of existence between death and rebirth in which the disembodied consciousness has a series of experiences—frightening or healing, according to the individual’s progress on the spiritual path—through which it moves toward “liberation.” Conventionally it is divided into three phases: the *chikhai bardo*, or “bardo of the moment of death”; the *chonyid bardo*, or “bardo of the experiencing of reality”; and the *sidpa bardo*, or “bardo of rebirth.”⁹⁵ Rituals performed and prayers offered by survivors, analogous to Christianity’s requiem and prayers for the dead, are believed to facilitate the individual’s progress.

Opportunities for further work include reconciling theosis with one or more of the planetary initiations.⁹⁶ A possible candidate would be the third initiation, in which “conscious recognition of the monad becomes possible.”⁹⁷ A better candidate would be the fifth initiation, the level of “relative perfection” in human evolution. Christian esotericists sometimes equate the fifth initiation with Christ’s resurrection, providing a neat sequence from the nativity (the first initiation) through the ascension (the sixth). Trans-Himalayan teachings, however, suggest that Christ attained either the sixth or the seventh initiation at his resurrection.⁹⁸ The seventh initiation is termed the “true resurrection.”⁹⁹

Bailey commented that that fifth initiation “is the true time of emergence from the tomb of darkness and constitutes an entrance into a light of an entirely different nature to any hitherto experienced.”¹⁰⁰ That light could very well be the “divine light” reported by the hesychasts, whether or not “emergence from the tomb” refers to resurrection.

The rare individuals believed to have attained theosis in their lifetimes may have been new masters. James Strong’s comments on the resurrected body could be compared with esoteric teachings on the *mayavirupa*, the glorified bodies manifested by fifth-degree initiates.¹⁰¹

The most serious obstacle to synthesis lies in the description of Christ’s natures and personhood. The Chalcedon decree essentially ended the development of christology; the only significant addition came in 680 when the Third Council of Constantinople decreed that Jesus Christ had both a human and a divine will. Enduring Christian dogma declares that Jesus Christ was, and remains, a single hypostasis, or “person,” with two distinct natures and two wills. Bulgakov spoke of “two streams of life” without separation but also without confusion.¹⁰² Church leaders insist that the hypostatic union of divinity and humanity, which also underlies the Christian understanding of theosis, was demanded by the redemptive act.

Trans-Himalayan teachings describe “Jesus Christ” as the union of two human individualities, both of whom attained individualization on this globe, the latter “only” two (or possibly three) initiatory grades above the former.¹⁰³ Christian theologians would not regard that description of Christ as sufficiently divine—though “divine” and “God” are imprecisely defined in Christian doctrine. They would also react to suggestions that the human–divine union was only temporary. Esotericists stress, however, that Christ carried with him the Second Aspect energy and intent of the Planetary Logos; they also stress that the union was no ordinary partnership.

Concluding Remarks

The concepts of theosis and the intermediate state offer more favorable prospects for narrowing the gap between Christian doctrine and modern esotericism than do better-known Christian teachings on human destiny. On the other hand, the human condition and the afterlife are just two of

many issues that have divided Christianity from esoteric philosophy over the centuries.

A viable system of esoteric Christianity, with a robust philosophical and ethical foundation, would need to provide satisfactory answers to all or most of the major questions of ultimate concern. Much work clearly remains to be done to reach that goal. Esoteric Christianity is still in its infancy, relative, say, to the esoteric Buddhism that developed in the 19th century. But important steps were taken in the 15th through 17th centuries, with the Hermetic Kabbalah and Rosicrucianism, and in the early 20th century, with Christian Theosophy. Work has continued, and further progress should come quickly as interest increases among practicing Christians and informed esotericists.

The difficulties involved in bridging the gap between Christian doctrine and esoteric teachings should not be underestimated, but several considerations encourage us to try. First, Christ's incarnation bridged the ontological gap between Creator and created. By comparison, securing consensus among sincere human beings on issues like their own destiny should be relatively easy. Second, the Sixth Ray is passing out of manifestation, and narrow ideologies--symptomatic of its crystallizing phase--continue to weaken. Third, and probably resulting from the second, sectarian polemic among Christian denominations, with histories marred by centuries of mutual antagonism, is at an all-time low, and mutual understanding at an all-time high. In particular, the degree of convergence already achieved between western and eastern Christianity has exceeded expectations.

Bridging the gap will require more than just scholarship and negotiation. Attempts to reduce issues extending over multiple levels of reality to a set of intellectual formulas are futile. We no longer believe, as Plato did, that man's highest faculty is the rational mind. Differences in describing Christ's incarnation and similar matters may be irresolvable at an intellectual level. But synthesis may be possible at the buddhic level.

Inspiration from still higher levels may be forthcoming, once the will exists to let it happen. Meditation, prayer, and contemplation will all be needed. When Henry Hill, bishop of Ontario, was appointed co-chair of the AOJDD in 1980, he moved to an ecumenical Benedictine priory where Anglican, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and other Christians shared a communal life of contemplation. Silent prayer, he commented, "unites us more deeply than our schisms can divide."¹⁰⁴

The Russian Orthodox Church's prominent role in developing and promoting the strong concept of theosis—along with its vibrant mystical theology with many other accomplishments—is highly significant. A passage in Alice Bailey's teachings referred to Russia's ongoing role in the spiritual evolution of the planet:

Out of Russia . . . will emerge that new and magical religion about which I have so often told you. It will be the product of the great and imminent Approach which will take place between humanity and the Hierarchy. From these two centers of spiritual force, in which the light which ever shineth in and from the East will irradiate the West, the whole world will be flooded with the radiance of the Sun of Righteousness.¹⁰⁵

Even if a synthesis of understanding on major theological/philosophical issues can be achieved, it is unlikely to be embraced by Christians of all persuasions, or for that matter by esotericists of all stripes—witness the "christianization" controversy in the Theosophical Society a century ago. Some esotericists and many others are hostile to Christianity because of repression and violence carried out in its name. They should note the distinction made by Pavel Florensky, Bulgakov, and others in the Orthodox tradition between the *mystical church*, which lies outside space and time, and the *historical church* that struggled through the centuries, often failing to live up to its archetype.¹⁰⁶ Other esotericists regard all religion as a thing of the past, a remnant

of the Path of Aspiration, unworthy of anyone committed to discipleship.

Notwithstanding, a comprehensive system of Christian esotericism could appeal to large numbers of practicing Christians whose questions are not being answered by traditional doctrine. It could also appeal to significant segments of the esoteric community who recognize Christianity's continued relevance in the Aquarian Age and its role in the New World Religion when "The living Christ will assume His rightful place in human consciousness."¹⁰⁷

-
- ¹ Plato's *psyche* corresponded to the ancient Egyptian *ka* and the Judaic *nefesh*. In the western mystery tradition the nonphysical component of the human constitution, extending from the etheric vehicle upward, was referred to as the *astral body*, on account of the "twinkling stars" clairvoyants saw in the etheric aura. Writers in the trans-Himalayan tradition unwisely applied "astral" to the emotional/desire body, which clairvoyants describe as being filled with clouds of fog or smoke!
- ² Gerhard Kittel *et al.*, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 1,343. Diacritical marks removed.
- ³ Helena P. Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, 1889; reprint (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1972), 110. Parenthesis in original.
- ⁴ See for example Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar* (New York: Lucis Publ. Co., 1922), xv. Also Charles W. Leadbeater, *Man Visible and Invisible*, 1925, reprint (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1971), 16–20. Note that in trans-Himalayan teachings "Logos" corresponds to "God" rather than Christ.
- ⁵ See for example John F. Nash, *The Soul and Its Destiny* (Bloomington, IL: Authorhouse, 2004), 89–121.
- ⁶ The trinitarian doctrine was formulated by the Councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381). Hypostases, or distinct divine realities, can be compared with the *partzufim* of the theoretical Kabbalah.
- ⁷ Eastern Orthodox Christianity retains the original Nicene language that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone. The western

-
- church modified the creed to state that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son.
- ⁸ That doctrine is referred to as "creationism" (carefully distinguished from the meaning assigned by modern anti-evolutionists). Thomas Aquinas strongly promoted the creationist belief.
- ⁹ Fourth Council of Constantinople, canon 11 and preamble. Online: http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0869-0869_Concilium_Constantinopolitanum_IV_Documenta_Omnia_EN.pdf. The council is not regarded as a major ecumenical council, and some historians claim that the outcome was distorted by voting irregularities. Nevertheless, the notion of the binary human constitution became entrenched in western Christianity.
- ¹⁰ Calvin's teachings on the human condition are often summarized by the acronym TULIP, standing for "total depravity," "unconditional election," "limited atonement," "irresistible grace," and "perseverance of the saints."
- ¹¹ Calvin promoted "single predestination," which referred to the predestination of the elect to heaven. "Double predestination," which asserted that all other souls were predestined to hell, was developed by his successors in the Reformed Church.
- ¹² Nathan R. Kerr, "St. Anselm: *Theoria* and the Doctrinal Logic of Perfection," *Partakers of the Divine Nature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 184.
- ¹³ Kenneth S. Guthrie (ed.), *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library* (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Publishers, 1988), 90.
- ¹⁴ Many other cultures deified secular rulers, including China, Japan and Tibet.
- ¹⁵ *Isaiah* 41:23. All scriptural citations in this article are from the King James Bible.
- ¹⁶ *Psalms* 82:6.
- ¹⁷ *John* 10:34.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:14.
- ¹⁹ *Galatians* 2:20.
- ²⁰ *2 Corinthians* 3:18. See the discussion in Stephen Finlan, "Can We Speak of *Theosis* in Paul?", *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 68–80.
- ²¹ *Hebrews* 12:23.
- ²² *2 Peter* 1:2–4a. Emphasis added.
- ²³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book VI, §38.3. See also book V, §1:8.

- ²⁴ Vladimir Kharlamiv, "Rhetorical Application of *Theosis* in Greek Patristic Literature," *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 121.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 123.
- ²⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration*, §21:1.
- ²⁷ J. A. McGuckin, "The Strategic Adaptation of Deification," *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 105–7.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.
- ²⁹ *John* 1:14.
- ³⁰ McGuckin, "The Strategic Adaptation of Deification," 97. Italicization in original. The term *anakephaliosis* was little used after the patristic era, but Paul Tillich revived it in his *History of Christian Thought* (1972).
- ³¹ The fifth- or sixth-century Syrian Neoplatonist who used the pseudonym "Dionysius the Areopagite" is best remembered for his work on divine emanation through the angelic hierarchies.
- ³² Elena Vishnevskaya, "Divinization as Perichoretic Embrace in Maximus the Confessor," *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 134–6.
- ³³ Cyril was dead by the time debate over Christ's dual nature came to a head. Although the orthodoxy of his teachings was questioned retroactively, he was honored as a saint by both Rome and Constantinople. The Copts regarded him as their spiritual father because of his teachings on the merged natures.
- ³⁴ *John* 6:53–8.
- ³⁵ Stephen J. Davis, "The Coptic-Arabic Tradition of Theosis," *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 168.
- ³⁶ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, new ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1963/1997), 64. Ware, an Englishman, converted to Greek Orthodoxy and eventually became known as Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia.
- ³⁷ Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976), 196.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 211.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 221–2.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 213–5.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 202.
- ⁴³ John F. Nash, "Sophia: the Gnostic Heritage," *The Esoteric Quarterly*, Fall 2009, 29–39.
- ⁴⁴ Sergei Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 1933, translation (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2008), 187.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 405.
- ⁴⁶ Boris Jakim, "Sergius Bulgakov: Russian *Theosis*," *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 253.
- ⁴⁷ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 408.
- ⁴⁸ Sergei Bulgakov, *Sophia, the Wisdom of God* (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Press, 1937), 108–9. Emphasis in original.
- ⁴⁹ Quoted in Boris Jakim, "Sergius Bulgakov," *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 252.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 230.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 256.
- ⁵² John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, §V.7.
- ⁵³ Kerr, "St. Anselm: *Theoria* and the Doctrinal Logic of Perfection," 178.
- ⁵⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Part I–II, §112, 1. Aquinas attributed the statement "God was made man, that man might be made God" to Augustine rather than Athanasius.
- ⁵⁵ For Aquinas's discussion of the beatific vision see his *Summa Theologiae*, Part I–II, §92, 1. See also *1 Corinthians* 13:12.
- ⁵⁶ Francis J. Caponi, "Karl Rahner," *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 263.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 264.
- ⁵⁸ Jonathan Linman, "Martin Luther: 'Little Christs for the World'," *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 189–99. J. Todd Billings, "John Calvin: United to God through Christ," *ibid.*, 200–18.
- ⁵⁹ Lancelot Andrewes, *Ninety-Six Sermons*, reprint, Oxford: Parker, vol. 3, 109. The Caroline Divines were a series of churchmen who preserved the sacramental form of Anglicanism through the period of the English Civil War, bracketed by the reigns of Charles I and II.
- ⁶⁰ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 1777, §17.
- ⁶¹ Michael J. Christensen, "John Wesley: Christian Perfection as Faith Filled with the Energy of Love," *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 223. Parenthesis in original.
- ⁶² Richard M. Benson, "The Virgin Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Foundation of the Christian Religion." Online: <http://anglicanhistory.org/benson/virginbirth.html>.
- ⁶³ A. Michael Ramsey, *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ*, 1949, reprint (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 89.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

