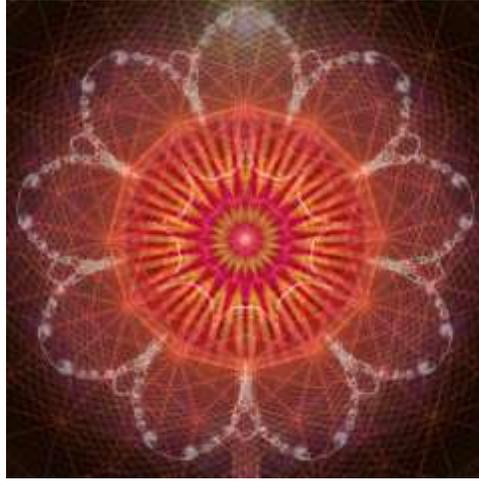


Winter 2016, Volume 11, Number 4



The Esoteric Quarterly

An independent publication dedicated to the trans-disciplinary investigation of the esoteric spiritual tradition.

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



Washington, DC, USA.
www.esotericquarterly.com
e-mail: editor@esotericquarterly.com



The Esoteric Quarterly

The Esoteric Quarterly is an online, peer-reviewed, international journal, published by The Esoteric Quarterly Inc., a non-profit corporation based in Washington, DC. 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.esotericquarterly.com>. All correspondence should be addressed to editor@esotericquarterly.com

Editorial Board

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

Editor Emeritus: John F. Nash (United States)

Alison Deadman (United States)

Celeste Jamerson (United States)

Jef Bartow (United States)

Katherine O'Brien (New Zealand)

Miguel Malagreca (Italy)

Facebook Administrator

Miguel Malagreca (Italy)

Copyright © *The Esoteric Quarterly*, 2016.

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 or redistribution without the permission of *The Esoteric Quarterly* is strictly prohibited. Note that the copyright volumes 1 thru 8 copyright remain with the *School for Esoteric Studies*

The Esoteric Quarterly

Contents

Volume 11, Number 4. Winter 2016

FEATURES

Editorial	4
Publication Policies	5
Poems of the Quarter	6
“Peace” and “A Riddle,” by Kurt Abraham	
Pictures of the Quarter	7
“Data Visualization” and “The Art of Pi,” by Martin Krzywinski	
Quotes of the Quarter	10
Advertising	12

ARTICLES

Mathematics and Esotericism , by John F. Nash	15
A Meditation on the Incarnation of the Word: Perspectives from the Gospel of Thomas in an East-West Synthesis , by Irina Kuzminsky	47
Lama Govinda’s Quest for the Truth: A Summary of His Life - Part II , by Iván Kovács	67

SHORT PAPERS

A Model of the Human Atom , by Jose Becerra	81
Radiation , by Dorje Jinpa	87

GREAT ESOTERICISTS

Katherine Tingley , by John F. Nash	91
--	----

BOOK REVIEW

Mystery and Language of Color , by Kurt Abraham	96
--	----



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@esotericquarterly.com.

Ways of Knowing

A true inquiry into the occult nature of humanity and the universe requires thinking across multiple perspectives and disciplines. The articles in virtually every issue of the *Quarterly* seek to juxtapose, connect and synthesize modes of realization or wisdom from the domain of traditional religion, esotericism, philosophy, psychology and science, and to do so in a way that dignifies the integrity of diverse paradigms and disciplines.

Inclusive and integrative approaches are crucial to the understanding of nature, the world around us and the deep inter-relationships in the cosmos. Therefore, all fields and methods of knowing can be thought of as manifestations of the sacred, in so far as they are part of hierarchy of methods and knowledge. However, these different ways of knowing must be illumined by a deeper spiritual awareness that discriminates but reconciles surface distinctions and the basic divisions of exoteric and esoteric, or scientific, phenomenological and spiritual knowing. Only in this way can the underlying unity of Knowledge be seen.

Mathematics is a field of knowledge, largely mental in nature, which focuses on the study of quantity, pattern, space, and change. However, in the ancient Mystery Schools, mathematics and geometry were thought to be hierophanies, or expressions of the sacred. In our first offering, John Nash elaborates upon this view in his examination of both the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of mathematics. In an effort to create a viable synthesis between the two, Nash searches for the esoteric meaning in equations, theorems, and other mathematical constructs. His primary emphasis is on geometry, algebra, and the esoteric symbolism of the point, the line, and the circle. The article concludes with a discussion of Chaos Theory, and a reflection on mathematics as a universal language and its “relevance to aesthetics, esotericism, and the spiritual path.”

Our next article, by Irina Kuzminsky, is a meditation on the Word and the secret teachings of Jesus from the Gospel of Thomas. Kuzminsky seeks to bring about an East-West synthesis by identifying a three-way relationship among “the Word” (Logos) of the prologue to the Gospel of John, the sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas, and the Vac (“Word”) of traditional Hindu teachings. Included is a discussion of the relationship between the Logos and the Vac, deities that carry out the creation of the universe through the power of speech. Kuzminsky’s intention is to show that Jesus’ controversial message in Thomas “is common to Eastern and Western Wisdom teachings and constitutes an example of how Wisdom may manifest in myriad different guises in the overlapping traditions of West and East.”

Iván Kovács contributes the concluding article in a two-part series on the life and travels of Lama Anagarika Govinda, one of the great translators of Tibetan Buddhism and culture to the West. Part One of this series, provided an account of Govinda’s early life, his creative activities and many adventures and encounters with notable teachers as he journeyed through Europe, Ceylon, Burma and India. Part Two details the fascinating but arduous expedition that Govinda and his wife, Li, undertook into Western Tibet. Kovács draws upon a number of sources including Govinda’s *The Way of the White Clouds*, to paint a rich and beguiling portrait of their spiritual pilgrimage to Tibet. The article concludes by touching upon the Govinda’s final years and their productive efforts to reconcile Eastern and Western values and ideals into a single framework.

In addition to the featured articles in this issue, we have included three short papers. The first essay from José Becerra, outlines a model of the occult constitution of a human being. The fascinating theories that Becerra discusses are consistent with the quantum ethereal space-

time matrix and the clairvoyant research of Babbitt, Besant and Leadbeater, et al.

Our second paper from Dorje Jinpa, explores The Law of Radiation, which governs the transmutation/radiation process. Jinpa touches on this law as it operates in the kingdoms of nature. However, his primary focus is on its operation and effects on the human organism.

In the third paper, John Nash explores the life of Katherine Tingley, one of the *Great Esotericists of the Past*. Tingley was the leader of the American Section of the Theosophical Society after W.Q. Judge, and one of three noteworthy women who contributed to the growth of the Theosophical movement.

Also included is a review for a new book by Kurt Abraham titled: *Mystery and Language of Color*. The “Mumbai Rosicrucian Pronaos” in commenting on this work, said that it “contains enough material for a lifetime of contemplation and practice.”

The two lyric poems featured in this issue, “Peace” and “A Riddle,” from a *Pocket of Pure Being and other Poems*, are also from Kurt Abraham. Abraham’s works, which attempt “to give form to essence,” and capture the “elusive spirit of things,” are available at: lampus@wizzards.net & www.amazon.com.

Our “Pictures of the Quarter” from Martin Krzywinski, bring together the seemingly disparate fields of Mathematics and Art. Mr. Krzywinski is a scientist who specializes in bioinformatics—the practice of organizing vast sets of biological data and representing them graphically for research and analysis. His work focuses on cancer research at the Cancer Agency in Vancouver. His information graphics began as a way to give data a form that could be understood both cognitively and emotionally. In the images included here, Krzywinski transforms data information and the infinite randomness of pi into images of stunning beauty and creative power. As such, his work shows us that mathematics is more than formulas or equations on a page. For additional information on Martin Krzywinski and his work, readers are encouraged to visit:

mkweb.bcgsc.ca/pi/art/, and the many other sites that feature his work.

Donna M. Brown
Editor-in-Chief

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 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 by Kurt Abraham

Peace

Restless is where restless wants
to find some peace where peace is not.
Peace is where the wants are few
but the need to give is restless too.

Restless is the empty cup
And restless is the filling up.
Peace descends when love provides
both ebb and flow of every tide.

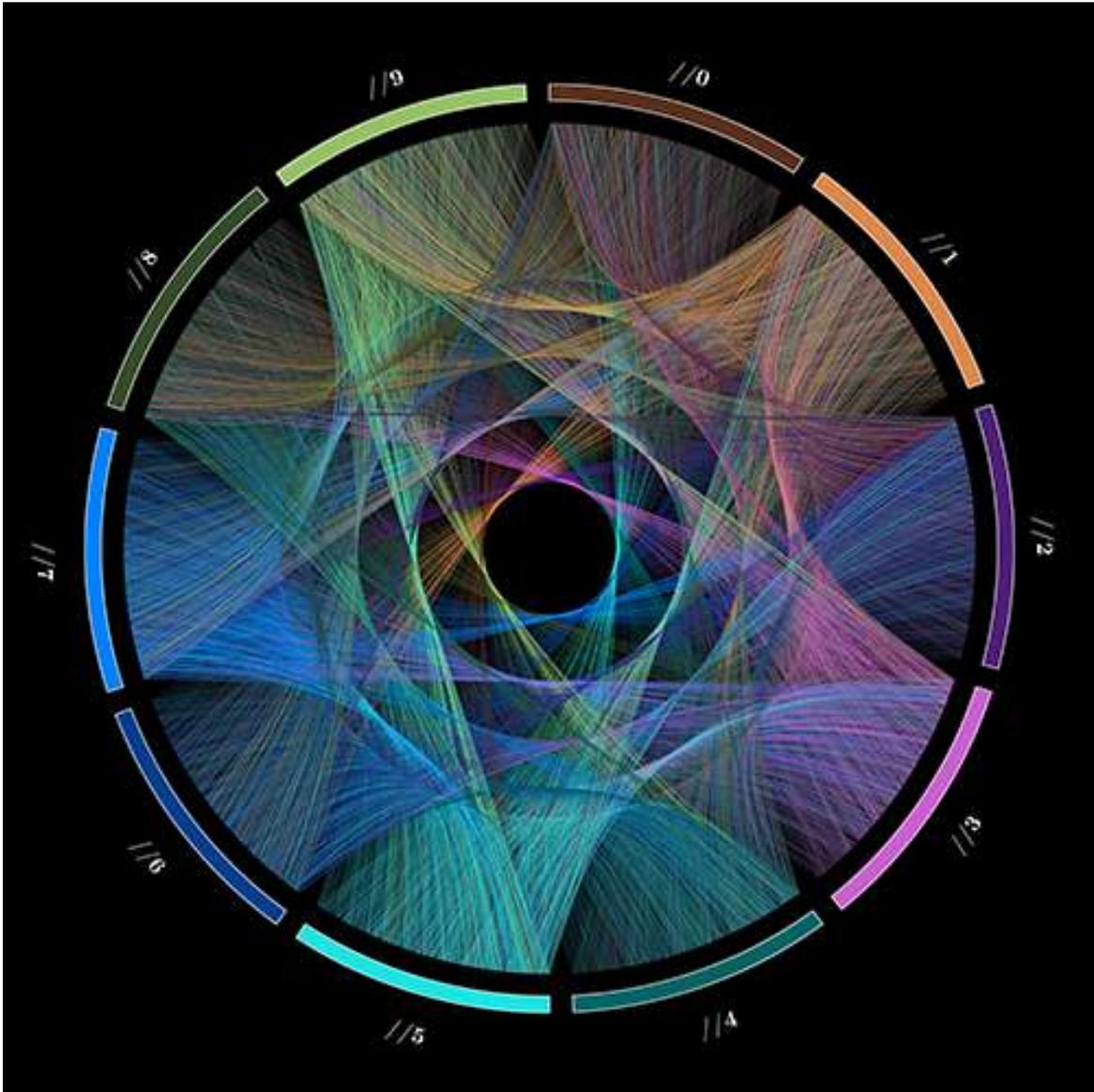
A Riddle

What has four legs
Three stars
And is nocturnal for eons
But then on one fine day
Rises with the Invisible Sun
As if there were no tomorrow
And stands on her-his head
Gliding on thought that flies
And perching its way
Though all those multifarious clamors
Bringing wren-like the most cheery cherry song

Oh Little Wren
Come alight upon one's troubles
Come alight
And show them
That they too *have song*