- 65 Ibid..
- 66 Anglican–Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussions (AOJDD), Moscow Agreed Statement, 1976, §I, 1–3. Online: http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/ecumenical/dialogues/orthodox/docs/pdf/the_moscow_statement.pdf.
- 67 Ibid. Parenthesis and italicization in original
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 AOJDD, Dublin Agreed Statement, 1984, §4(a). Online: http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/ecumenical/dialogues/orthodox/docs/the_dublin_statement.cfm.
- 70 Pia Chaudhari, master’s thesis, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, 2009.
- 71 *Purgatorio* is the second part of the trilogy *The Divine Comedy*.
- 72 Indulgences were offered by the papacy for various kinds of good works, including making certain pilgrimages, serving on crusades, and donating money. Chantries were sums of money paid to the church for masses to be said, often in perpetuity, for beneficiaries.
- 73 David C. Ford, “Prayer and the Departed Saints,” 1. Online: http://www.holy-trinity-church.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=70&Itemid=131.
- 74 Ibid., 2.
- 75 See the discussion in John F. Nash, *Christianity: the One, the Many* (Bloomington, IL: Xlibris, 2007), vol. 2, 214.
- 76 Wesley, “Letter to Miss B,” April 17, 1776, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley* (New York: Harper, 1827), 322.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 James Strong, *The Doctrine of a Future Life* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1891), 57.
- 79 Ibid., 65.
- 80 Ibid., 70.
- 81 Ibid., 73–8.
- 82 Ibid., 82, 86–7.
- 83 *Revelation* 6:11.
- 84 Ibid., 14:13.
- 85 John H. Newman, “The Intermediate State,” *John Henry Newman: Parochial and Plain Sermons* (Fort Collins, CO: Ignatius Press, 1997), 720–1.
- 86 H. Lloyd Russell, “The Intermediate State and Prayer for the Departed,” *Sermon, All Soul’s Day, 1885* (London: Guild of All Souls, 1885), 8.
- 87 AOJDD, Dublin Agreed Statement, §72.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 See the extensive discussion in Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 213–47. The doctrine of *kenosis* is based on *Philippians* 2:7.
- 91 John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, §V.7.
- 92 John H. Hick, *Death and Eternal Life* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1976), 393–5.
- 93 The book is attributed to the eighth-century Tibetan mystic Padmasambhava.
- 94 No records suggest that John Wesley knew of the *Bardo*, but his choice of the term “intermediate state” is highly significant.
- 95 Graham Coleman, *et al.*, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (London: Penguin Books 2005.)
- 96 For an in-depth discussion of the initiatory path see Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York: Lucis Publ. Co., 1960.)
- 97 Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Publ. Co., 1957), 158.
- 98 Bailey indicated in *Initiation, Human and Solar* (p. 17) that Christ has attained the sixth initiation. But in *The Rays and the Initiations* (p. 730) she stated that he attained the seventh initiation at the resurrection.
- 99 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 643.
- 100 Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 644.
- 101 See for example Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (New York: Lucis Publ. Co., 1934), 761. Also Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, 697.
- 102 Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 244.
- 103 See for example Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 45–9. Also Charles W. Leadbeater, *The Inner Life*, 1910, abridged reprint (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1978), 6–8. Christian theologians refer to division of the person of Jesus Christ as Nestorianism. It was condemned as heretical by the First Council of Ephesus (431) and the Council of Chalcedon (451).
- 104 “Bishop Henry Hill Devoted Years of Study and Dialogue to Orthodoxy,” *AnglicanJournal.com*, October 25, 2006.
- 105 Alice A. Bailey, *The Destiny of the Nations* (New York: Lucis Publ. Co., 1949), 61.
- 106 See the discussion in Nash, *Christianity: the One, the Many*, vol. 2, 280–5.
- 107 Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, 202.

The Second Epistle of Peter Compared to Bailey's Technique of Integration for the Second Ray

Zachary F. Lansdowne

Summary

The Second Epistle of Peter, often referred to simply as Second Peter, is a book of the New Testament of the Bible and is traditionally ascribed to the apostle Peter. It provides a series of instructions that enable Christians to “escape from the corruption that is in the world” and “become partakers of the divine nature.” The instructions in Second Peter are shown to be similar to corresponding ones in Alice Bailey’s “Technique of Integration for the Second Ray.” This demonstration clarifies the meaning of both texts and supports the thesis that Second Peter is the essence of the true or original Christianity that will eventually replace the misinterpretations of Paul and subsequent theologians.

2 Peter 1:1-9

Second Peter, in its first verse, claims to have been written by the apostle Peter, but many scholars over the centuries have disputed that claim. Jerome (347-420 CE), who is acknowledged by the Catholic Church as both a Saint and a Doctor of the Church, explained the basis of their doubt: “Simon Peter ... wrote two epistles which are called Catholic, the second of which, on account of its difference from the first in style, is considered by many not to be his.”¹ Nevertheless, Jerome was a strong proponent of the authenticity of Second Peter and included it in his celebrated translation of the Bible, the Latin Vulgate.

Peter spoke Aramaic, which was the common language in Israel during the first century CE, and was characterized as being “uneducated” (Acts 4:13).² Nevertheless, both First and Second Peter were written in the Greek language. If Peter could not himself speak Greek fluently and wished to send a letter to

Greek-speaking Christians in Asia Minor, he could have dictated a letter in his native Aramaic language for subsequent translation into Greek by a bilingual amanuensis, or secretary. Jerome accounted for the literary differences between First and Second Peter by postulating a different amanuensis for each epistle. First Peter explicitly states that its author used an amanuensis named Silvanus to write that epistle: “By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you” (1 Peter 5:12). Jerome’s conjecture is that Peter also used an amanuensis for his second epistle who was someone other than Silvanus. An alternative conjecture is that Peter wrote Second Peter in Greek himself, because this epistle does not mention the use of an amanuensis and because the lack of secretarial help might be indicated by the common observation that its style is inferior to that of First Peter. For instance, Daniel Wallace, a Professor of New Testament Studies, states, “Simply put, 1 Peter is good Greek while 2 Peter is not.”³ If either of these conjectures is correct, then the difference in style between the two epistles is not greater than what would be expected.

Second Peter was eventually accepted as an authentic epistle of the apostle Peter and included in the official canon by the Council of Hippo (393 CE) and later by the Council of

About the Author

Zachary F. Lansdowne, Ph.D., who served as President of the Theosophical Society in Boston, has been a frequent contributor to *The Esoteric Quarterly*. His book *The Revelation of Saint John*, which provides a verse-by-verse analysis of the entire *Revelation*, was reviewed in the Fall 2006 issue. He can be reached at zackl@sprynet.com.

Carthage (397 CE). This canon consists of the 27 books of our New Testament, regarding which the Council of Carthage decreed: “Aside from the canonical Scriptures nothing is to be read in church under the Name of Divine Scriptures.”⁴

We accept the traditional view that the apostle Peter wrote Second Peter. He is thought to have written it just before his death, because this epistle presciently declares, “I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me” (2 Peter 1:13-14). David Dockery, Professor of Christian Studies, says that Peter had the following intention for writing this epistle: “He wanted to leave a spiritual testament that would provide helpful instruction after his departure.”⁵ Peter is thought to have died in 67 or 68 CE, which is about 35 years after Jesus’s death.

We are primarily concerned with only the first nine verses of Second Peter, denoted as 2 Peter 1:1-9:

Greeting

¹ Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

² May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Make Your Calling and Election Sure

³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-

control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Technique of Integration for the Second Ray

Teachings on the seven rays are contained in both the ancient Hindu *Rig Veda* and modern Theosophy.⁶ Alice Bailey (1880-1949), a modern theosophical writer, states:

A ray is but a name for a particular force or type of energy, with the emphasis upon the quality which that force exhibits and not upon the form aspect which it creates. This is a true definition of a ray.⁷

Every human being is swept into manifestation on the impulse of some ray, and is colored by that particular ray quality, which determines the form aspect, indicates the way he should go, and enables him (by the time the third initiation is reached) to have sensed and then to have cooperated with his ray purpose.⁸

In Theosophy, an “initiation” is said to be a milestone on the spiritual journey. Thus, according to Bailey’s account, every human being is connected to a specific ray and can receive guidance on the spiritual journey from that ray.

Bailey provides “Techniques of Integration” that symbolically depict the pattern of guidance from each ray.⁹ She admits that her techniques are written in such a way that they are difficult to understand: “It is difficult to make easily comprehensible the nature and purpose of these techniques”; “Our study of the Techniques of Integration was definitely abstruse and couched in language quite symbolic.”¹⁰ She also says, “these ray techniques are imposed by the soul upon the personality after it has been somewhat integrated into a

functioning entity and is, therefore, becoming slightly responsive to the soul, the directing Intelligence.”¹¹ Bailey uses the term “soul” to denote the “superconscious self,”¹² and “personality” to denote the mental, emotional, and physical bodies,¹³ although other writers employ these terms in different ways.

If Bailey’s claim is correct, then her techniques depict the intuitive, archetypal patterns that underlie all inspired methods of integration. For example, the esoteric teaching of any religion is expected to be a verbal expression of one of these archetypes, but with some distortions due to the limitations of words. Different exoteric religions might be expressions of the same archetype but with varying distortions. Thus, if her claim is true, it should be possible to show that her techniques, in part or in whole, are similar to various recorded methods of integration that are thought to be inspired.

This article is concerned with only the Second Ray, called “the Ray of Love-Wisdom,” and will demonstrate that 2 Peter 1:1-9 is similar to Bailey’s Technique of Integration for the Second Ray. This Technique is as follows:

“Again I stand; a point within a circle and yet myself.”

The love of love must dominate, not love of being loved. The power to draw unto oneself must dominate, but into the worlds of form that power must some day fail to penetrate. This is the first step towards a deeper search.

The word goes forth from soul to form: “Release thyself from all that stands around, for it has naught for thee, so look to me. I am the One who builds, sustains and draws thee on and up. Look unto me with eyes of love, and seek the path which leads from the outer circle to the point.

I, at the point, sustain. I, at the point, attract. I, at the point, direct and choose and dominate. I, at the point, love all, drawing them to the center and moving forward with the travelling points

towards that great Center where the One Point stands.” What mean you by that *Word*?¹⁴

Bailey states that each of her techniques can be divided into five phases: “The words, covering the process in every case, are *Alignment, Crisis, Light, Revelation, Integration*.”¹⁵ In what follows, our commentary is also divided into these five phases.

Alignment

In the first phase of the integration process, the aspirants bring their mental, emotional, and physical bodies into increased *alignment* with their soul. Let us examine how this phase is treated in both Second Peter and Bailey’s Technique.

Peter’s greeting in the first verse shows that his intended readers are people who have already obtained faith: “To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours.” Although Peter mentions his apostleship in his greeting, he demonstrates humility by putting himself, as to “faith,” on the same level as his readers. Hebrews 11:1 gives this definition: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Peter states that his readers obtained their faith through (or, on the basis of) “the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Here, “the righteousness of our God” might refer to the intuitive instruction of the inner divine voice. For example, in 1 Kings 19:12, God spoke to Elijah through his intuition, described as “the sound of a low whisper.” Bailey uses the term “soul” to denote “the inner divine voice”¹⁶ and refers to “the intuitions which are sent to you from your soul.”¹⁷ “The righteousness of our ... Savior Jesus Christ” might refer to accounts of Jesus’s righteous actions in our physical world. If these associations are correct, then Peter’s intended readers gained their faith through hearing accounts of Jesus’s righteous actions that served as an outer confirmation of the inner divine voice, or soul, that they were hearing within themselves.

Bailey's Technique states in its first sentence: "Again I stand; a point within a circle and yet myself." A standing position indicates spiritual alignment, as in Romans 5:2, "this grace in which we stand." Bailey writes, "Of form and of consciousness, the circle and the point are the natural symbols,"¹⁸ speaks of the soul as one's "own spiritual center,"¹⁹ and uses "higher self" and "lower self" as synonyms for soul and personality, respectively.²⁰ Accordingly, the first sentence has this meaning: the aspirants increase their alignment between their personality and soul, and thereby receive a stream of influence that goes from their higher to lower self. As Bailey explains, "There is therefore a direct way or line (speaking symbolically) between the thinking, meditative, reflective man upon the periphery of the soul's influence and the soul itself, the One Who is at the center."²¹

Bailey does not say in her Technique how the foregoing alignment affects an aspirant psychologically, but she describes these effects elsewhere:

Yet there slowly arises in him a divine discontent; the savor of his life experience and enterprises begins to prove unsatisfactory. Another shift in consciousness takes place, and he reaches out—at first unconsciously and later consciously—to the life and significance of a dimly sensed reality. The soul is beginning to make its presence felt, and to grip in a different sense than hitherto, and in a more active manner, its vehicles of expression and of service.²²

Thus, an aspirant, who achieves the foregoing alignment, reaches out to "a dimly sensed

reality," which implies a conviction, or strong belief, in something intuitively sensed, but not physically seen. According to the earlier definition of faith, this conviction implies

Peter says that we have been granted "all things that pertain to life and godliness," whereas the Technique says that we have the soul's power that "builds, sustains and draws thee on and up." Peter says that we may escape "from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire" to "become partakers of the divine nature," whereas the Technique speaks of "the path which leads from the outer circle to the point."

faith in an invisible transcendent power. The next phase in the Technique assumes that an aspirant has achieved such faith.

In summary, Peter and the Technique give complementary accounts of the alignment phase. Peter assumes that his readers have gained faith, which is a psychological effect of increased alignment with the soul. The Technique depicts increased alignment with the soul, but without mentioning any psychological effects. Thus, the two accounts, taken together, provide a more

complete treatment of this phase than each account considered separately.

Crisis of Evocation

Bailey writes, "The soul is a unit of energy, vibrating in unison with one of the seven ray Lives, and colored by a particular ray light."²³ In other words, each human soul has the quality of a particular ray, which is called its "soul ray." In the second phase of the integration process, the aspirants sense intuitively their soul ray, which in this case is love-wisdom, because they have increased their alignment with their soul. The inconsistency between their sensed potential and their daily life brings them to an inner *crisis* in which they begin to bring forth the guidance of their soul.

Peter, in verse 2, makes a prayerful wish that his readers gain "grace and peace," indicating that they do not yet have those attributes. In the New Testament, "grace" is a translation of the Greek word *charis* and means a merciful favor or benefit bestowed by God.

"Peace" is the translation of *eirene*, which

originally meant peace due to absence of war. In the New Testament, however, it speaks of something far greater than human peace, namely, the peace of God. According to verses 4 and 7, Peter also recognizes that his readers are caught up in “sinful desire” and are not yet expressing “love.” Thus, Peter’s readers face the following crisis: they have faith that an invisible transcendent power exists, but they are unable to express that power in their daily life.

Bailey’s Technique, in its second paragraph, depicts a similar crisis. The aspirants realize that they must devote themselves to love, rather than selfish desire, if they wish to actualize their sensed potential (“*The love of love* must dominate, not love of being loved”). Bailey gives this definition: “Love is that inclusive, non-critical, magnetic comprehension and attitude.”²⁴ Although the aspirants have faith that love exists and want it to dominate their life, they recognize that it is failing to penetrate through their personality (“The power to draw unto oneself must dominate, but into the worlds of form that power must some day fail to penetrate”). Thus, they are preparing themselves for embarking on their spiritual journey (“This is the first step towards a deeper search”).