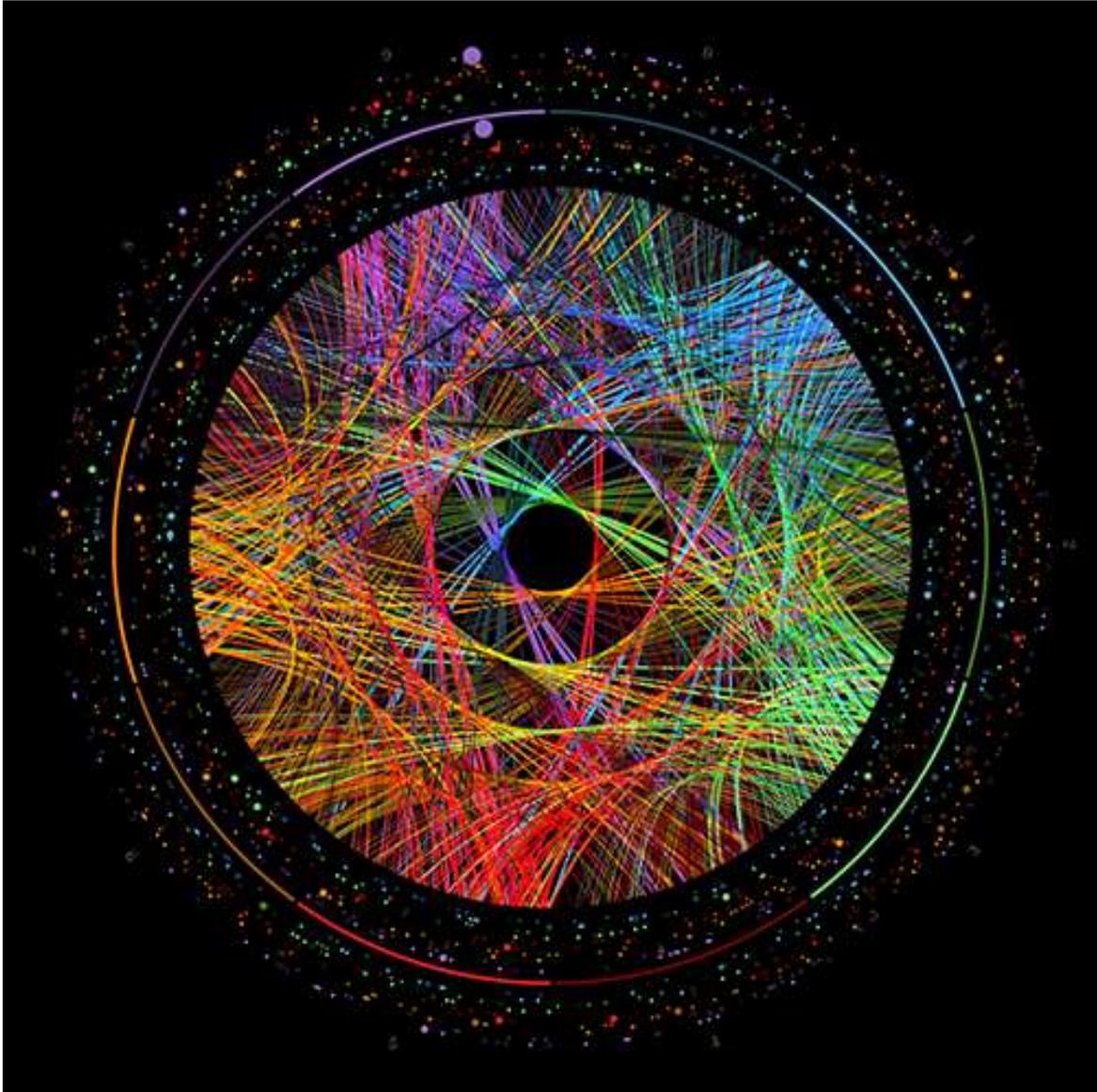


(From a *Pocket of Pure Being and Other Poems*)



Pi Progression and Transition Path for 10,000 digits

By Martin Krzywinski



Pi Progression and Transition Paths for 1,000 digits

By Martin Krzywinski

Quotes of the Quarter

In a sense, Mathematics has been most advanced by those who have distinguished themselves by intuition rather than rigorous truths.

Felix Klein, as quoted in *Levels of Infinity* by Herman Weyl (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2012), 33.

Mathematics ... functions as a bridge between the relative and transcendent states of consciousness. It serves, on the one hand, as a vehicle for crossing from the transcendent to the relative by providing a highly subtle and precise language for expressing the immediate contents of transcendent states with minimal distortion. On the other hand, it also serves as a vehicle for crossing from the relative to the transcendent by providing highly abstract and universal symbols for generating insights through contemplation. ... although the structure of this mathematical bridge is provided by the highly subtle forms of thought, an actual crossing of the bridge requires the motivating power of love and devotion.

Thomas McFarland, *The Spiritual Function of Mathematics and the Philosophy of Franklin Merrell-Wolff*, 1995.
www.intergralscience.org.

Mathematics is, in many ways, the most precious response that the human spirit has made to the call of the infinite. It is man's best revelation of the "Deep Base of the World."

Cassius J. Keyser, *The Human Worth of Rigorous Thinking: Essays and Addresses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925), 59.

Mathematics, rightly viewed, possesses not only truth, but supreme beauty—a beauty cold and austere, like that of sculpture, without appeal to any part of our weaker nature, without the gorgeous trappings of paintings or music, yet sublimely pure and

capable of a stern perfection such as only the greatest art can show.

Bertrand Russell, "The Study of Mathematics." *Mysticism and Logic: And Other Essays* (Watford, UK: Taylor Garnett Evans & Co., 1910), 22.

Jesus, in the manner of the masters of the East invites us by means of paradoxical formulations to become aware of our uncreated origin, of our freedom without limits in the midst of the most restrictive contingencies. Here it is a question of awakening to the absolute Reality in the core of relative or deceptive realities. It is an unceasing journey from limited consciousness to an unlimited consciousness.

Jean-Yves Leloup, *The Gospel of Thomas* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2003), Preface.

The enigmatic sayings of the Thomas Gospel are reminiscent of the Buddhist koan, an intentionally perplexing statement or question that is crafted to encourage the reader or listener to ponder paradoxes which may have no rational, logical solution. The Thomasine emphasis on unity as such and the union and even transcendence of opposites, reminds one of Hinduism non-dualism, especially as enshrined in the Upanishads. ...

Jesus in his esoteric doctrine desires his listeners to seek and find their true identities in their pre-existent celestial counterparts, which pre-exist in the supernal Shekhinah. In short, Jesus' secret teaching is not one of faith, nor of a worshipping community, but of individual Self-realization.

Samuel Zinner, *The Gospel of Thomas: In the Light of Early Jewish, Christian and Islamic Trajectories* (London, UK: The Matheson Trust, 2011), 47 & 62.

The world as such is neither good nor bad; it produces criminals as well as saints, ignorance as well as wisdom, fools as well as

Enlightened Ones. One may say that the number of fools is out of proportion to the number of the Enlightened, but this means that one mistakes quantity for quality.

Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Creative Meditation and Multidimensional Consciousness* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1977), 184,

The intellectual thinker generally believes he has reproduced reality in his thoughts, mistaking the foreshortening perspective of his two-dimensional logic for a universal law. The use of logic in thinking is as necessary and justified as the use of perspective in painting—but only as a means of expression and not as a criterion of reality. As long as the mind is tethered to the idea that action must be divided into past, present and future, there is identification through time and therefore a continuity from which arises the fear of death, the fear of the loss of love. To understand timeless reality, timeless life, action must be complete. But you cannot be aware of this timeless reality by searching for it.

Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Creative Meditation and Multidimensional Consciousness* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1977), 253.

The Formless ('Arupa') Radiations existing in harmony of Universal Will ... being what we term the collective or aggregate of Cosmic will ... unite together an infinitude of monads—each a mirror of its own Universe—and thus individualize, for the time being, an independent mind, omniscient and universal; and by the process of magnetic aggregation they create for themselves objective, visible bodies, out of interstellar atoms. For atoms and Monads, associated or dissociated, simple or complex, are from the moment of the first differentiation, but *principles*, corporeal, psychic and Spiritual, of the 'Gods,'—themselves the Radiations of primordial nature.

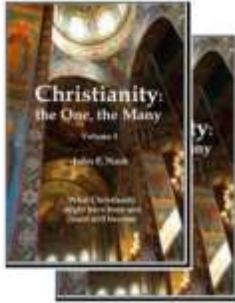
Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, reprint, 1974; (London, The Theosophical Publishing Co. 1888), 632-633.

At a specific point in evolution, radiation is an indication that the life essence within a particular form is starting to respond to the magnetic pull of a greater, more inclusive centre of energy. The life has evolved to the point that it can no longer be contained within its confining walls and it's starting to escape.... *Radiation is transmutation in process of accomplishment ... the passage across from one state of being to another, through the agency of fire.* We see this taking place by degree throughout the whole scheme of evolution, reflecting the great process of the electric fire of spirit contacting the frictional fire of matter and producing the spiralling path of consciousness, the relationship between the two.

Laurence Newey, "The Conscience of Love," from a talk entitled: *Esoteric Perspectives on a Science of Consciousness*. Lucis Trust, May, 2003.

Every man has an atmosphere which is affecting every other. So silent and unconsciously is this influence working, that man may forget that it exists. Man cannot escape for one moment from this radiation of his character—this constantly weakening or strengthening of others. He cannot evade the responsibility by saying it is an unconscious influence. He can select the qualities he would permit to be radiated. He can cultivate sweetness, trust, generosity, truth, justice, loyalty, nobility, and make them vitally active in his character. By these qualities he will constantly affect the world. This radiation to which I refer comes from what a person really is, and not from what he pretends to be.... Every man by his mere living is radiating sympathy, sorrow, or morbidness, cynicism, or happiness or hope or any other of a hundred qualities. Life is a state of radiation and absorption. To exist is to radiate. To exist is to be the recipient of radiation.

David O. McKay, *Spiritual Radiation*, from an address given at Brigham Young University, April 27, 1948.



**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."

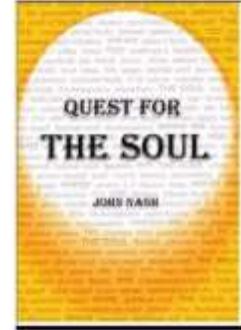
Two volume set.
Paperback \$39.98, hardback \$59.98.

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

**Quest for
the Soul**

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

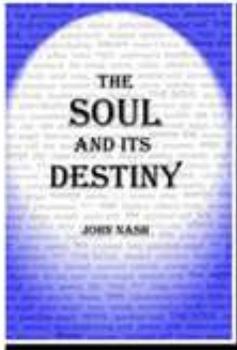
by **John Nash**



"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**

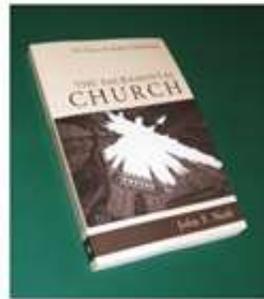
by **John Nash**

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**

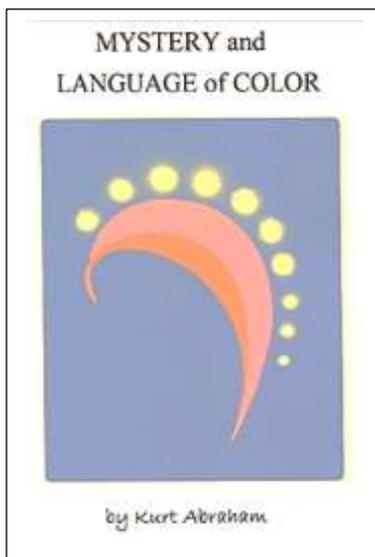
"Is there a Catholic tradition in Anglicanism? What are its origins? Are Anglo-Catholics real Anglicans/Episcopalians? What is their relationship with Roman Catholics? Has Anglo-Catholicism betrayed the Reformation? *The Sacramental Church* answers these and many other questions in a very readable style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

MYSTERY and LANGUAGE of COLOR

By Kurt Abraham



This book looks at the esoteric significance of color, drawing upon the works of H. P. Blavatsky and Alice Bailey. The book includes 47 color plates. Every human passion, thought, and quality is indicated in the aura by a color. The growth of the color sense indicates a thinning of the veil which separates the world of external and tangible phenomena from that of subjective being and of subtler matter. These colors can be seen by the clairvoyant, but there are also other means by which one can view the subtle colors that exist on the inner planes. Color veils the Spirit aspect, as dense form veils the Soul.



“This slim, beautifully illustrated book contains enough material for several lifetimes of contemplation and practice. Kurt writes with his head among the constellations but his feet are firmly planted on Earth.” (Mumbai Rosicrucian Pronaos Newsletter)

129 pages, US \$24.00
Available at: [http://: www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and
lampus@wizards.net

Call from the Mountain



Messages to Disciples from the Heart of Kanchenjunga

*“Beauty is the magnet of the new world and
love is its portal of entry.”*

At the heart of these messages is a call to disciples to realize their responsibility in forming a living link between the human and spiritual kingdoms.

*“We urge you to step forthrightly into the future by assuming
your true identity as souls. That is what narrows the gap
between humanity and the Hierarchy and paves the way for the
Great Approach.”*

*“It is crucial to remember that the externalizing process requires a
pathway of descent that must be built, in part, by human minds.”*

This *Call* is being studied and meditated upon by disciples around the world.

One wrote: *“The vibration behind the document is exquisite.”*

To download the pdf version of the *Call* click [here](#):

The Living Discipleship Initiative ♦ www.callfromthemountain.net

Esotericism and Mathematics

John F. Nash

It seems to me now that mathematics is capable of an artistic excellence as great as that of any music, perhaps greater; not because the pleasure it gives . . . but because it gives in absolute perfection that combination, characteristic of great art, of godlike freedom, with the sense of inevitable destiny; because, in fact, it constructs an ideal world where everything is perfect and yet true. (Mathematician and philosopher Bertrand Russell¹)

Summary

Mathematics is a system of thought whose applications range from simple arithmetic, to modeling physical phenomena, to exploring abstract concepts that transcend the world we know. It is also a universal language that can express esoteric truths: perhaps a derivative of the language *Sensa* used by high initiates. Even mathematicians who disavow “the sacred” may experience a sense of awe upon gaining new insights or witnessing new discoveries.

This article reviews areas of exoteric and esoteric mathematics in order to build a more meaningful synthesis. A major focus is on the geometry, algebra, and esoteric symbolism of the point, the line, and the circle—along with three enigmatic numbers that feature therein. The article continues with an exploration of chaos theory, placing it in the context of the eternal conflict between cosmic order and disorder, stasis and evolution. The article concludes by reflecting on the larger role of mathematics in esotericism, and its actual and potential relevance to the spiritual path.

Introduction

Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) proclaimed: “The universe cannot be read until we have learned the language and become familiar with the characters in which it is written. It is

written in mathematical language, and the letters are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures, without which . . . it is humanly impossible to comprehend a single word. Without these, one is wandering about in a dark labyrinth.”² Most likely, “the universe” he was referring to was the external one, which his telescope was bringing into focus, and his statement pertained to applied mathematics. But it could equally pertain to pure mathematics and the universe of abstract mental formulations.

In either case, Galileo was expressing an appreciation, shared by many others, of the power and the *necessity* of mathematics. Its name comes from the Greek *mathema*, which means “knowledge,” “study” or “learning.” Clearly, it is a broad field, whose roots lie deep in antiquity, but which is more relevant today than ever before.

From early times, mathematics has been recognized as possessing esoteric as well as exoteric dimensions. The esoteric dimensions may have been paramount during Lemurian and Atlantean times, when initiates formed the priesthood. The language of adepts, we are told, was and remains *Sensa*: “a universal language, and largely a hieroglyphic cypher”;³ an “ideographic language.”⁴

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*. The two-volume *Christianity: The One, the Many* was reviewed in the Fall 2008 issue. His latest book: *The Sacramental Church* was published in 2011. For further information see the advertisements in this issue and the website <http://www.uriel.com>.

In his study of the ancient language, Dorje Jinpa explained that, at the highest levels of reality, *Sensa* consists of ideograms of enormous power. But as information filters down to lower levels—as the formless descends into form—the familiar process of differentiation and multiplication takes place. By the time the information reaches the physical level, many words, sounds, symbols and gestures may be needed to capture the meaning and power of the original ideograms. Among the relevant symbols are the circle, the point, and the line, discussed in some detail in the present article. Jinpa urged: “[T]he understanding of symbols must be intuitive rather than analytical [because] esoteric symbols represent ideas on a level where the parts, the dualities of opposites, are realized as a synthesis.”⁵ Yet Jinpa did not denigrate analysis; in particular, he paid tribute to Pythagoras (c.570–c.495 BCE) for his work on the concept of number.⁶

The esoteric literature is replete with articles and books on “sacred mathematics,” divided into topic areas that include numerology, gematria, and sacred geometry. Much of the material lacks a sense of closure: fascinating but leaving us wondering what it all means. The extant material may well be a dim memory of the mathematical content of *Sensa*, used by the Masters before they withdrew from external manifestation at the end of the Atlantean era. The methods survived, but much of the underlying message was lost.