Light

Because of their crisis of evocation, the aspirants take stock of their situation and search within themselves. Eventually they enter the phase of *light* and see clearly their need to make three kinds of changes: alteration in direction, a change in method, and a different attitude.

Peter, in verses 3 and 4, and the Technique, in its third paragraph, provide exhortations that elucidate each other and describe the changes that need to be made. Peter says that we have been granted “all things that pertain to life and godliness,” whereas the Technique says that we have the soul’s power that “builds, sustains and draws thee on and up.” Peter says that we may escape “from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire” to “become partakers of the divine nature,” whereas the Technique speaks of

“the path which leads from the outer circle to the point.”

Invocation is the act of petitioning for help or support from a greater entity; evocation is the subsequent response of help. The Technique’s phrase, “Look unto me with eyes of love, and seek the path,” exhorts us to have, in Bailey’s words, “conscious Invocation, plus a trained expectancy of a reciprocal Evocation.”²⁵ In particular, the invocation is devotion to the soul, and the reciprocal evocation is the soul’s revelation of the spiritual path. Thus, the “precious and very great promises” in Peter’s exhortation corresponds to the implicit promise in the Technique that an effective invocation is followed by a reciprocal evocation.

Let us consider the meaning of Peter’s exhortation to his readers in verses 3 and 4:

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

These verses set forth *God’s provision for spiritual growth*. Verse 3 states that God has granted to us “all things that pertain to life and godliness,” which means that we have the power for spiritual growth. Verse 4 states that God has granted to us “his precious and very great promises,” which means that we have the incentive for spiritual growth. Through utilizing this power and incentive, we may escape “from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire” to “become partakers of the divine nature.” Lawrence Richards, in his commentary on Second Peter, states, “Peter takes a . . . very practical approach. He says, in effect, step out and use *the resources God has provided!*”²⁶

Next, let us consider the meaning of the Technique’s exhortation. Intuitions go forth from soul to personality and convey the fol-

lowing instructions (“*The word goes forth from soul to form*”). Release yourself from your attachments to people, places, and things, for they will not bring happiness to you, and instead look to the soul (“Release thyself from all that stands around, for it has naught for thee, so look to me”). The soul is the only power that builds and sustains right actions and that raises your consciousness (“I am the One who builds, sustains and draws thee on and up”). Be devoted to the soul, and look for the revelation of the path that leads from your selfish desires to participation in the divine nature (“Look unto me with eyes of love, and seek the path which leads from the outer circle to the point”).

What does devotion to the soul entail? Elsewhere Bailey gives this answer:

The patient (if I might so call him) is taught to take his eyes, and consequently his attention, away from himself, his feelings, his complexes and his fixed ideas and undesirable thoughts, and to focus them upon the soul, the divine Reality within the form ... This eventually regenerates the mental or thought life, so that the man is conditioned by right thinking under the impulse or the illumination of the soul.²⁷

In summary, Peter attempts to stir up his readers so that they will take the spiritual journey, and the Technique provides a similar exhortation, except that it depicts its instructions as coming from the soul.

Revelation

Through their devotion to the soul, the aspirants enter the fourth phase and receive the *revelation* of the path and what they need to do in connection with it. Each aspirant receives the revelation of only his or her next step ahead, which, when taken, enables the subsequent step to be revealed.

Peter, in verses 5, 6, and 7, describes a path having seven steps, each of which cultivates a specific quality: “For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control

with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.”

Bailey’s Technique, in its fourth paragraph, describes a path that also has seven steps: “I, at the point, sustain. I, at the point, attract. I, at the point, direct and choose and dominate. I, at the point, love all, drawing them to the center and moving forward with the traveling points towards that great Center where the One Point stands.”

We regard these two sevenfold paths to be identical, except that Peter emphasizes the role of the personality and writes with unambiguous words, while the Technique emphasizes the role of the soul and is written with abstruse symbols. By combining the accounts from both sources, we can enhance our comprehension of each step.

Peter’s first step is: “make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue.” James 2:17 says, “faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead,” so just having faith in an invisible transcendent power, or soul, is not enough: we must also act on our faith by displaying virtue. The Technique’s description is: “I, at the point, sustain,” which means that our virtues are the sustained emergence of inner qualities that come from the soul. Bailey makes a similar statement: “Basically, all such virtues, good inclinations and attempted sound qualities represent the emergence into expression upon the physical plane of certain energies and tendencies, inherent in the soul itself.”²⁸ For example, the “special virtues” of the Second Ray of Love-Wisdom are said to be: “Calm, strength, patience and endurance, love of truth, faithfulness, intuition, clear intelligence, and serene temper.”²⁹ Thus, the first step is to display outwardly the soul qualities that we believe exist within us.

Peter’s second step is: “supplement your ... virtue with knowledge.” Colossians 1:10 also encourages us to “to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” By displaying virtue, we learn about the transcendent power, or soul, that acts through our virtue. This

knowledge is first-hand, because we learn from our own experiences rather than from the testimony and promises of other people. Bailey also speaks of “that small but steadily growing band of Knowers of God, and of reality, who know the soul to be a fact in their own experience.”³⁰ The Technique’s description is: “I, at the point, attract,” indicating that the soul becomes more attractive to us as we gain first-hand knowledge about it, which draws our interest and attention toward our spiritual center. As the Bible teacher Joyce Meyer explains, “We learn by doing it. We have to step out in faith and as we do we will experience the faithfulness of God, and that makes it easier to trust Him next time.”³¹ Thus, the

second step is to become knowers of the soul, rather than just believers in it, and thereby become more trusting toward it.

Peter’s third step is: “supplement your ... knowledge with self-control. When our interest and attention are oriented toward our spiritual center, we receive revelations from the soul regarding what must be done in our personality life, as Bailey explains: “The searchlight of the soul reveals faults in character, limitations in expression and inadequacies in conduct. These must be intelligently corrected.”³² The Technique’s description is: “I, at the point, direct,” indicating that we gain self-control by directing our thoughts according to the revelations that we receive internally from the soul. As Bailey also explains, “One of the basic laws in occult development and in spiritual unfoldment is given in the words ‘As a man thinketh, so is he.’”³³

Romans 12:2 makes a similar point: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be trans-

formed by the renewal of your mind.” Thus, the third step is to renew our mind through the guidance of the soul.

Peter’s fourth step is: “supplement your ... self-control with steadfastness.” “Steadfastness,” in Bailey’s words, “is the power to stand unmoving in the center of your environment and in the midst of changing circumstance.”³⁴ The Technique’s description is: “I, at the point, ... choose,” indicating that our steadfastness enables us to register the inner choices that the soul makes for us in the midst of our changing circumstance. Bailey gives this explanation: “When, therefore, the need for quiet and poised strength arises and there come those moments when powerful action seems desirable or violent protest or words are

deemed advisable, stand in steadfastness and recollect the need for poise, for patience and the desirability to await right indication of the way to go and the need for speech or for silence.”³⁵ James 1:2-5 also associates steadfastness with receiving wisdom from God during trials: “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.” Thus, the fourth step is to make right choices in stressful situations.

Peter’s fifth step is: “supplement your ... steadfastness with godliness.” Titus 2:11-12 clarifies what “godliness” entails: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in

[A]fter using the light of our soul to perceive the vision of the soul within everyone that we contact, [Peter’s] ... seventh step ... [uses] that light to perceive even further behind, revealing the inner spirit where God Immanent is present. Through this process, we experience “true compassion,” which, in Bailey’s words, “is, predominantly, in the nature of an identification with all beings.”

the present age.” Accordingly, godliness refers to living a consistent, self-controlled, and upright life. The Technique’s description is: “I, at the point, . . . dominate,” indicating that godliness occurs when the soul’s inner guidance dominates all aspects of our daily life. Bailey gives this explanation: “At the stage of *Discipleship*, the soul ray comes into increased conflict with the personality ray and the great battle of the pairs of opposites begins. The soul ray or energy slowly dominates the personality ray, as it in its turn has dominated the rays of the three lower bodies.”³⁶ *A Course in Miracles* says, “It is only because you think that you can run some little part, or deal with certain aspects of your life alone, that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is limited.”³⁷ Here, “Holy Spirit” is a synonym for the soul.³⁸ Thus, the fifth step is to apply the earlier steps to all aspects of our life, no matter how unimportant those aspects may seem to be, including our personal, family, business, community, national, and international responsibilities.

Peter’s sixth step is: “supplement your . . . godliness with brotherly affection.” Here, “brotherly affection” is a translation of the Greek *philadelphia* and is used in the New Testament to denote the type of love that Christians ought have for each other, such as in Romans 12:10: “Love one another with brotherly affection.” The Technique’s description is: “I, at the point, love all, drawing them to the center.” In this sentence, “point” symbolizes our spiritual center, and “center” symbolizes the spiritual center within someone else. Bailey clarifies the required effort: “The flickering soul light in the personal self has enabled the disciple to see the vision of the soul and in that light to reach union with the soul, even if only temporarily.”³⁹ Thus, the sixth step is using the light of our soul to perceive the vision of the soul within everyone that we contact. This perception sees other people as being on our own level with our own spiritual resources, so it results in the feeling of brotherly affection.

Peter’s seventh and final step is: “supplement your . . . brotherly affection with love.” Here, “love” is a translation of the Greek *agape*,

and it is the attitude that God is said to exhibit toward human beings, such as in 1 John 4:9: “In this the love of God was made manifest among us.” The Technique’s description is: “I, at the point, love all, . . . moving forward with the travelling points towards that great Center where the One Point stands.” Bailey clarifies this effort by speaking of “the soul, as the intermediary between spirit and matter,”⁴⁰ and says, “Now the greater light of the soul becomes focused like a radiant sun and it reveals in its turn a still more stupendous vision—that of the Presence.”⁴¹ Thus, after using the light of our soul to perceive the vision of the soul within everyone that we contact, the seventh step is using that light to perceive even further behind, revealing the inner spirit where God Immanent is present. Through this process, we experience “true compassion,” which, in Bailey’s words, “is, predominantly, in the nature of an identification with all beings.”⁴²

Integration

By completing the preceding path, the aspirants achieve *integration*, which is the fifth and final phase. Integration refers to uniting personality with soul so that they act in unison and function as a single organism.

Peter, in verses 8 and 9, describes this final phase: “For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.”

The Technique covers this phase with a single question: “What mean you by that *Word*?” Here, “*Word*” is taken as a flash of inspiration that is conveyed by the soul. This question signifies the effort of converting that flash of inspiration into understanding. Bailey gives this definition: “*The understanding* may be defined as the faculty of the Thinker in Time to appropriate knowledge as the foundation for wisdom, that which enables him to adapt the things of form to the life of spirit, and to take the flashes of inspiration that come to him . . . and link them to

the facts.”⁴³ Accordingly, the understanding is the product of both the soul and personality working together.

Thus, both Peter and the Technique characterize the result of the preceding path in terms of vision. Peter says that whoever does not complete the path “is so nearsighted that he is blind.” On the other hand, the Technique indicates that whoever does complete the path gains clear vision in the sense of having flashes of inspiration and understanding.

Peter, in verses 10 and 11, describes another outcome for his instructions:

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Thus, Peter makes the claim that his instructions lead to what he calls the “eternal kingdom.”

Bailey makes a similar claim as shown next. The most advanced discipline in her Technique of Integration is the seventh step, which is equivalent to what she calls the “Technique of the Presence,” described as the “definite and sustained effort to sense the Presence throughout the Universe in all forms.”⁴⁴ She explains how the Technique of the Presence leads to the third initiation:

The Technique of the Presence. By means of this technique, the soul assumes control of the integrated personality and of its relations, horizontal and vertical. This technique involves the unfolding of the flower of the intuition, dispelling illusion, revealing the Angel, indicating the Presence, and opening up to the disciple the world of ideas and the door of the higher initiations. Through the disciple's grasp and application of these divine ideas or seed thoughts, he becomes initiate and the third initiation becomes possible as an immediate goal.⁴⁵

In this quotation, “Angel” is taken as the soul, because “solar angel” and “soul” are said to be synonymous terms.⁴⁶

Bailey associates the third initiation with entering the “kingdom of God”:

These three words—*individualization*, *initiation* and *identification*—cover the whole process of man's career from the time he emerges into the human kingdom till he passes out of it at the third initiation, and functions freely in the fifth kingdom, the kingdom of God.⁴⁷

The “kingdom of God” is also called the “fifth kingdom of nature” in Theosophy. The first, second, third, and fourth kingdoms are the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms, respectively.⁴⁸ Accordingly, the Technique of Integration for the Second Ray leads to entering the kingdom of God, because this technique incorporates the Technique of the Presence, and the Technique of the Presence leads to the third initiation, and attaining the third initiation is equivalent to entering the kingdom of God. Thus, Peter's explicit claim that his instructions lead to the “eternal kingdom” is similar to Bailey's implicit claim that her instructions lead to the “kingdom of God,” so these two transcendent kingdoms appear to be the same.

Conclusions

Let us consider the following hypothesis: Bailey's “Techniques of Integration” for the seven rays depict symbolically the archetypal patterns of integration that aspirants are intuitively directed to apply to themselves. This hypothesis can be tested by comparing Bailey's ray techniques with various methods of psychological or spiritual integration that are thought to be inspired.

The foregoing demonstration, which shows the similarity between 2 Peter 1:1-9 and Bailey's Technique of Integration for the Second Ray, supports the above hypothesis, because there is evidence that 2 Peter 1:1-9 was inspired. 2 Peter 1:1-9 is written in the form of prophecy, but 2 Peter 1:21 states, “For no prophecy was ever produced by the

will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

Another article shows that the *Tao Te Ching* is similar to the Fourth Ray technique,⁴⁹ and an additional one shows that chapter 10 of the *Revelation of St. John* is similar to the Third Ray technique, and that the *Myth of Isis and Osiris* is similar to the Fifth Ray technique.⁵⁰ Thus, there is increasing evidence that the above hypothesis is correct, namely, that Bailey’s ray techniques do symbolically depict the archetypal patterns of integration.

Bailey speaks of “the Christ, representing the Second Ray of Love-Wisdom,”⁵¹ “true Christianity, as Christ taught it,”⁵² and “integration which Christ so fully exemplified.”⁵³ Accordingly, if Christ represents the Second Ray and if Christ taught a technique of integration, then one might expect that the essence of true Christianity—as Christ originally taught it—is depicted by the Second Ray technique of integration. This expectation is supported by our demonstration that the Second Ray technique is similar to 2 Peter 1:1-9, because the latter is a canonical Christian text attributed to the apostle Peter, who was a direct and leading disciple of Christ. The notion of salvation in 2 Peter 1:1-9 is evolutionary: we are saved from the authority of our threefold personality by progressively developing and expressing our spiritual resources.