Sacred mathematics has largely ignored advances in its exoteric counterpart over the last 1,000 years.⁷ Yet the dim memories are giving way to new insights, raising hope that mathematics will once again be recognized as a sub-language of *Sensa*.

Esotericist Alice Bailey (1880–1949) wrote of a geometric language that expresses our progress on the Path of Return:

Each life that the Personality leads is, at the close, represented by some geometrical figure, some utilization of the lines of the cube, and their demonstration in a form of some kind. Intricate and uncertain in outline and crude in design are the forms of the earlier lives; definite and clear in outline

are the forms built by the average advanced man of this generation. But when he steps upon the Path of Discipleship, the purpose consists in merging all these many lines into one line, and gradually this consummation is achieved. The Master is He Who has blended all the lines of fivefold development first into the three, and then into the one. The six-pointed star becomes the five-pointed star, the cube becomes the triangle, and the triangle becomes the one; whilst the one (at the end of the greater cycle) becomes the point in the circle of manifestation.⁸

Elsewhere Bailey spoke of the Great Architect, the Great Geometrician, who produces the blueprints “with their mathematical accuracy, their structural unity and their geometrical perfection.”⁹ She also identified exactitude in thought, higher mathematics, and philosophy as “methods of development” for those on the Third Ray.¹⁰

This article does not simply *discuss* mathematics, it offers readers the opportunity to *experience* mathematics, and to place it in relation to esotericism by exploring formal logic, analytical methods, applications, and formats for expressing mathematical solutions.¹¹ The reader will encounter numbers, symbols, equations and graphs. This is not the first esoteric text to include such material. In 1989, William Eisen published a series of lectures with mathematical content, some similar to that presented herein.¹² Eisen drew upon Rosicrucian teachings and “the Cabalah,” as the basis for his interpretations. Unfortunately, many of those interpretations lacked persuasive force, and the work evoked little response. The present article looks to the trans-Himalayan teachings as its primary source of esoteric knowledge.

Notwithstanding Eisen’s work, the mathematics presented here is more advanced than that found in earlier treatments of the subject. Some readers may welcome the innovation, while others may react negatively. Despite its long tradition and increasing importance, mathematics is not a popular subject in our culture; too often we celebrate ignorance rather than expertise.¹³ This attitude must change if we are to move forward.

To understand the mathematics in this article, in a detailed sense, would be rewarding. But it is not necessary in order to grasp the article's intended message. Just as one need not understand Latin or Old Church Slavonic to appreciate the sanctity of the Mass, the esoteric aspects of mathematics can be appreciated without the need to verify every equation. The mathematics should stimulate the intuition; its elegance should be recognized; it should be regarded as a basis for contemplation.

The present article provides a very brief account of the development of mathematics, as an academic and utilitarian discipline, drawing attention both to its enormous success and to the recent discovery of inherent weaknesses. It illustrates traditional "sacred mathematics" by briefly reviewing gematria and the sacred geometry of the *vesica piscis*. The article's main purpose is to explore areas of mathematics, and their relevant analytical methods, that have not previously been addressed in the esoteric literature. It seeks to expand the boundaries of what may be considered esoteric mathematics and to simulate work on similar lines by other authors.

A major focus is on the geometric symbols of the point, the line, and the circle—forms that not only have an impressive array of numerical and algebraic properties, but also have profound esoteric significance. The mathematical constant, π (*pi*), which links the line and the circle, is a quantity that has been studied throughout the ages—and continues to captivate the imagination of the masses as well as of mathematicians. The article also examines the relatively new field of chaos theory, which forced science to abandon trust in calculability and to redefine the concept of determinism. Computations of the development of chaotic systems can provide patterns of exquisite beauty, worthy to inspire meditation.

The article ends with an effort to synthesize the various topics and to identify connections among diverse areas of exoteric and esoteric mathematics. It also reflects on the role of mathematics as a sacred language—potentially an expanding role as we come closer to recapturing some of the richness of *Sensa* on our

individual and collective Path of Return. The study of mathematics is to be recognized as a spiritual path in its own right—with inherent opportunities and challenges.

A new root race will soon emerge on this globe, which will place less emphasis on the intellect than the fifth root race has done. Before long, mathematics may be viewed in a new light, and may assume new roles, as the intuitive faculties become firmly established in human consciousness.

Development of Mathematics

The origins of mathematics go back far in history, even prehistory. Every significant culture—Indian, Chinese, Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, Mayan—encouraged the study of mathematics. The need to count and measure traded and warehoused goods laid the foundations of arithmetic. Land surveying stimulated the study of geometry; the very term is derived from the Greek *geometria*, which means "measuring the Earth." But even in antiquity mathematics was seen as an art transcending the purely utilitarian.

The Vedas of the Indus Valley of India, the world's oldest known scriptures, attached Sanskrit names to numbers extending over an enormous range of magnitudes. For example, one *mahayuga* equaled 10^{62} —a number one hundred times greater than the ratio of the diameter of the observable universe to the Planck length (the shortest distance that has any meaning in quantum mechanics). An impressive array of arithmetic, algebraic and geometric operations—some outperforming modern western counterparts in their simplicity—has been gleaned from the Vedas.¹⁴

The Greeks made substantial contributions to mathematics. Pythagoras studied the applications of arithmetic and discovered a synthesis of number, geometry, music and astronomy. Geometry was studied by Thales (c.624–c.546 BCE), and in the fourth-century BCE Euclid developed most of the theorems of high-school geometry we know today. Aristotle proposed elements of formal logic still used today as basic tools in pure mathematics.

Rhetorical algebra, in which unknown quantities were designated by words, can be traced back to Babylonian sources. Another example is found in Plato's *Timaeus*, where a passage can be interpreted as a pair of simultaneous algebraic equations, which can be solved to form a useful result.¹⁵ Later, the seventh-century CE Indian mathematician Brahmagupta referred to the unknowns by colors.

What we now know as the Hindu-Arabic numbering system—the digits 1 through 9—probably developed in India around the beginning of the Common Era. Brahmagupta may have been the first to propose rules for incorporating zero into arithmetic calculations.

The medieval period was the golden age of Islamic mathematics. In the ninth-century CE the Persian mathematician Muḥammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi translated Indian works on arithmetic and algebra into Arabic. He also wrote a treatise on trigonometry, which studies the relationship between the proportions and angles of triangles. The thirteenth-century Moroccan Sufi and mathematician Ibn al Banna al Marrakushi al-Azdi laid the foundations of modern *symbolic algebra*, in which unknowns are represented by symbols like x and y .

The work of the Islamic mathematicians was soon brought to the West, along with the Hindu-Arabic notation and the decimal system for expressing fractions. From the Renaissance onward the focus of mathematical study moved to western Europe. The differential calculus, which refuted Zeno's Arrow Paradox, was developed in the seventeenth-century CE by Isaac Newton and Gottfried von Leibniz.¹⁶ The last several centuries have seen a great expansion of mathematics, and brilliant mathematicians have come from every part of the world.

Mathematics Reigns Supreme

Mathematics, as the term is used today, includes the study of quantity, pattern, space, and change. *Pure mathematics* long ago branched out beyond the world of objective reality. For example, "quantity" includes imaginary numbers, and Hilbert space can have an infinite number of dimensions. In many cases, however, topics in pure mathematics, once considered irrelevant to the real world, turned out to have important practical applications.

The renowned German mathematician Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777–1855) was among the first to give his field the accolade "Queen of the Sciences";¹⁷ many others have done so since. Alone among the sciences, pure mathematics did not depend for its validity on laboratory or astronomical

observation; it was the domain of pure thought, unsullied by the messiness of empiricism.

A major objective of pure mathematics is the derivation of *theorems* from stated premises, or *axioms*, using rules of logical inference. A theorem is a mathematical statement that can be tested to determine whether it is true or false. A famous example is Fermat's Last Theorem, proposed by the French mathematician Pierre de Fermat in 1637, but not proven until 1995. It states that no three positive integers a , b , and c can satisfy the equation $a^n + b^n = c^n$ for any integer value of n greater than two. Some theorems are derived "from first principles." More commonly, they invoke theorems already proven, in order to reduce the number of logical steps required. New theorems build upon existing ones.

At one time, logical operations were expressed in the language of the particular nation or culture: Latin, German, English, as the case might be. More recently, universal languages with

The article reflects on the role of mathematics as a sacred language—potentially an expanding role as we come closer to recapturing some of the richness of Sensa on our individual and collective Path of Return. The study of mathematics is to be recognized as a spiritual path in its own right—with inherent opportunities and challenges.

their own alphabets, vocabulary and grammars have been developed to avoid ambiguities and misinterpretations arising from translation.

An early development, dating from 1847, was Boolean Algebra, named for the British logician George Boole. The variables in Boolean Algebra can take one of two values: **true**, conventionally designated by 1; and **false**, designated by 0. Three basic operations are: **AND** (represented by the symbol \wedge), “inclusive” **OR** (\vee), and **NOT** (\neg). To illustrate, $x \wedge y = 1$ means that both variables are true, while $x \vee y = 1$ means that at least one variable is true. The expression $\neg x = 1$, implies that x is false. Arithmetic operations can be performed on the variables; for example:¹⁸

$$\begin{aligned}x \wedge y &= x \times y \\ \neg x &= 1 - x.\end{aligned}$$

On a much larger scale, the monumental *Principia Mathematica*, published by Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell in 1910–1913, attempted to express all rules of logical inference in algebraic form. It employed symbols like \forall (“for all”), \exists (“there exists”), and \subset (“is a subset of”). A second objective of *Principia Mathematica* was to identify a set of axioms sufficient for the whole of mathematics.

Axioms are definitions or assertions that establish the “rules of the game”—that is, the particular game being played.¹⁹ Examples are: “ n is a positive number”; “ $a + b = b + a$, $a \times b = b \times a$ ” (commutability); and “Given infinitely many non-empty sets, one element can be chosen from each of those sets.” Most theorems depend on multiple axioms, which must be mutually consistent and complete if a theorem is to be proved or disproved. Axioms are consistent if one does not contradict another; they are complete if the truth or falsehood of all dependent theorems can be decided. A desirable, but not essential, quality is that the axioms contain no redundancies.

Pure mathematics, which concerns itself with abstract concepts, occupies a relatively small number of people, mostly in academia. By contrast, millions of people are engaged in *applied mathematics* whose objective is to model real-world phenomena, make useful predic-

tions, and keep track of the innumerable metrics of modern life. Whereas the theorems of pure mathematics are validated by logic, the models of applied mathematics are validated by comparison with relevant data. If the data support a model’s predictions, it is used—hopefully with due caution—until defects cast doubts on its continued utility, and motivation grows to develop a better model.

Mathematics is applied to a vast range of problems in the physical sciences, technology, medicine, the social sciences, business, government, the military, and many other fields. Computer technology has enabled the solution of mathematical problems that would otherwise be impossible. Images, audio and video recordings, and data transmission are digitized and can be manipulated mathematically. The human genome has been sequenced, identifying some three billion base pairs constructed from a four-character alphabet. Internet search engines depend on mathematical algorithms to identify websites of potential interest or relevance.

Computer technology also made good use of mathematics. For example, Boolean algebra, with its truth values 1 and 0, is directly applicable to digital processing, in which the presence or absence of a voltage in binary circuitry (or the magnetic polarity on a hard drive, electric charge on a flash drive, or pit on an optical disk) encodes the numbers 1 and 0.

Nowhere has mathematics been applied more successfully than in the “hard sciences” of physics, chemistry and astronomy. Isaac Newton (1642–1727) demonstrated that the laws of motion and gravitation applied both to terrestrial phenomena and to planetary orbits—a shocking revelation to those who believed that celestial bodies were moved by the hand of God. In the nineteenth-century James Maxwell derived the equations of electromagnetic radiation, demonstrating that electricity, magnetism, and light are manifestations of a single phenomenon.

In 1905, Albert Einstein proposed the Special Theory of Relativity, which included the most famous equation of all time: $E = mc^2$, where E is energy, m is mass, and c is the speed of

light. Bringing together three of the most fundamental ingredients of physical reality was an achievement of profound synthesis. The constant of proportionality, c^2 , between energy and mass is so large—on the order of 10^{17} (km/sec)²—that a small amount of mass can be converted into an enormous amount of energy. That conversion is demonstrated in nuclear reactors and, to deadly effect, in nuclear weapons.

Ten years later Einstein published his General Theory of Relativity, which utilized work on non-Euclidean geometry previously thought to be a fanciful construction of pure mathematics. The General Theory is far-reaching in its implications, but mathematical notation is so concise that its primary component, the Field Equation, can be expressed as: $G = (8\pi G/c^4) T$, where G is the gravitational constant and c is the speed of light. G and T are *tensors*, the higher-order equivalents of physical variables: G expresses the curvature of space-time, and T expresses energy or mass.²⁰ The General Theory of Relativity asserts that a massive object warps space-time, while, in return, the curvature of space-time determines the object's motion. Astronomical observations support the theory, and no new theory has yet challenged it.

In quantum mechanics, which relates to physical matter on subatomic scales, the behavior of and interactions among elementary particles are modeled by mathematical equations, notably the Schrödinger Wave Equation, formulated in 1925 by Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger. Its predictions have been verified by an enormous body of experimental data, to the point where few scientists doubt its validity.

Yet the inferences from quantum mechanics defy interpretation, and in many cases are counterintuitive. For example, at the quantum level, time runs both forward and backward; a particle's location and momentum cannot be specified simultaneously; particles often behave like waves. Schrödinger's Wave Equation is deterministic, but its dependent variables are probabilities attached to a *range* of states (charge, spin, momentum, and so forth), super

imposed upon one another.²¹ A specific value is obtained only upon measurement or observation.²² How these behavioral oddities give way, with increasing scale, to our familiar, everyday reality remains to be explained.

At the largest scales—relating to galaxies and so forth—the driving force behind activity and the effect of that activity, is *geometry*: the non-Euclidian geometry of four-dimensional space-time. At the very smallest scales the distinction between physical reality and the equations that model it begins to break down; the basic building blocks of physical matter may not just be *described by* mathematical equations, they may *be* equations.²³ The mathematization of reality would have been endorsed by the Pythagoreans, and possibly by the Kabbalists who labeled the cascading emanations from Deity *sephiroth* (“numbers”). Their endorsement would not suggest a desire to drag reality down to the mundane level; rather, it would affirm that mathematics lifts what we experience as physical reality to the divine level. In 1937 British mathematical physicist James Jeans famously declared:

Today there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as a creator and governor of the realm of matter.²⁴

This realization came as no surprise to students of South Asian religions and philosophies, but it was shocking to the western mind, so strongly attached to notions of objective physical reality—or perhaps, we should say, so deeply mired in *maya*. Pure mathematics is a thought experiment; applied mathematics may prove to be the same.