Contemporary Christianity generally does not emphasize the technique of integration described in 2 Peter 1:1-9, but instead stresses Paul’s theology of atonement: “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved” (Romans 10:9–10). According to Paul, salvation through Jesus refers to being “saved by him from the wrath of God” (Romans 5:9). This notion of salvation is not evolutionary but rather an abrupt shift in status: we are suddenly saved at the moment that we believe in and outwardly confess some prescribed dogma. Paul’s influence on Christian

thinking has been more significant than any other New Testament author, and indeed about half of the books in the New Testament are attributed to Paul.

Bailey states that contemporary Christianity is a distortion of the Christianity that was originally taught:

St. Paul misinterpreted the esoteric significances of the New Testament message and he misinterpreted because the truth—like all truths as they reach humanity—had to pass through the filter of his personality mind and brain; it was then unavoidably given a personal slant and twist and this is responsible for the sorry historical story of Christianity and the dire plight of the nations today.⁵⁴

The Church has wandered far from the simplicity which is in Christ. Theologians have lost (if they ever possessed it) the “mind that is in Christ” and the outstanding need of the Church today is to relinquish theology, to let go all doctrine and dogma and to turn upon the world the light that is in Christ, and thus demonstrate the fact of Christ’s eternal livingness, and the beauty and the love which it can reflect from its contact with Him, the founder of Christianity but not of Churchianity.⁵⁵

Man’s salvation is determined by the processes of evolution and is not a question of ultimate achievement but simply one of time . . . His salvation is not determined by his acceptance of some dogma, formulated by men who have lost their sense of proportion (and consequently their sense of humor) and who deem themselves capable of interpreting the mind of God for their fellowmen.⁵⁶

Bailey, however, also predicts that the true, or original, Christianity will be restored:

True Christianity, as Christ taught it, is free from theological abuses and must and will be restored or—perhaps more accurately—reach its first stage of expression.⁵⁷

As the essence of Christianity emerges into expression (and in so doing destroys Churchianity) you have again a striking illustration of the truth of what I am seeking to emphasize. In the Christian Church, men have expressed themselves, not the Christ; they have imposed their interpretations of truth on truth itself; they have created a massive organization in every land but a living organism is non-existent. In the new world religion which is on its way, Christianity will be expressed through the creative activity of the Christ spirit through the medium of the world disciples and initiates.⁵⁸

If the foregoing prediction is correct, then our conclusion is that 2 Peter 1:1-9—or equivalently, Bailey’s Technique of Integration for the Second Ray—is the essence of the true, or original, Christianity that will eventually replace the “Churchianity” formed by the distorted interpretations of Paul and subsequent theologians.

-
- ¹ Saint Jerome, *On Illustrious Men* (translated by Thomas P. Halton, Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 5.
- ² The English Standard Version (ESV) is an English translation of the Bible that was published in 2001. The stated intent of the translators was to follow a literal translation philosophy. All biblical quotations in this article come from the ESV.
- ³ Daniel B. Wallace, “Second Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline,” *New Testament: Introductions and Outlines* (Richardson, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 2000), 9; <http://bible.org/seriespage/second-peter-introduction-argument-and-outline> (accessed November 27, 2010).
- ⁴ Walter A. Elwell and Philip W. Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 174.
- ⁵ David S. Dockery, editor, *Holman Bible Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1992), 769.
- ⁶ Zachary F. Lansdowne, “Vedic Teachings on the Seven Rays,” *Esoteric Quarterly*, Spring 2010.
- ⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, Vol. I (1936; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 316.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

-
- ⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II (1942; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1981), 345-378.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 346-347, 378.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 351.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 439.
- ¹³ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 339.
- ¹⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 355.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 347.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 491-492.
- ¹⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I (1944; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 476.
- ¹⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II (1955; reprint. New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1972), 250.
- ¹⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (1934; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 13.
- ²⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (1925; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 48.
- ²¹ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 356.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 337.
- ²³ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 42.
- ²⁴ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I, 59.
- ²⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Problems of Humanity* (1964; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1972), 161.
- ²⁶ Lawrence O. Richards, *The Bible Reader’s Companion* (Baltimore, MD: Halo Press, 1991), 886.
- ²⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (1953; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1978), 119.
- ²⁸ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 85.
- ²⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 202.
- ³⁰ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 17.
- ³¹ Joyce Meyer, *Power Thoughts* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2010), 158.
- ³² Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I, 727.
- ³³ Alice A. Bailey, *The Light of the Soul* (1927; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1978), 382.
- ³⁴ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I, 668.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 308.
- ³⁷ *A Course in Miracles (ACIM)* (second edition; Glen Ellen, CA: Foundation for Inner Peace, 1992), vol. I, 298.
- ³⁸ *ACIM*’s “Holy Spirit” is synonymous with Bailey’s “soul” for two reasons. First, they are

equivalent to equivalent terms: *ACIM*, vol. 1, 76, uses “Voice for God” as a synonym for the Holy Spirit, while Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 491-492, uses “inner divine voice” as a synonym for the soul. Second, “Holy Spirit” in the edited versions of *ACIM* is not necessarily the term that was originally dictated but is sometimes a substitute for the word “Soul” that was in the original dictation. For example, the original dictation, *A Course in Miracles: Urtext Manuscripts* (Jaffrey, NH: Miracles in Action Press, 2009), 53, states, “the mind is split between the ego and the Soul”; but the second edition, *ACIM*, vol. 1, 48, states, “the mind is split between the ego and the Holy Spirit.” Thus, in this instance, an anonymous editor had replaced “Soul,” which was the original word, with “Holy Spirit,” perhaps to make the terminology more consistent throughout the book.

³⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem* (1950; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 180.

⁴⁰ Bailey, *The Light of the Soul*, 411.

⁴¹ Bailey, *Glamour*, 180.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴³ Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar* (1922; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1974), 12.

⁴⁴ Bailey, *Glamour*, 180.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁴⁶ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 48.

⁴⁷ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 27.

⁴⁸ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 422.

⁴⁹ Zachary F. Lansdowne, “The *Tao Te Ching* compared to Bailey’s Technique of Integration for the Fourth Ray,” *Esoteric Quarterly*, Winter 2010.

⁵⁰ Zachary F. Lansdowne, “Use of Ancient Texts to Test Hypotheses on the Seven Rays,” *Esoteric Quarterly*, Summer 2010.

⁵¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (1960; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 369.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 614.

⁵³ Alice A. Bailey, *From Bethlehem to Calvary* (1937; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1989), 139.

⁵⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (1951; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 215.

⁵⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *The Destiny of the Nations* (1949; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1974), 40.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 614.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 296.

The Origins and Nature of Human Consciousness, Part Three: Towards a Holographic Metaphysics of the Human Heart

Christopher P. Holmes

*I cognized the center of the empyrean as a point of intuitive perception
in my heart. Irradiating splendor issued from my nucleus
to every part of the universal structure. Yogananda¹*

*In some sense man is a microcosm of the universe; therefore, what man is,
is a clue to the universe. We are enfolded in the universe. Physicist David Bohm²*

THE SONS EXPAND AND CONTRACT THROUGH THEIR OWN SELVES
AND HEARTS; THEY EMBRACE INFINITUDE. ...
EACH IS PART OF THE WEB.
REFLECTING THE "SELF-EXISTING LORD" LIKE A MIRROR,
EACH BECOMES IN TURN A WORLD.
Stanza of Dzyan, from Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, 1888³

Abstract

If there is truth to the possibilities of life after life, psychical phenomena, experiences of other worlds, disembodied mind, spirits and souls, and so on, then a fundamental revision is required in the modern understanding of the nature of human consciousness and the dimensionality of existence. A human being is something completely different from what is currently imagined in those modern psychological and scientific theories which regard humans as simply biological and material animals evolved through happenstance and random processes, and who lack any soul or spiritual nature. The holographic paradigm emerged in modern psychology and science in the 1980s, based upon the work of neuroscientist Karl Pribram and physicist David Bohm and provided a basis for exploring hidden dimensions of consciousness, space and time. Unfortunately, there were fundamental errors made in the approach. Esoteric and mystical studies suggest that the human holography is based not upon neurological processes in the brain, as largely assumed by modern theorists, but rather, upon the physics and metaphysics of a zero point element or center established within

the multi-dimensional Aether of the heart Space. Yogananda's account of cosmic consciousness is used to illustrate an archaic mystical claim concerning the holographic dimensions to the human heart, and then concepts from modern physics and *The Secret Doctrine* of Helena Blavatsky are used in order to elaborate a holographic model of consciousness and the human heart.

Esoteric Dimensions of Self

One of the most unusual dimensions ascribed to Self or "I" is that of an infinitely small source at zero point levels. An invisible and

About the Author

Christopher P. Holmes was born in England and raised in Ontario, Canada. He earned a PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Waterloo in 1978, taught at York University, Toronto for eleven years and then worked as a forensic psychologist. Christopher currently directs the *Zero Point* Institute for Mystical and Spiritual Science, Kemptville, Ontario. Christopher maintains a website at: www.zeropoint.ca and hosts a bimonthly radio show on www.bbsradio.com.

indivisible, sub-atomic element, a divine element or God spark, exists within the sacred heart space. In the terminology of modern physics, the Self is a quantum, a particle/wave or element existing beyond the atomic level of material organization. The divine spark can be regarded as a “quantum of consciousness” or a “quantum Self.” Alternatively, it can be conceived of as a singularity condition, a first point source of supernal *lux*, minute with no extension in external space/time. This zero point element does not exist within external four dimensional space as such, but underlies this while established within a seven dimensional hyperspace. Modern scientists hypothesize that the vast universe emerged from such an infinitely small singularity at the beginning of time, out of the apparent nothingness of the quantum vacuum, now considered as a seven dimensional hyperspace. The singularities and hyperspace of modern physics bear a profound relationship to the divine sparks described by mystics as emanating out of the mystical void and plenum, the *seven skins of the Mother Deep*, as described by Blavatsky. At the singularity point, the finite merges into the infinite, as the individual Self merges with That Self.⁴

Swami Yogeshwaranand Saraswati notes: “... it is instinctually recognized that Jivatman denoted by the pure form of ‘I’ has its abode in the heart, and in Samadhi there is direct realization of this.”⁵ Both the Jivatma (the Individual Self) that is subtle and minute, and Ishwara (or Paramatman, the Supreme Self) the greatest of all, dwell within the cave of the heart. The jivatma is likened to “an infinitesimal poppy seed,” which has no form or color. This atomic or indivisible entity is embodied *within* the Bliss Sheath, itself a “mass of light filled with bliss.”

A first mystical dimension ascribed to the Self involves such descriptions of a spiritual or divine spark as the smallest of elements. Another mystical dimension ascribed to Self is that of the universe. An ancient Vedic saying declares: “*Thou art that*,” meaning you are the world. As a microcosm of the macrocosm, the individual self, in blending with the larger SELF, reflects or contains all things within Self. The individual spirit soul is a seed or atom of the Supreme Supersoul and can experience the deeper realities

and the larger structures of the universe. In this way, one might *know thy Self, the universe and the Gods*, as suggested by an ancient Greek axiom. Various Upanishads suggest this holographic possibility of the heart as being a microcosm of the larger macrocosm:

Self-luminous is Brahman (God), ever present in the hearts of all. ... In him exists all that moves and breathes. In him exists all that is. ... This Self, who understands all, who knows all, and whose glory is manifest in the universe, lives within the lotus of the heart, the bright throne of Brahman.⁶

As large as the universe outside, even so large is the universe within the lotus of the heart. Within it are heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, the lightening, and all the stars. What is in the macrocosm is in this microcosm ... All things that exist ... are in the city of Brahman.⁷

These are the most paradoxical and unusual claims. How could the “heart” contain the universe within itself and could consciousness somehow expand into such subtle realms of the inner cosmos? This ancient mystical claim illustrates the idea of a part embodying the whole as within the modern holographic paradigm. Similarly, a point source element within the Heart Space might unfold into the larger universe.

Yogananda’s Experience of Cosmic Consciousness

There are reports within the mystical literature of individual experiences which illustrate these paradoxical ideas about the spirit soul being a microcosm of the macrocosm. Paramahansa Yogananda, a twentieth century Indian saint and master of kriya yoga, in his classic work *Autobiography of a Yogi*, provides an extraordinary account of the fantastic possibilities inherent to Self. Yogananda describes his experience of “cosmic consciousness” as initiated by his Master striking him gently over the heart—to awaken it. Yogananda receives grace from his Master in order to “*fulfill his heart’s desire*.” He then experiences these extraordinary states of enlightenment and cosmic consciousness:

My body became immovably rooted; breath was drawn out of my lungs as if by some huge magnet. Soul and mind instantly lost their physical bondage and streamed out like a fluid piercing light from my every pore. The flesh was as though dead; yet in my intense awareness I knew that never before had I been fully alive. My sense of identity was no longer narrowly confined to a body but embraced the circumambient atoms. People on distant streets seemed to be moving gently over my own remote periphery. The roots of plants and trees appeared through a dim transparency of the soil; I discerned the inward flow of their sap.

The whole vicinity lay bare before me. My ordinary frontal vision was now changed to a vast spherical sight, simultaneously all-perceptive. Through the back of my head I saw men strolling far down Rai Ghat Lane, and noticed also a white cow that was leisurely approaching. ... After she had passed behind the brick wall of the courtyard, I saw her clearly still.

It is instructive to review Yogananda's experiences in order to have a clearer account. Yogananda firstly feels his soul and mind stream out of his body *like light*, so that his awareness is interpenetrating the entire volume of space around his body and the ashram. He senses the inner activity of the plants, the soil and the ashram, while experiencing a "*vast spherical sight, simultaneously all-perceptive.*" This description is of a level of *samadhi*, wherein consciousness interpenetrates material nature and larger volume of space/time.

All objects within my panoramic gaze trembled and vibrated like quick motion pictures. My body, Master's, the pillared courtyard, the furniture and floor, the trees and sunshine, occasionally became violently agitated, until all melted into a luminescent sea; even as sugar crystals, thrown into a glass of water, dissolve after being shaken. The unifying light alternated with materializations of form, the metamorphoses revealing the law of cause and effect in creation.