The goal of unifying all the forces of nature—gravity, electromagnetism, and the strong and weak forces that operate at subatomic levels—currently remains unrealized. But many scientists are working on the problem, and the long-

sought-after “Theory of Everything” may emerge within the foreseeable future.

Cracks in the Walls

Over a period of centuries pure mathematics grew into a vast edifice of axioms, theorems and proofs. In order to prove a theorem’s truth or falsity, one must be confident that axioms are complete and consistent, and until the early twentieth century it was generally believed that consistency and completeness could always be tested. If inconsistencies came to light, the problem could be resolved by restating the axioms, and incompleteness could be resolved by adding more axioms. “Mathematics,” asserted a popular claim, “is the only exact science; the only [one] whose propositions are capable of conclusive proof and demonstration.”²⁵

Yet even in antiquity statements were constructed that could be considered neither true nor false. Epimenides (c. 600 BCE), a native of Crete, famously declared: “All Cretans are liars.” To call that statement either true or false triggers an automatic and immediate rebuttal. The problem arises from self-reference. It may reside in the axioms, logical inferences, or both; and it may not be as obvious as in Epimenides’s Paradox.

In 1931 the Austrian-born logician Kurt Gödel (1906–1978) demonstrated that consistency and completeness are mutually incompatible and inherently indeterminable. Specifically, he declared: if an axiomatic system is consistent it cannot be complete, and the consistency of axioms cannot be proven within the system itself.²⁶

Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorem was demonstrated for the special case of the arithmetic of natural numbers (the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, ...). But it was immediately recognized as having broader implications. The ability to prove or disprove any given theorem was no longer assured. And the dream, expressed in *Principia Mathematica*, of identifying a universal set of axioms was dashed. Mathematics was still enormously powerful, but cracks had developed in the walls of what had always been regarded as an impregnable fortress of rationality. Cracks also developed in applied mathe-

matics. An important example is chaos theory, which, as a field of serious study, dates from the 1960s. Chaotic phenomena will be examined later in this article.

Aside from the inherent limitations of mathematics, serious issues arise from its misapplication or misinterpretation. Models of economic, social, political and biological systems inevitably simplify the real-world situation to which they apply, incorporating only those variables believed to be important, or those which can be measured. Inevitably, they are at the mercy of *exogenous* factors—those omitted from the models—which may have large, unforeseen influences.²⁷

Statistical methods are used to analyze large volumes of historical data. They have afforded scientific legitimacy to a number of fields, including psychology and public health, where hypotheses might otherwise rest on anecdotal data or rumor. On the other hand, predictions must be treated with caution. For example: “Candidate A leads B by 10 points, going into the election, with a margin of error of 5 points” (a very dubious caveat); “California can expect a major earthquake in the next thirty years”; “the three-year survival rate for a patient with your condition is no more than 5 percent.” Statistical predictions are probabilities, but the one future event that really matters may lie far from the expected value. Furthermore, the “tails” of probability distributions—percentiles less than five or greater than ninety-five—are notoriously inaccurate. Significantly, the tails are much wider in chaotic phenomena than in the Gaussian distributions typically used in statistical analyses.

Traditional Sacred Mathematics

The development of mathematics was stimulated by the need to count and measure, but numbers and geometric shapes were also believed to have larger meaning. Pythagoras’ work on numbers has already been mentioned. Mathematics was a sacred science, taught in the ancient mystery schools. A significant overlap between mundane and sacred mathematics survived until about the sixteenth century.

Eventually, the two branches of divided, and exoteric mathematics experienced the impressive development described in the previous section. Sacred mathematics lived on and experienced a renewal of interest in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁸ But it virtually ignored developments in pure and applied mathematics. Most of the techniques of arithmetic and geometry employed in sacred mathematics were known in ancient Greece.

Two areas of sacred mathematics that have received much attention are gematria—along with its close cousin, numerology—and sacred geometry. In some instances, unifying links are identified between them.

Gematria and Numerology

Gematria, also known as *theomatics*, had its origins in ancient languages in which symbols denoted both letters and numbers. Letter–number equivalency allowed the numerical values of complete words or phrases to be calculated, compared with the values of other words or phrases, and studied for hidden meanings.

Hebrew is the sacred language of Judaism: the media of scripture and liturgy. Jews of the biblical period believed that every letter of the Hebrew alphabet was a divine revelation; the alphabet was to them what numbers were to Pythagoras. The Hebrew gematria extends back three millennia, but it gained particular favor in the medieval Kabbalah and in the Hermeticism of more recent times. The Greek gematria was known in the third century BCE, and significant inscriptions were found at Pompeii. Greek became the sacred language of early Christianity and continues to play that role in the Eastern Orthodox churches.²⁹ The nineteenth century saw a revival of interest in Greek gematria, though words and phrases of classical and Christian Greece remained its primary focus. The numbers associated with Hebrew and Greek letters are shown in Table 1.³⁰

With numbers assigned to each letter of the alphabet, the gematric values of whole words can be found by summing the values of the individual letters. To illustrate, in Hebrew ge-

matria, “Adam,” אָדָם, has a value of $1 + 4 + 40 = 45$.³¹ The Greek word for God, Θεός, has a value of $9 + 5 + 70 + 200 = 284$. Words of the same numerical value are believed to have a connection or mutual resonance. For example, the Hebrew words for Moon, יָרֵחַ, and Arcana (“Mystery”), סֵדֶר, both have the value 218, while Serpent, אֲשֵׁר, and Messiah, מָשִׁיחַ, share the value 358. In Greek gematria, Sacred, Ἅγιος, and Jerusalem, Ἱερουσαλήμ, share the value 864. Brave souls look for resonances that cross linguistic boundaries, attaching significance to words or phrases that have the same numerical value in Hebrew, Greek, or one of the several versions of Latin or English gematria.³²

Much has been made of the observation that “Jesus,” Ἰησοῦς, has the value of 888 in Greek gematria. The number 888—in common with 111, 222, 333, 444, 555, 666, 777 and 999—is divisible by thirty-seven; $888 = 24 \times 37$. The Greek word for Christ, Χριστός, has a gematric value of 1,480, which is also divisible by thirty-seven: $1,480 = 40 \times 37$. Frederick Bligh Bond and Thomas Lea identified more than 100 words and phrases related to Jesus Christ whose values are multiples of thirty-seven.³³ Not surprisingly, the value of “Jesus Christ,” Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, itself is so divisible: $2,368 = 64 \times 37$. Those who seek evidence of the sacred destiny of the United States note that $888 \times 2 = 1776$, the date of the Declaration of Independence.³⁴

Gematria is not the only way that high entities acquire numerical values comprising repeated digits. Alice Bailey declared that 777 is the number of our Planetary Logos, “just as 666 and 888 holds the mystery hid of two other Heavenly Men. This number 777 is also the number of transmutation, which is the fundamental work of all the Heavenly Men.”³⁵ She also stated that 666 “is the number of the active intelligent man and distinguishes his form nature from his spiritual nature, which is 999.”³⁶ In *Revelation*, 666 is said to be the “number of the Beast,”³⁷ but in Hebrew gematria it is the number of Sorath, סוֹרַת, the Spirit of the Sun.³⁸

Table 1. Equivalence Between Letters and Numbers

(a) Hebrew Gematria

Hebrew Letter	Trans-literation	Value
aleph	א	1
beth	ב	2
gimel	ג	3
daleth	ד	4
he	ה	5
vau	ו	6
zayin	ז	7
cheth	ח	8
teth	ט	9
yod	י	10
kaph	כ, ך	20
lamed	ל	30
mem	מ, ם	40
nun	נ, ן	50
samekh	ס	60
ayin	ע	70
pé	פ, ף	80
tzaddi	צ, ץ	90
qoph	ק	100
resh	ר	200
shin	ש	300
tau	ת	400