Yogananda experiences the objects and scene surrounding him melting into a luminescent sea,

with materializations of forms alternating with experiences of the unifying light. He experiences the inner dimensions of things as they crystallize out of an underlying realm of light into material forms and then dissolve back into the underlying light realm. Yogananda has united the light within himself with the unifying light of Brahman, which he describes as "*the structural essence of creation.*" In doing so, he witnesses the cosmic dance of the involution and evolution of elements within an infinite Sea of Light.

An oceanic joy broke upon calm endless shores of my soul. The Spirit of God, I realized, is exhaustless Bliss; His body is countless tissues of light. A swelling glory within me began to envelop towns, continents, the earth, solar and stellar systems, tenuous nebulae, and floating universes. The entire cosmos, gently luminous, like a city seen afar at night, glimmered within the infinitude of my being. ...

The divine dispersion of rays poured from an Eternal Source, blazing into galaxies, transfigured with ineffable auras. Again and again I saw the creative beams condense into constellations, then resolve into sheets of transparent flame. By rhythmic reversion, sextillion worlds passed into diaphanous luster, then fire became firmament.

Yogananda's awareness then enveloped larger and larger realms passing from towns, to continents, the earth, the solar system, the galaxy and floating universes! Creation is revealed to involve the "*dispersion of rays poured from an Eternal source,*" which condenses or crystallizes into galaxies and constellations, which again resolve back into sheets of transparent flame. As before, Yogananda experiences the process of inward creation and dissolution, although this time at the level of the universe.

I cognized the center of the empyrean as a point of intuitive perception in my heart. Irradiating splendor issued from my nucleus to every part of the universal structure. ...

Suddenly the breath returned to my lungs. With a disappointment almost unbearable, I realized that my infinite immensity was lost. Once more I was limited to the humiliating

cage of a body, not easily accommodative to the Spirit. Like a prodigal child, I had run away from my macrocosm home and had imprisoned myself in a narrow microcosm...

“It is the Spirit of God that actively sustains every form and force in the universe; yet He is transcendental and aloof in the blissful uncreated void beyond the worlds of vibratory phenomenon,” Master explained.⁸



Figure 1

Finally, Yogananda cognized the “*center of the empyrean*.” The term empyrean from ancient and medieval cosmology refers to the highest seventh heavenly sphere consisting of fire and light. The center of the empyrean and of the universe was “*a point of intuitive perception in his heart*”! From this point or nucleus, Yogananda experienced an “*irradiating splendor*” issuing to every part of the universal structure. Somehow, the universe as it were, concentrates itself into a point.

Yogananda offers an awe-inspiring glimpse into the hidden dimensions of consciousness, life and the universe. Figure 1 illustrates this idea of the heart embodying the cosmos.⁹ If this is an objectively valid account of an awakening of consciousness within the heart and its expansion into the dimensions of the universe, then somehow there is something fundamentally mistaken with the entire approach to consciousness found within the mainstream of western psychology, science, cosmology and education.

Yogananda’s experiences illustrate the most unusual dimensions ascribed to the spiritual soul or divine spark—that it is a point source of “*omnipresent Spirit*” emerging from the unifying

Light and which is interconnected to the Whole. Yogananda’s experience illustrates the statements of the Chandogya Upanishad: “*As large as the universe outside is the universe within the lotus of the heart. ... All things that exist... are in the city of Brahman.*”¹⁰

Yogananda explains the principles behind this cosmic experience, the “*law of miracles*:”

The consciousness of a perfected yogi is effortlessly identified not with a narrow body but with the universal structure. ... He who knows himself as the omnipresent Spirit is subject no longer to the rigidities of a body in time and space. The imprisoning “rings-pass-not” have yielded to the solvent: *I am He....* “If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be *full of light*.” (Matthew 6:22) ... the liberating spiritual eye has enabled the yogi to destroy all delusions concerning matter and its gravitational weight; he sees the universe as the Lord created it: an essentially undifferentiated mass of light.

*The law of miracles is operable by any man who has realized that the essence of creation is light. A master is able to employ his divine knowledge of light phenomena ... a yogi rearranges the light atoms of the universe ... The colorful universal drama is ... issuing from the single white light of a Cosmic Source. ... “My sons are children of light; they will not sleep forever in delusion.”... The so-called miraculous powers of a great master are a natural accompaniment to his exact understanding of subtle laws that operate in the inner cosmos of consciousness.*¹¹

The mystical heart doctrine provides an intriguing holographic model of the Self (and Super Self). The Self is a point source of coherent light consciousness emanating from a realm of Eternal Light, higher dimensional Space and the uncreated Void. A point of intuitive perception within the heart can thus be related to the larger dimensions of the macrocosmic universe!

Mystical teachings suggest that light has a deep, hidden, supernal nature, unrecognized within science. When Yogananda’s consciousness expands to embrace the universe, it does so at speeds greater than the speed of light! It must as

the universe is billions of light years across and yet his experience lasts only minutes. However, Yogananda consciousness is not really travelling anywhere, as the whole universe is embodied within the point of intuitive perception within his heart. The usual notions of time and space simply do not apply within the subtle implicate and super-implicate orders of a holographic universe, wherein information about the whole is present everywhere instantaneously in omnipresent Spirit. The universe within is as vast as the universe without.

The Emergence of the Holographic Paradigm

The brain is a hologram perceiving and participating in a holographic universe. ... the new science demands spirit; at least, it makes ample room for spirit. Either way, modern science is no longer *denying* spirit.
12

In *The Doors of Perception*, Aldous Huxley described the possible relationship of individual mind to "*Mind at Large*:"

... each one of us is potentially Mind at Large. But insofar as we are animals our business at all costs is to survive. To make biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to be funnelled through the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system. What comes out at the other end is a measly trickle of the kind of consciousness, which will help us to stay alive on the surface of this particular planet. ... The various "other worlds" with which human beings erratically make contact are so many elements in the totality of awareness belonging to Mind at Large.¹³

Several philosophers have speculated upon this idea that the human brain acts as a reducing valve for *Mind at Large*.

The holographic paradigm emerged in modern psychology in the 1980s when Karl Pribram, a distinguished neuroscientist, applied the principles of holography to the functioning of consciousness, the brain and mind. The holographic paradigm derived from Pribram in conjunction with the ideas of physicist David Bohm. Essen-

tially, the mind/brain is taken to exist in relationship to an underlying "*frequency domain*," which consists of hidden dimensions containing information. The mind/brain then acts as a lens or filter which focuses one particular space/time reality out of the underlying Mind at Large.

The principles of holography, a form of lens-less photography, were outlined in 1947 by Dennis Gabor. Holographs yield remarkable three-dimensional images of objects by using no lens, which contrasts with the usual flat two-dimensional photographs produced through the use of a lens. The creation of a hologram requires a source of coherent light derived from a point source, usually provided by a laser, as illustrated in Figure 2.¹⁴ In holographic photography, the coherent light beam is split into two beams by a partially coated mirror. The *reference beam* impinges directly upon a holographic plate; while the *object beam* reflects off an object before impinging on the plate. The two light beams interact on the holographic plate to produce a wave interference pattern (determined by the phase shifts of the interacting waves and their mutual enhancement or reductive effects).

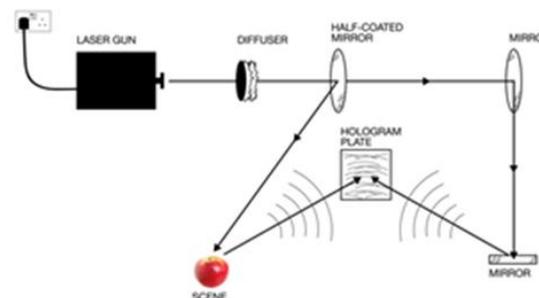


Figure 2

To visual inspection, a holographic plate bears no resemblance to the object "*holographed*" until the plate is again illuminated by a coherent light source. In this event, a three dimensional image of the object is projected out from the holographic plate into space. In the reconstruction of the image, the interference pattern stored on the plate acts as a grating to bend the light by diffraction to re-establish the image. A holographic image produced with modern technology can be so similar to the original that it is im-

possible to tell the two apart. The projected *virtual image* can be viewed from various angles and appears quite substantial and three dimensional—apparently real like our apparently real world.

The most unusual property of a holograph is that any portion of the holographic plate illuminated by a light source will recreate an image of the “whole” object: The term holography means literally “to write the whole.” Whereas a camera has a lens which focuses the light from an outside source to establish a point-to-point correspondence between any part of the scene photographed and a portion of the recording film; by contrast in holography, no lens is used and so light from the whole of the object impacts upon every point on the holographic film. The whole is thus *implicated* in any part, enfolded into each point. This unusual property of holographs suggests mechanisms for mystical states and knowledge, where the microcosm (the individual) embodies at some deep level the macrocosm (the larger world), or as an individual mind might implicate Mind at Large.

This unusual property of holographs led Pribram, to apply this model to the study of the brain/mind. Initially, Pribram was attempting to explain why “memory engrams,” the supposed site and substance of memory, did not appear to be localized within the brain. The traditional mechanistic model of memory predicted that memories are established by specific microcircuits or cell assemblies (an atomistic approach) localized in particular areas of the brain. However, experimental evidence demonstrated that learning and memory were maintained in laboratory animals despite the removal or destruction of large brain areas. The expected one-to-one correspondence between brain sites and particular memories did not seem to exist. This fact has historically posed a fundamental enigma in the study of the brain: how and where are memories stored?

In *Languages of the Brain* (1971), Pribram explained how various psychological processes could be based on holographic principles. The neuro-circuitry of the brain with its own standing wave patterns could serve as a referent beam and interact with environmental stimuli (other

wave patterns) to produce complex wave interference patterns spread over areas of the brain. Neurological processes store the resultant wave interference patterns holographically over both small and large volumes of the brain, with different interaction patterns superimposed upon one another. This could explain why attempts to isolate particular memory engrams have been unsuccessful. A holographic model of memory and the brain would allow for the storage of immense amounts of information. Scientists have developed ways of taking “multiple holograms” which can record billions of bits of information within a cubic centimeter of a thick holographic plate. In multiple holograms, successive wave fronts are superimposed in infinitesimal layers upon each other by varying the angles of the projecting light beams. Layers of neurons provide the *holographic film* necessary to record successive interacting wave patterns. This would be a highly efficient way to encode, analyze and synthesize immense amounts of information.

On one level, Pribram suggests that the whole brain might operate holographically, while at another level, this holograph would be composed of innumerable small “*patch holograms*.”

The holograms within the visual system are patch holograms. The total image is composed much as it is in an insect’s eye that has hundreds of little lenses instead of one big lens. ... In each patch, the activity of the cells creates a wave front; I believe that the interaction of these wave fronts is what you experience. You get the total picture all woven together as a unified piece by the time you experience it.¹⁵

An essential feature of Pribram’s model was the proposal that the same mathematics used by Gabor to develop holography (Fourier transforms) are used within the brain to process and analyze sensory, perceptual, imaging and memory data. Fourier transforms provide methods of breaking any complex wave interference pattern into its component frequencies. Laboratory data confirmed Pribram’s prediction: in effect, the brain/mind performs mathematical Fourier transforms on wave patterns established in the neuro-circuitry of the brain. This was a radically dif-

ferent perspective on the functioning of the brain and mind.

Although Pribram regards the brain as operating holographically, he does not believe that there is any “*laser beam in the brain*”—that is, any source of coherent *inner light*, equivalent to the point source of laser light used to produce an actual holograph. In an *Omni* interview, Pribram was asked about this:

Omni: I’m a little puzzled by one thing. When I first read about the holographic brain, I thought of it as a metaphor. Then I began to think you meant it as an actual model. Which is correct?

Pribram: Both. First it was a metaphor. Then ... a model developed, because the mathematics fitted the data gathered in several laboratories around the world. *There are no laser beams in the brain*. I’m simply saying that the brain performs certain operations, which can be described by Gabor’s mathematics, to code, decode, and recode sensory input.¹⁶

Despite its revolutionary account of the dynamics of the brain, Dr. Pribram’s theory remained in essence an “*under the hat theory*” of holographic mind. He assumed that the holographs are produced by the brain’s physiological mechanisms and processes, and further, he did not consider there to be an *inner source of light* to illuminate the holographs of human experience. There is no laser beam, no coherent light source within the inner world. Further, the heart is not recognized as the source of any “*standing wave patterns*” or as the main source of electromagnetic influence within the human being. Instead, Dr. Pribram assumes that the brain produces consciousness and the holographs are within the head where the mind is assumed to be.

The Self is a point source of coherent light consciousness emanating from a realm of Eternal Light, higher dimensional Space and the un-created Void. A point of intuitive perception within the heart can thus be related to the larger dimensions of the macrocosmic universe!

However, it was the combination of Pribram’s model of the holographic mind/brain with David Bohm’s model of *wholeness and the implicate order* which created the basis for holographic paradigm. We will explore the more detailed

physical theories of Bohm currently. Most importantly, Bohm suggested that there are incredible amounts of information present within the frequency domain which the mind/brain can access—because “*the entire Universe ... (is) ... a single undivided whole.*” The holographic theory and Bohm’s model suggest that a human being is a microcosm of the macrocosm rooted into interior dimensions of being and the plenum, and connected to the larger universe! Paranormal researcher, Stanislav Grof noted: “*If this (holographic paradigm) is true, then we each hold the*

potential for having direct and immediate experiential access to virtually every aspect of the universe....”¹⁷ Certainly, a holographic universe provides an unimaginable playground for a similarly holographic mind, consciousness and Self.

If the whole of the universe is implicated in any (apparently) localized region (or point) in space/time, then the brain/mind could potentially have unlimited access to this underlying storehouse of information in the implicate orders—the *Mind at Large*. Pribram viewed the brain as mathematically extracting information out of the underlying frequency domain. Now it seemed that this frequency domain could indeed contain vast amounts of the information potentially available for analysis by the mind and brain. Dr. Pribram described the possibilities of a holographic mind/brain in a holographic universe:

... if you penetrate through and look at the universe with a nonlens system (holographically), you arrive at a different view, a different reality ... that can explain things that have hitherto remained inexplicable scientifically. ... the mystical experiences people have described for millennia begin to make

some scientific sense. They bespeak the possibility of tapping into that order of reality that is behind the world of appearances. ... I wonder if somehow (the mystics) haven't hit upon a mechanism that lets them tap into the implicate order. ... In terms of holographic theory, all those events (paranormal and transcendental states) are plausible if the brain can somehow abrogate its ordinary constraints and gain access to the implicate order.

... Leibnitz talked about "monads," and ... (an) indivisible entity that is the basic unit of the universe and a microcosm of it. God, said Leibnitz, was a monad. ... In a monadic organization, the part contains the whole—as in a hologram. "Man was made in the image of God." Spiritual insights fit the descriptions of this domain. They are perfectly plausible by the invention of the hologram.¹⁸

Unfortunately, although Pribram speaks of Leibnitz's Monads, he does not consider such an idea seriously in his own holographic theorizing, to argue that an individual might have such a zero point Monadic essence or some inner point source of supernal light to illuminate the inner holographic world. Instead, he maintains a view of the brain as the site of his holographic model with no light of its own.

Pribram contrasted two fundamentally different assumptions "about the brain." The first traditional materialist viewpoint regards the brain as organizing input from the physical world and constructing mental properties. Scientists assumed that mental properties are derived from physical processes. The second viewpoint is that: "Mental properties are the pervasive organizing principles of the universe, which includes the brain." Many influential physicists and mathematicians have subscribed to the second viewpoint. Sir James Jeans, a prominent physicist of the early part of the twentieth century, famously asserted that the more we penetrate into the nature of matter, the more it appears as "a great thought, rather than as a vast machine."

A critical idea linking the holographic theory of consciousness to holographic views of the world

is that the mind is *isomorphic* to the world. Isomorphism suggests "a one-to-one correspondence between the form (morphology) of the world around us and the form in the brain representing that world." In this case, mind is not simply an emergent property of the brain's material organization, but instead it "reflects the basic organization of the Universe (including the organism's brain)."¹⁹ Similarly, Bohm explains:

The mind may have a structure similar to the universe. ... The particular forms which appear in the mind may be analogous to the particles, and getting to the ground of the mind might be felt as light. ... (a) free, penetrating movement of the whole.²⁰

Thus, a human might be a microcosm of the macrocosm, having an inner form which isomorphically corresponds to the inner structures of the universe. This isomorphic concept is illustrated by the point source origins of both the Cosmos and human self-existence.

The holographic paradigm attracted wide interest within the New Age movement and among those interested in the personal and scientific issues of consciousness. Shirley MacLaine gave this popular account of the emerging paradigm of wholeness:

... the seeds of all things, ourselves included, were present at the birth of creation, and every scrap of matter and energy and blood and bones and thought present in the cosmos today could be traced back to the origins of the universe from one small subatomic particle of light. That makes us each sparks of the same light. It also makes each of us a hologram of the entire event. The energies that fragmented and separated and multiplied as the young universe expanded and cooled continue to operate in the beating of our hearts and the movement of our bodies, as well as in the alignment and behavior of the stars. We and they—all things and everything are a connected whole. That is the meaning of "We are all one." The evolution of the Universe then is continuing not only around us but within us. Our thoughts, our dreams, and our awareness are part of that

universe, the physical and the spiritual inextricably bound together.²¹

Bohm's theory, the holographic paradigm and quantum theory (with its non-local effects and quantum interconnectedness) collectively paint a picture of the ultimate interconnectedness of things. Everything did originate from a singularity or zero point state, out of a state of perfect symmetry as an original point source of light. Further, quantum theory suggests that all quanta are ultimately interrelated in higher dimensional spaces, the active information fields, zero point fields or the frequency domain of holographic theory.

Unfortunately, the holographic paradigm has lacked *key elements*—which meant that the full implications and applications of this model have not been substantiated as a model of consciousness. In this regard, Pribram's comment—“*There are no laser beams in the brain*”—is most telling. Firstly, it indicates that the idea of a laser beam or of a “point source of coherent light” to light the inner world is not seriously considered. Further, consciousness needs to be considered as light itself. Further, his comments indicate that scientists have primarily looked for such holographic dynamics within “*the brain*” Once again, we encounter the limits of the *head doctrine* and the neglect of mystical, spiritual and occult views concerning the deepest levels of Self and the higher dimensional physics and metaphysics of the Heart.

In 2003, the *Scientific American* published an issue with the question “*Are you a Hologram?*” on the front cover. The illustration is of a bubble like sphere surrounding a brain and head. This illustrates the assumptions of the modern psychology and science, that the head would be the basis for the human holographic system. Of course, the mind may function in terms of holographic principles, but it certainly is not the only basis of our experience of life.²² From an occult perspective, the holographic paradigm needs to include the whole human being as a quantum system of electromagnetic influences centered upon the higher dimensional physics and metaphysics of the heart. A *point source of supernal light* is established within the higher dimensional Aether of the heart space. The addition of

such elements to a holographic model would provide a source of coherent light, even of *divine lux*, to illuminate the holograms of our lives.

Figure 3 from the *Heart/Math Institute* is a more apt depiction of the human holograph. In *The Heart's Code*, psychologist Paul Pearsall maintains that, energetically speaking, the heart rather than the brain is clearly the center of the psychological universe:

The heart's EMF (electro-magnetic field) is five thousand times more powerful than the electromagnetic field created by the brain and, in addition to its immense power, has subtle, non-local effects that travel within these forms of energy. ... the heart generates over fifty thousand femtoteslas (a measure of EMF) compared to less than ten femtoteslas recorded from the brain.²³

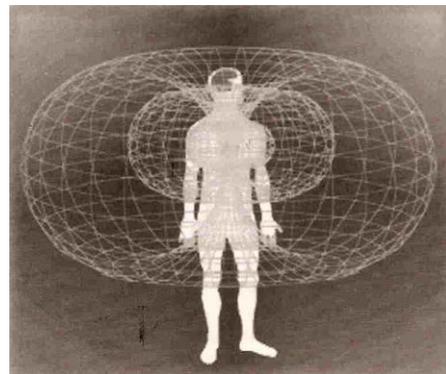


Figure 3

Ervin Laszlo²⁴ provides valuable and more contemporary commentary on the possible holographic nature of a human being. Laszlo describes us as living within the information fields of the ether or *Akasha*, and memory is regarded as inherent within all structures within the Akasha based upon interfering vacuum vortices. He states: “*the Akashic Field (is) a cosmic hologfield*”²⁵ Laszlo's answer to the neurological issues of where and how memories are stored is that “*... long-term memory is not stored within the brain: it is extra-somatic.*” (p. 57) Memories are available within the zero point fields and the Akasha and there are no discrete memory engrams within the brain.

Laszlo reports a curious case study which illustrates the potential information latent within the Akasha. He describes the talents of an *idiot sa-*

vant, an individual who is supposed to be below normal functioning in intelligence and adjustment, but who can speak seven languages, compute cube roots as fast as a calculator and recall the constant *pi* to 22,514 decimal places! There is no known mechanism within a materialist and reductionist viewpoint to explain such unusual talents, clearly not the result of education or the usual faculties of mind. Such case studies suggest that individuals can tap information fields latent within space or the Akasha itself. Laszlo notes: "... the vacuum is ... the seat of the consciousness that infuses my body and brain the same as the rest of the universe" Laszlo describes the experiences of seekers and mystics which illustrate his basic concepts:

The field of cosmic consciousness they experience is a cosmic emptiness—a void. Yet, paradoxically, it is also an essential fullness. ... it contains all of existence in potential. The void they experience is fullness; the vacuum is a plenum. It is the ultimate source of existence, the cradle of all being.²⁶

Laszlo considers that human beings can so experience within various levels of the aether as described for centuries throughout the mystical literature: Interfering vacuum-vortices are nature's holograms and the Akashic Field (is) a cosmic holofield.

David Bohm on Wholeness and the Implicate Orders

Ultimately, the entire universe (with all its 'particles,' including those constituting human beings, their laboratories, observing instruments, etc.) has to be understood as a single undivided whole, in which analysis into separately and independently existent parts has no fundamental status.²⁷

David Bohm was an associate of Albert Einstein and author of the acclaimed *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (1980). One of the world's foremost theoretical physicists, Bohm published classic works on quantum and relativity theory and was an important contributor to the debate

concerning *hidden variables* in quantum theory. Because of his eminence as a physicist, Bohm was in the privileged position of being able to espouse his radical theoretical model—one that postulated the undivided wholeness of reality. Bohm's ideas generated widespread interest not only amongst scientists but also within philosophical, religious and New Age circles.

Bohm's model arose from his attempt to reconcile relativity and quantum theory while accounting for non-local effects and other quantum paradoxes. He distinguished between the outward, manifest physical reality—the "*explicate order*" and an underlying un-manifest realm—the "*implicate order*." Within Bohm's framework, all manifest phenomena of the explicate order (the manifest physical world) must be understood as particular cases of the unfolding of a more general set of implicate orders (the unmanifest underlying realm). The fundamental relationships are between the implicated structures, which interpenetrate each other throughout the whole of space and time. The explicate order flows out of the laws and processes of a multi-dimensional implicate order—as apparent differentiations of an undivided whole! Bohm explains:

... the central underlying theme (is) the unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence as an undivided flowing movement without borders. ... in the implicate order the totality of existence is enfolded within each region of space (and time). So, whatever part, element, or aspect we may abstract in thought, this still enfolds the whole and is therefore intrinsically related to the totality from which it has been abstracted. Thus, wholeness permeates all that is being discussed, from the very outset.²⁸

Bohm's basic thesis is that even the whole of the Universe is implicated within any point. Such a view is remarkable—a profound revision of centuries of fragmentary little-bit scientific thought. Manifest reality is but a shadow of the deeper underlying realities.

Bohm emphasized that a quantum is a real particle plus a real wave, but it is linked to a new field composed of the *pilot wave* which guides the movement of the particle.²⁹ Bohm viewed

the electron or quantum as an ordinary particle but it is guided by a very non-ordinary wave. The “pilot wave” is instantaneously affected whenever a change occurs within the whole environment and it communicates this change to the particle altering its position and momentum. Thus, Bohm put forth a non-local causal model accepting the implications of quantum theory’s baffling holism and non-local effects.

Bohm uses various analogies to explain his non-ordinary waves—the *pilot waves* that carry the *quantum potential*. These pilot waves carry *information* rather than energy or mass and serve to guide the particle. The quantum potential is the information content. Thus, we have a triad of *matter, energy and information*—in contrast with the traditional matter-energy duality:

By way of illustration, think of a ship that sails on automatic pilot, guided by radio waves. The overall effect of the radio waves is independent of their strength and depends only on their form. The essential point is that the ship moves with its own energy but that the *information* within the radio waves is taken up and used to direct the much greater energy of the ship. In the causal interpretation, the electron moves under its own energy, but the information in the *form* of the quantum wave directs the energy of the electron.³⁰

The external direction of the matter of the ship is determined by the energy expenditure of the engines informed by information content within the quantum potential. The quantum potential or pilot wave embodies “*active information*” with little (if any) energy. The equation for the quantum potential is highly unusual in that its strength is independent of distance and not limited by the speed of light. Instead, it is instantaneously present throughout the field. Bohm explains the profound implications of this view:

The quantum field contains information about the whole environment and about the whole past, which regulates the present activity of the electron in much the same way that information about the whole past and our whole environment regulates our own activity as human beings, through consciousness. ... what is going on in the full

depth of that one moment of time contains information about all of it. ... In non-manifest reality, it’s all interpenetrating, interconnected, one.³¹

Bohm takes quantum interconnectedness to the extreme by suggesting that any particular quanta (element, particle) is ultimately interconnected through the implicate and super-implicate orders to the whole of the universe! Certainly, such a concept of the universe as an undivided whole provided an ideal physics for a holographic model of consciousness and the mind. Bohm hypothesizes:

... a super-information field of the whole universe, a super-implicate order which organizes the first level (of the implicate orders) into various structures and is capable of tremendous development of structure. The point about the super-implicate order is that if we take the holographic theory, though we have an implicate order, nothing organizes it. It is what’s called “linear” ... but it does not have an intrinsic capacity to unfold an order. The super-implicate order, which is the so-called higher field ... makes the implicate order non-linear and organizes it into relatively stable forms with complex structures.³²

According to this scheme, the physical world is the external manifestation of multidimensional hidden dimensions. Reality as it appears to our senses—the everyday world of matter and energy in time and space—is essentially a holographic image projected out of vast interconnected hidden dimensions.

The implicate orders underlie the explicate orders and material reality in a sense *unfolds* from WITHIN/WITHOUT.

... a new notion of order is involved here, which we called the *implicate order* (from a Latin root meaning “to enfold” or ‘to fold inward’). In terms of the implicate order one may say that everything is enfolded into everything. This contrasts with the *explicate order* now dominant in physics in which things are *unfolded* in the sense that each thing lies only in its own particular region of space

(and time) and outside the regions belonging to other things.³³

Bohm's model of the implicate orders suggest that there is indeed a more fundamental hidden reality, worlds beyond the level of the quanta and material organization. Since all things are interconnected in informational fields that inform material/energetic processes, then there must be inner dimensions of being capable of responding to this active information, some kind of receiver or resonator system. Bohm uses a radio analogy to explain this. The radio wave carries information or a signal which might be considered to be potentially available everywhere. However, for this potential information to have an active informational influence there has to be a radio set with electrical energy capable of responding to this information field. In this case, we might hear singing (molecular sound vibration) propagated from a radio. We require the material harmonic resonator (the radio set), the information and the energy (electrical power) to manifest within the explicate order (sound). This analogy with a radio set has startling implications for the necessity of other deep levels of reality. Bohm and Peat note:

The quantum wave carries "information" and is therefore *potentially* active everywhere, but it is *actually* active only when and where this energy enters into the energy of a particle. But this implies that an electron, or any other elementary particle, has a complex and subtle inner structure that is at least comparable with that of a radio. Clearly this notion goes against the whole tradition of modern physics, which assumes that as matter is analyzed into smaller and smaller parts, its behavior grows more elementary. By contrast, the causal interpretation suggests that nature may be far more subtle and strange than was previously thought.

But this inner complexity of elementary matter is not as implausible as it may appear at first sight. For example, a large crowd of

people can be treated by statistical laws, whereas individually their behavior is immensely subtler and more complex. Similarly, large masses of matter reduce to simple Newtonian behavior whereas atoms and

molecules have a more complex inner structure. And what of the sub-atomic particles themselves? It is interesting to note that between the shortest distance now measurable in physics (10^{-16} cm) and the shortest distance in which current notions of space/time probably have meaning, (10^{-33} cm); there is a vast range of scale in which an immense amount of yet undiscovered structure could be contained.

Indeed this range is roughly equal to that which exists between our own size and that of the elementary particles.³⁴

It seems that the world within is potentially as complex as the world without. Only such inner dimensions of being could allow for a quantum to be responsive to the active information of the quantum potential containing information about the larger whole. Bohm predicted new levels of complexity as suggested now in the 21st century within superstring and M-theories, and by the holographic paradigm. The seven dimensional Calabi Yau Spaces of the physicists, considered to be existent at every point within four dimensional space/time, along with multidimensional "branes," extended within hyperspace dimensions, certainly fulfill Bohm's predictions of there being additional levels of inner complexity. Such elements and dynamics could provide resonator systems with structures far more complex than those of a radio.

Bohm came to regard so-called *empty space* as full of an incredible range of energies and potentials:

What is implied by this proposal is that what we call empty space contains an immense background of energy ... space ... is *full* rather than empty. ... the plenum ... the ground for the existence of everything, including ourselves. The things that appear to

It is the conjunction of the self-illuminating zero point element within higher seven dimensional space that lies behind the creation of the human holographic experience originating out of the depths of the Heart.

our senses are derivative forms and their true meaning can be seen only when we consider the plenum, in which they are generated and sustained, and into which they must ultimately vanish.³⁵

All of creation is folded out of an immense underlying realm of the plenum and of Undivided Wholeness—as tiny ripples on a vast Sea. Bohm's model suggests that ultimately, any quantum exists in relationship to information about the whole, even the past: "... *what is going on in the full depth of that one moment of time contains information about all of it. ... In non-manifest reality it's all interpenetrating, interconnected, one.*"³⁶

Summing up, Bohm suggests a progression from the explicate order of manifest existence to multi-dimensional implicate and super-implicate orders—all of which are part of an immense sea of information/energy sensed as empty space.

The space *without* (the *explicate order*) is unfolded from the space *within* (the *implicate order* and plenum). Bohm suggests that there might be various extensions of the implicate order beyond the critical limit of 10^{-33} cm. into "*unknown depths of inwardness.*" Certainly, Bohm's ideas suggest the existence of rich playground for a holographic mind, heart or human being.

Blavatsky's Holographic Space and Zero Point Dynamics

Blavatsky articulated a holographic model of creation—of physics and metaphysics, a century before science arrived at such concepts and possibilities. However, *The Secret Doctrine* suggested a more differentiated view of holographic dynamics than even that of contemporary science. Further, it applies the same perspective to understanding ourselves as holographic beings—microcosms of the macrocosm.

Blavatsky states: "*The first and Fundamental dogma of Occultism is Universal Unity (or Homogeneity)....*"³⁷ A holographic view is thus implicit in Occultism which generally espouses

the unity and interrelatedness of creation. Further, Blavatsky notes:

There is but one indivisible and absolute Omniscience and Intelligence in the Universe, and this thrills throughout every atom and infinitesimal point of the whole finite Kosmos which hath no bounds, and which people call SPACE, considered independently of anything in it.³⁸

This certainly suggests that there are vast informational and zero point fields within the very fabric of space. Blavatsky states that there is a correlation of all forces within real space or the plenum.

For Blavatsky, the seemingly solid material world is illusory, an outgrowth of causes at zero point levels wherein the forces of nature emerge within without from higher dimensional realms. In her view, the external space/time complex is quite illusory and there are many worlds interpenetrating and sustaining our own space! Blavatsky provides this remarkable passage discussing the presence of other worlds within the same Space as ourselves:

The Secret Doctrine—postulating that conditioned or limited space (location) has no real being except in this world of illusion, or, in other words, in our perceptive faculties—teaches that every one of the higher, as of the lower worlds, is interblended with our own objective world; that millions of things and beings are, in point of localization, around and *in* us, as we are around, with, and in them; it is not metaphysical figure of speech, but a sober fact in Nature, however incomprehensible to our senses.

... the Occultist does not locate *these spheres* either *outside* or *inside* our Earth, as the theologians and the poets do; for their location is nowhere in the space *known* to, and conceived by, the profane. They are, as it were, blended with our world—interpenetrating it and interpenetrated by it.

.... Although as invisible as if they were millions of miles beyond our solar system, they are yet with us, near us, *within* our own world, as objective and material to their respective inhabitants as ours is to us. ... The

inhabitants of these (worlds) ... may be, for all we know, or feel, passing *through* and *around* us as if through empty space, their very habitations and countries being inter-blended with ours, though not disturbing our vision, because we have not yet the faculties necessary for discerning them.

... such invisible worlds do exist. Inhabited as thickly as our own is, they are scattered throughout apparent Space in immense number; some far more material than our own world, others gradually etherealizing until they become formless and are as “Breaths.” That our physical eye does not see them, is no reason to disbelieve in them; physicists can see neither their ether, atoms, nor “modes of motion,” or Forces. Yet they accept and teach them.³⁹

This is a remarkable conception of the nature of Space—compatible with holographic and quantum information theory in modern physics. Space is not empty. Ordinary four-dimensional space/time is an outward projection from within higher dimensions of real Space. Further, there are all kinds of other intelligences, worlds, dimensions and beings within the same space as us, although invisible to our perceptive faculties. This is analogous to how a scientist can produce multiple holographic images on a holographic plate by shifting the angle of the projecting light sources.

Blavatsky has provided a remarkable description of a holographic universe wherein a whole hierarchy of intelligences is implicated within any element—any living Kosmos.⁴⁰ Further, she describes how such a higher dimensional metaphysics produces a lower four dimensional physics as well as a law conformable cosmic order. She notes in regards to the abstruse and abstract teachings of *The Secret Doctrine*:

These abstractions become more and more concrete as they approach our plane of existence, until they phenomenalise in the form of the material Universe, by process of conversion of metaphysics into physics, analogous to that by which steam can be condensed into water, and the water frozen into ice. (p. 45)

Apparent material realities are projected out of the holographic dynamics of higher dimensional Space, illusory manifestations of nominal realms which underlie and sustain them. Material realities veil the true nature of Deity.

A human being in the material body is a quantum system based primarily upon the electro-dynamics of the heart. The heart functions essentially as a quantum computer (with micro black hole information processors⁴¹) and exists within quantized information and zero point fields; ultimately, within an Omniscience which “*thrills throughout every atom and infinitesimal point of the whole finite Cosmos.*” Human consciousness emerges through the dimensions of the Heart as the living entity is expanding and withdraws back into the heart at moments of death when it is contracting. Blavatsky explains that the “Sons” or the “*Winks in the Eye of Self-Existence*” do so expand and contract through their own Selves and Hearts.

Blavatsky's occult and mystical views of the zero point origin of human consciousness and of the Kosmos, and her metaphysical model of the laws of nature operating through zero point dynamics provide profound insights into modern scientific theories. Cosmoses emerge from zero point sources out of a seven dimensional mystical void/plenum of the Eternal Parent Space, wherein the Ceaseless Eternal Breath modifies its motion on seven invisible points. All of these dynamics can be considered in relation to the newest ideas in modern physics and could bear upon understanding the multidimensional holographic nature of a human being. These concepts provide the basis for a holographic model of human existence, not based upon neuro-networks in the brain but upon a physics and metaphysics of the heart and its zero point dynamics, and an original point source of *lux*.

Most modern neuroscientists and psychologists consider humans as only a *collection of neurons, molecules and particles*. None has been able to discover a human “I.” Of course, it is hard to know how one might discover a form of ‘nothingness at the heart of being’ or a Monad established in hyperspace beyond Planckian depths! The newest theory in modern psychology and neuro-science is that a particular portion of the

prefrontal cortex is the site where the experience of the social self arises. However, from a mystical perspective, these huge errors have arisen because the scientists search for self primarily with the brain instead of awakening to Self within the lotus of the Heart. Blavatsky explains: “*The Mind is the Great Slayer of the Real*” and further, she directs the Initiate to “*slay the slayer*.” The Sons expand and contract through the higher dimensions of the human heart—as winks in the eye of self-existence.

Concluding Remarks

A holographic model of creation is inherent to mystical and occult views which suggest the ultimate unity and interrelatedness of existence, and further, that a human being embodies the cosmos and can even have direct experience of this—as depicted by Yogananda. The holographic paradigm within modern psychology explored these concepts but tended to assume that the Holographic principle applied exclusively to the mind and that there is no coherent light source within a human being. An occult perspective provides an alternative view of human beings as having some type of zero point element, a first point of supernal lux, deriving from within a higher dimensional Heart Space, which allows for the illumination of the inner cosmos. It is the conjunction of the self-illuminating zero point element within higher seven dimensional space that lies behind the creation of the human holographic experience originating out of the depths of the Heart.⁴²

¹ Paramahansa. Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi* (Los Angeles: Self Realization Fellowship, 1988), 46.

² David Bohm, *Creativity: The Signature of Nature*, interview in Rene Weber, *Dialogues with Scientists and Sages: The search for unity* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).

³ Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (Pasadena: Theosophical Society, 1988), 27.

⁴ These concepts have been previously elaborated through parts 1 and 2 of this series.

⁵ Swami Yogeshwaranand Saraswati, *Science of Soul: A treatise on Higher Yoga* (New Delhi: Yoga Niketan Trust, 1987), 69, 36.

⁶ Swami Nikhilanda, *The Upanishads*, (New York, Harper & Row Publishers: 1963), 161.

⁷ Swami Prabhavananda & F. Manchester (Eds.) *The Upanishads: Breath of the Eternal* (New York: New American Library, 1957.)

⁸ Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, 45.

⁹ Artist: Anita J. Mitra by permission.

¹⁰ Nikhilanda, *The Upanishads*, 279.

¹¹ Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, 315- 321.

¹² Ken Wilber, (Ed.) *The Holographic Paradigm and other Paradoxes* (Boulder, Shambhala, 1982).

¹³ Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1954).

¹⁴ Graphic by Zeljka Zupanic, with permission.

¹⁵ Karl Pribram, *Psychology Today* Interview (February 1979), 80.

¹⁶ Karl Pribram, *Holographic Brain*, in *The Omni Interviews*,(Ed.) P. Weintraub (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1982), 33-34.

¹⁷ Stanislav Grof, *The Holotropic Mind; The three levels of human consciousness and how they shape our lives*. (San Francisco: Harper, 1993).

¹⁸ Karl Pribram, *What the Fuss is all About*, in. Ken Wilber (Ed.) *The Holographic Paradigm and other Paradoxes*, (Boulder: Shambhala, 1982), 33-4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

²⁰ Bohm, *Creativity: the Signature of Nature*, 48-49.

²¹ Shirley MacLaine, *Going Within* (New York, New York: Random House, 1989), 259.

²² Recall from part II of this series, that each chakra can be regarded as having a zero point center, as there are seven fundamental differentiations of the original zero point, and each of these would work on holographic principles as portions of the larger whole.

²³ Paul Pearsall, *The Heart's Code: Tapping the Wisdom and Power of Our Heart Energy* (New York: Broadway Books, 1998), 55.

²⁴ Founder of systems philosophy and general evolution theory.

²⁵ Ervin Laszlo, *Science and the Reenchantment of Nature*, (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2006), 35.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 88-89.

²⁷ David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1980), 174.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 172.

²⁹ Nick Herbert, *Reality: Beyond the New Physics* (New York: Anchor Books, 1987).

³⁰ David Bohm & F. David Peat, *Science, Order and Relativity* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1987), 90.

³¹ Rene Weber, *Dialogues with Scientists and Sages*

(London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1986), 39, 41.

³² Ibid., 33.

³³ Ibid., 177.

³⁴ Bohm & Pea, 93-4.

³⁵ Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, 191-2.

³⁶ David Bohm, in Weber (1986), 41.

³⁷ Helena Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Syntheses of Science, Religion and Philosophy* (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, California, 1888), 58.

³⁸ Ibid., 277.

³⁹ Ibid., 604-6.

⁴⁰ I use the term “Kosmos” when referring to Blavatsky as this is the more archaic spelling

she uses, while otherwise using the more familiar and modern “Cosmos.”

⁴¹ These bizarre concepts will be elaborated within the concluding article of this series and concerns the seven “holes dug in Space” described by Blavatsky as the foundations of the Kosmos, as elaborated in part II of this series.

⁴² A concluding section of this article series will explore the more complex notions of holography to emerge in 21st century physics; dealing with black hole information processors in alternate space dimensions and the relationship of such concepts to Blavatsky’s notion of “seven holes dug in space.”

An Interview: With Dr. Carol Parrish-Harra

Rev. Carol Parrish-Harra, PhD, retired in 2010 after many years' service as founding dean of the Sancta Sophia Seminary, pastor of the Light of Christ Community Church, and spiritual leader of the Sparrow Hawk Village community, all at Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Her books, including *The New Age Handbook on Death and Dying*; *Messengers of Hope: The Walk-In Phenomenon* (now in expanded second edition); *Sophia Sutras*; and her three volume *Adventures in Meditation* have been influential in the esoteric community.

Dr. Parrish-Harra has received many honors and recognitions for her work as a teacher, author, minister, and mystic. In 1998 the World Network of Religious Futurists honored her with the Earl Award for outstanding service in advancing the contribution of world religions to the future of humanity. In 2005 at Saint Petersburg, Russia Dr. Parrish-Harra was presented the International Nebolsin Award for outstanding service in the field of education for the common good of humanity, in company with Alexander Putin, president of the Russian federation; Nobel Laureate Jores Alferov; and M. Piotrovsky, director of the Hermitage Museum.

Esoteric Quarterly: You left a promising business career in 1971 to seek ordination as a minister. The rest, as they say, is history. But can you share some insights into what motivated you to take that step?

Carol Parrish-Harra: In 1958 I had a near death experience and came back changed and knowing what my life was about. The “presence” never left me and I have tried to “dignify” the work as I was asked to do. Later, that kind of experience became known as Soul-Exchange or Walk-In Experience.

EQ: Who were your most important mentors in those early days—or more recently?

CP-H: Ann C. Manser of Florida was an influential teacher and guide. I also studied with Vera Stanley Alder from London and Bournemouth, England, and later with Torkom Saraydarian of California and Arizona. Torkum is believed to have been one of the students personally supervised by the Tibetan Master, Djwhal Khul. Since then I have added a number of favorite teaching authors, including Manly P. Hall, Tau Malachi, and John White.

EQ: What do you consider your greatest accomplishment in your years of ministry and teaching?

CP-H: Enduring it all and always loving the work.

I strongly believe that a number of the books that I authored were guided by Spirit. The three volumes of *Adventures in Awareness* took me nine years of great effort. *The New Dictionary of Spiritual Thought* has proved to be a priceless aid to beginners. Despite its title it is written in a narrative style. Writing the *Sophia*

Sutras was the most fun, although it was a challenge to document.

EQ: If you had your time over again, is there anything you would have done differently?

CP-H: Of course. I would have prayed more for serious disciples who wanted to carry on the work and were capable of doing so. As it is, many students want to “act like” they “know” and just want to receive a piece of paper—thinking that certification makes them holy! Also, many people are angry with tradition and want to rebel; but they don’t have a good grasp of what needs to be done or how to do the real work. Fortunately, a few really dedicated students dignify their lives instead of feeding *maya* and illusion.

EQ: Your career covered much of the life cycle of the New Age movement. What do you think were the movement’s enduring effects—good and bad—on more serious esoteric studies and practices?

CP-H: Torkom Saraydarian told me once that psychic play, with superficial interests, provides a smoke screen, behind which the real workers could be protected from harm. I think all those who have been touched will move forward slowly, and the real disciples will be richly blessed.

EQ: The Divine Feminine Sophia has meant much to you, and certainly you have helped promote awareness of her in your writings and teachings. How do you

view Sophia—as compared, say, with Mary the mother of Jesus or the Buddhist Kwan Yin—as a guiding principle for the Aquarian Age?

We struggle to define “mystic.” Perhaps we can say that the mystic “knows” God in some intimate way. Mystics testify to more than just an earthly experience. They have brought together heart and mind to know God as a Divine Presence. People come to this “knowing” in their own way; it does not require a commitment to the contemplative life. Simplicity of being is the most obvious outer sign...

CP-H: I believe Sophia is Mother Wisdom. Respectfully, I give honor to Mary, Mother of Jesus, and to Kwan Yin as personifications of Sophia or the Divine Mother. I believe we have had wonderful masculine figures as the icons of the last period. Now I think we will become more aware of the holy feminine working behind the scenes. These workers were called “*taras*” meaning fountains. They stayed in one place most of the time (except when working in other worlds) and watered

the seeds so they would grow. Males could travel more freely and the females could hold the energy in a sacred place...for many this was the community in which they dwelt.

EQ: In your various trips to Russia you observed the resurgence of the Orthodox Church. What influence do you think Eastern Christianity can have on esoteric studies and practices in the decades to come?

CP-H: I made nine trips to the Soviet Union and to Russia between 1987 and 2005. Eastern Orthodoxy is very significant as it expects everyone to end up as a mystic. The Eastern Churches remember the traditional steps to making a mystic. In time this will be better understood in the West.

EQ: What form do you think organized religion will take over the century or two, and what will be its relationship to esoteric studies and practice?

CP-H: I believe organized religion has been so restricted that people will continue to leave it behind. There will be an increase in prayer, visualization, and meditation groups in the future, so individuals can express themselves more freely. I think we are watching the Church of Paul and the Church of John come together to form a vehicle of grace. Everyone ought to reread *The Gnostic Gospels* by Elaine Pagels. All inner life is a mystery and all of us are called to be mystics.

We struggle to define “mystic.” Perhaps we can say that the mystic “knows” God in some intimate way. Mystics testify to more than just an earthly experience. They have brought together heart and mind to know God as a Divine Presence. People come to this “knowing” in their own way; it does not require a commitment to the contemplative life. Simplicity of being is the most obvious outer sign, and that means a great many mystics in all traditions are overlooked.

EQ: Although you remain professionally active, you have passed the torch to a younger generation at Sancta Sophia, the Light of Christ Community Church, and Sparrow Hawk Village. What general advice would you give them, based on your years of experience and your awareness of changing conditions in the world?

CPH: People need to know that “they don’t know” when they take on public work. I began my studies in 1965 and was ordained in 1971, forty years ago. But I have learned more since 1981.

Before that I was just laying a foundation for what I was to learn later on. The Masters will only work with you, not for you.

EQ: Would you give different advice to your many former seminary students who have taken up professional positions throughout the nation and beyond?

CP-H: I think it is foolish to give too much credit to a piece of paper—graduation or certification. If you really are an esotericist you will never stop striving, studying and pondering. You are to be true to your commitment to whatever vows you make to the best of your ability and both serve and work to keep your own light shining.

EQ: Is there anything else you would like to tell readers of *The Esoteric Quarterly*?

CP-H: Many people who are dabbling are really just waking up. Few recognize the sacrifices disciples really have to make. In a world transforming we are moving ahead but must remember that there is always someone ahead of us and some one behind. Link hands and it is easier for us all.

EQ: What do you envision yourself doing in the next ten years or so?

CP-H: Primarily, I want to go on teaching and writing. I love my “Conversations with Carol” class. I may travel more but am not ready for too much at this time.

EQ: We very much appreciate your taking the time for this interview. We wish you every blessing for the future. And may your next ten years be even more fruitful than the last!

Fundamentals of the Work

An occasional column on aspects of the work, written for students by the staff of the School for Esoteric Studies.

Recollection

One of the most basic practices a student aspiring to discipleship must employ, in addition to meditation, is the daily practice of recollection, which has also been referred to in some literature as “Self remembering.”

Recollection is defined as a moment of heightened consciousness during which we realign the personality with the Soul and remember that our true Self is the Soul. This links us up with the group Soul and puts us in tune with the One Life. In this way we become a channel for the inflow of light to the personality and, through the personality, to our environment.

Since this practice only takes a few seconds and does not require any special thoughtform construction or refocusing of our attention, it can be carried out no matter what we are doing and no matter where we are. We simply “wake up” into a higher level of conscious awareness.

In order to make this practice of recollection a daily habit, we begin by choosing a particular time of day, preferably a time when we are most likely to remember to do it, so that a daily rhythm can be established. One practical suggestion is to implant the intention to recollect at a particular time as a final step in the morning meditation.

The Tibetan, in *Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol. 2, pp. 647-648, recommends five particular points of recollection during the day, each taking only a few seconds, in order to establish a “living continuity of sensed relationship” in our consciousness:

1. On awakening in the morning, before rising.
2. At noon.
3. At sunset, whatever hour that may be.
4. On retiring at night.
5. At the time of the group meditation, whenever you may decide to do it.

Once the practice is firmly established, we will find that we begin to recollect at other times of the day as we anticipate the actual time of recollection. This is greatly to be desired because our eventual goal is to recollect as often as we can during the day in order to create a continuity of consciousness.

The Tibetan refers to this continuity of consciousness in *A Treatise on White Magic*, p. 423, where he refers to the need for disciples to be able to be in telepathic rapport with each other:

The second requirement that will establish relation between the working disciples in this group is the capacity to preserve a constant and sequential recollection of both the inner and the outer life. We call it continuity of consciousness, and by this we mean the power to be fully aware of all happenings in all spheres and departments during the entire twenty-four hours of the day.

In *The Light of the Soul*, Book 3, Sutra 11 (pp. 262-263), we read about developing control over the mental body and the importance of establishing a habit of recollection in order to attain it:

The ideal condition is that of being in a state of realization all day every day. The ability at will to draw upon the resources of the Ego, the constant recognition that one is a [Soul] incarnate upon the physical plane, and the ability to draw down, when needed, the power and the force of the Soul, is one which will be eventually achieved by every aspirant! But first, however, the habit of recollection has to

be instituted and the instantaneous ability to restrain the modifications of the thinking principle has to precede this desirable state of being.

The goal of achieving a continuity of consciousness throughout the day is also mentioned on pp. 420-421 of *The Light of the Soul* (Book 4, Sutra 25):

All meditation work, all moments of reflection, all affirmative exercises, all hours of recollection of one's true nature are means employed to detach the mind from the lower reactions and tendencies, and build in the habit of a constant realization of one's true divine nature. When this realization is achieved, the need for

such exercises ceases and one enters into one's heritage. The isolation referred to [in Sutra 25] is the detachment of the self from the field of knowledge, the refusal of the self to seek outward-going sensuous experience and standing firm in the state of spiritual being.

When we are immersed in our daily work, in our self-made lives, it is all too easy to feel separate and asleep to spiritual realities, but when we venture out into the realm of the Soul, there is nothing separating us from Life, and the Soul lets us know of its all-pervading presence through an exquisite feeling of connectedness and joy.

Book Review

***The Need for a Sacred Science*, by Seyyed Hossein Nasr.** Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993. Paperback, 175 pages.

Since the Seventeenth century, the doctrine of scientific materialism has come to dominate western civilization's concept of the natural sciences, along with its history, philosophy, economics and politics. Based on the so-called "superior method" of reductionist logic, scientific materialism presumes that the material world—the external world of objective reality—is the only reality that exists. Modern science is apt to claim that objective reality is independent of any subjective or metaphysical influences or causes. It explains immaterial or subjective truths in material terms and tends to see humankind as an accident and God as a delusion. The catastrophic result, in Dr. Nasr's view, has been the loss of a sacred cosmic order that threatens humanity's spiritual and temporal existence.

The remedy for such a profound "loss of Center," as Professor Nasr maintains, is the Supreme Science of meta-physics—the *scientia sacra*—defined by the author as the sacred knowledge which springs from all great or divinely inspired revelation. For Nasr, one of the world's leading perennial philosophers and proponents of the "traditionalist school," the sacred sciences are the "traditional sciences that lie at the center of man and at the heart of all orthodox and authentic religions attainable by the intellect...and the inner spiritual faculties."

In a series of inspired and exquisitely written essays, Nasr outlines the basic principles and metaphysical foundations of sacred science and explains their applicability to the macrocosm as well as the microcosm. He contrasts metaphysical knowledge with contemporary science and discusses how scientific thinking has altered humanity's image of itself and contributed to the major problems that the world currently faces.

Dr. Nasr's call for a sacred science begins with a discussion of how modern secular science has severed the connections between humanity and the Divine and reduced reality to an externally experienced world where nothing exists but matter and where nothing is revered but the pursuit of material pleasure or progress. The development of rationalistic thought, in Nasr's view, has created a world where the "knowing self" along with its "objective and subjective poles of knowledge" are diminished and "reduced to a single level of awareness." His first series of essays, contrasts this restrictive and inadequate outlook with the traditionalist perspective, which posits "God as Reality," and which envisions a hierarchic multiplicity of intelligences behind the forces of nature and the external world of the senses.

It is possible, Nasr maintains, to gain knowledge of the Absolute and to know Him as "Ultimate Reality" through "the twin sources of revelation and intellection." In other words, such an awareness can only be gained through the *sophia perennis* or traditional wisdom embodied in the revealed doctrines of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, the Vedas, and all sapiential and unitive traditions. Nasr's considerable knowledge of traditionalist teaching and intellectual traditions, in addition to his advanced degrees in science, allow him to present an insightful and integrated overview of the perennial wisdom within the context of sacred science. This overview draws numerous parallels from Islam and diverse traditions concerning self-awareness and the ultimate nature of the Self, as well as metaphysical notions regarding the Oneness of Spirit, human destiny, eternity and time.

Nasr also considers the themes of unity and diversity and their denial by secularized societies. He argues that it is necessary to "realize the unity of the Spirit behind the multiplicity of religious forms in order to reach the peace that human beings seek." Truth, as Nasr contends, "is One, but its expressions are many." The

esoteric nexus that all religions contain are intended to serve as a background upon which individual and societal values and ethics must be based. From a traditionalist perspective, the recognition of a singular esoteric essence lying at the heart of diverse forms is necessary to counter the moral relativism and absolutism of self-authority or individualism that scientific materialism and secular humanism advocates.

Rejecting the purely historical and academic approach toward sacred teachings, Nasr calls for a true *philosophia perennis* that concerns itself with every aspect of religion. Such an approach must necessarily include an understanding of “the relationship between God and man, revelation, mysticism, sacred art, symbol, ritual, religious law, social ethics, theology and cosmology.” In addition to the aforementioned disciplines, the “spiritual significance of nature” is seen as being of utmost importance to the sacred sciences. Its significance, as Nasr explains, can be seen in the order, harmony, contemplative beauty, cooperation and complementarity that nature exhibits as well as the laws that make these and other attributes feasible. Nature is a “cosmic book”, containing the “words and letters of a sacred language written by the creative power of Divinity upon the tablet of cosmic existence.”

The final series of essays in this book deal with the confrontation between the traditionalist framework and the modern predicament. Nasr provides a sharp critique of the problems caused by “materialist science” and its various offspring. He touches on a number of social, psychological, environmental and economic problems, such as the erosion of values and ethical foundations, depression, alienation and nihilism, as well as the myth of unending material progress, which Nasr sees as “stimulating consumption and the satisfaction of novel caprice and artificial desire.” Nasr, who was one of the first to express his concerns about the environmental crisis, includes an essay on the environment as seen from an Islamic perspective. In this view “the solution of the environmental problem cannot but come from the cure of the spiritual malaise of modern man

and the rediscovery of the world of Spirit, which being compassionate always gives of Itself to those open and receptive to Its vivifying rays.”

Nasr’s reflections upon some of the distinctive features of modern existence touch upon the unnoted results of secularism. Secularization, as he argues, has “sought to replace the traditional concept of man with one which divorces him from his Divine Archetype.” It “extols human reason”, but “de-sacralizes the whole cosmos in the name of the supremacy of man.” He goes on to say that:

The current concept of man as a self-centered creature not responsible to any authority beyond himself wielding infinite power over the natural environment can not but end in the aggression of man against himself and the world of nature.

For Nasr, it is “not possible to have true compassion for humanity while holding the dehumanizing view that people can be reduced to their physical abilities or their material input ... “To forget the Spirit and settle for its earthly reflections alone is to be doomed to the world of multiplicity, to separation, division and finally aggression and war.”

Modern science, as the author concedes, is responsible for some remarkable accomplishments. However, the immense failures of science must be clearly understood. Science must, by necessity, be confined to its own philosophical premises, which concern the nature of the objective or physical world. Although Nasr accepts that the world is in need of a sacred science pertaining to the material sphere, such a science must, in his view, be seen as part of a larger whole and can only derive from the perennial philosophy or “the sacred science of the Real.”

While not everyone will embrace Nasr’s traditionalist views in full, the author’s dazzling scholarship, spiritual insight and passionate concern carry an undeniable weight that is certain to expand and enrich the readers of this book.

Donna M. Brown