(b) Greek Gematria

Greek Letter	Trans-literation	Value
alpha	α, Α	1
beta	β, Β	2
gamma	γ, Γ	3
delta	δ, Δ	4
epsilon	ε, Ε	5
zeta	ζ, Ζ	7
eta	η, Η	8
theta	θ, Θ	9
iota	ι, Ι	10
kappa	κ, Κ	20
lambda	λ, Λ	30
mu	μ, Μ	40
nu	ν, Ν	50
xi	ξ, Ξ	60
omicron	ο, Ο	70
pi	π, Π	80
rho	ρ, Ρ	100
sigma	σ (or ς), Σ	200
tau	τ, Τ	300
upsilon	υ, Υ	400
phi	φ, Φ	500
chi	χ, Χ	600
psi	ψ, Ψ	700
omega	ω, Ω	800

Successive addition of digits reduces the gematric value of a word to its *root value*. Permissible root values are the digits 1 through 9, plus the *master numbers* 11 and 22. For example, “Adam,” whose value in Hebrew gematria is 45, has a root value of 9: 4 + 5 = 9. “Christ,” whose value in Greek gematria is 1,480, has a root value of 4: 1 + 4 + 8 + 0 = 13; 1 + 3 = 4. Words with the same root values are believed to have mutual resonance, though not as strong a resonance as among words with the same gematric values. Reduction to root values links gematria with more traditional forms of numerology.

Gematria depends for its validity on a stable alphabet, consistent spelling, and agreed-upon rules governing the assignment of numbers to the alphabet. Those requirements were met tolerably well in classical Hebrew and Greek, but are met less well in other languages. Sev-

eral forms of English gematria have emerged, including at least two applicable to modern English that differ in their number-assignment rules. The Reduced Alpha Number (RAN) system assigns values to letters as shown in Table 2.³⁹

Table 2. RAN System of English Gematria

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

Bailey made use of the RAN system and attached meanings to certain root values:

[T]he numerical value of the word “four” is the same in detail as that of the word

“force,” if you eliminate the number five. For humanity, it is the fifth energy which leads to the battlefield, the energy of the discriminating mind, and when that has been in due time used, controlled and transmuted, “only the four remains and force has gone.” Note the detail of the numbering:

FORCE 6 9 3 5 [with a root value of] 11. Number of adept, using energy.
FOUR 6 6 3 9 [root value] 6. The creator, unifying the subjective and the objective.

It is apparent that force in the first group ends in separateness, for five is the number of the mind and of man. Number nine, the number of initiation, is hidden midway in force, but the climaxing figures indicate activity and separation. In the second group of figures, activity precedes the nine of initiation, and that nine is the culmination.⁴⁰

Elsewhere, Bailey applied the RAN system to the word Shamballa:

S.H.A.M.B.A.L.L.A. or 1.8.1.4.2.1.3.3.1. This word equals the number 24 which in its turn equals 6. I would call your attention to the fact that the word has in it nine letters, and—as you know—nine is the number of initiation. . . . The number 6 is the number of form or of manifestation, which is the agent or medium through which this realization comes and by which the consciousness is unfolded. . . . Again, 6 being the number of the sixth ray, it is therefore the number of idealism and of that driving force which makes mankind move forward upon the path and in response to the vision and press upward towards the light.⁴¹

John Berges made extensive use of the English gematria in his analysis of the Great Invocation.⁴² Berges used the original 1945 version of the Invocation, and the numerological relationships he identified are not preserved in gender-neutral versions which have been proposed since then.

Bailey attached considerable importance to the number 24, which occurred in the gematric value of “Jesus” and also emerged as an inter-

mediate step in the calculation on the root value of “Shamballa”:

The number 24 is of deep interest, expressing as it does the double 12—the greater and the lesser zodiac. Just as the number 6 expresses space, so the number 24 expresses time, and is the key to the great cycle of manifestation. It is the clue to all cyclic appearance or incarnation. Its two figures define the method of evolution; 2 equals the quality of love-wisdom, working under the Law of Attraction and drawing man from one point of attainment to another; whilst 4 indicates the technique of conflict and the achieving of harmony through that conflict; 4 is also the number of the human hierarchy, and 2 is the number of the spiritual hierarchy.⁴³

The number 6 expresses space because there are six directions: up, down, east, west, north and south. Bailey added: “Needless to say, there is much more to say anent these figures, but the above will suffice to show the satisfactory nature of esoteric numerology—not numerology as understood today.”⁴⁴

Traditional numerologists attach meaning to the numbers 1 through 9, 11 and 22.⁴⁵ A broad consensus exists that odd numbers: 1, 3, 5 . . . are “masculine,” reaching out into new realms, while even numbers: 2, 4, 6 . . . are “feminine,” restoring balance after each forward thrust. But a pervasive problem has always been the lack of agreement on numbers’ more specific meanings. The trans-Himalayan teachings have created new meanings based on the seven planes of creation, the Seven Rays, and the twelve Creative Hierarchies;⁴⁶ the quotes cited above provided relevant examples.

Sacred Geometry

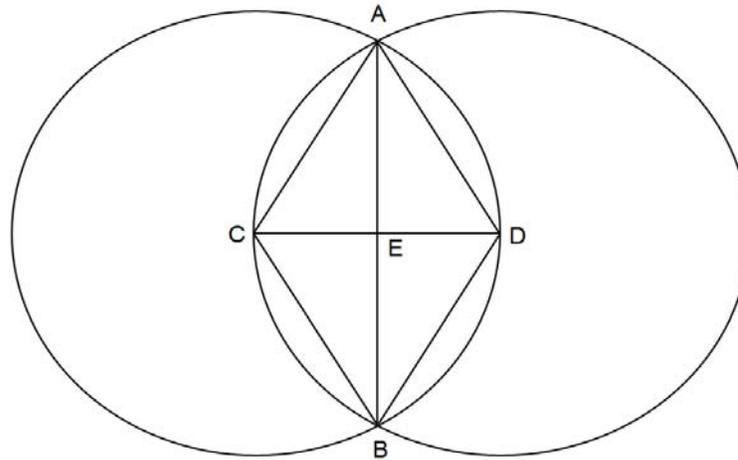
Sacred geometry is a broad field, ranging in its focus from simple geometric shapes, to structures like the Great Pyramid or Chartres Cathedral, to labyrinths and mazes, to large-scale features of the landscape like ley lines and the alignment of ancient monuments.⁴⁷ Within the sub-field of geometric shapes, a vast literature is available on the golden rectangle and its associations with the pentagram and the Fibon-

nacci series;⁴⁸ they will not be discussed herein.

The brief illustration of sacred geometry, presented here, focuses on the geometric shape known as the *vesica piscis* (Latin: “fish bladder,”

or, more sensitively, “fish vessel”). Studied since antiquity, it is the area of overlap between two circles of equal radius, each centered on the circumference of the other (Figure 1). It is bounded by the two arcs ACB and ADB.

Figure 1. Vesica Piscis and Its Inscribed Triangles



The two interlacing circles have been interpreted as the realms of spirit and matter—though there is disagreement on which circle represents which realm.⁴⁹ The vesica piscis itself—the area where spirit and matter overlap—can be associated with the “cosmic soul.”⁵⁰ The notion of the soul as the mediator between spirit and matter dates back to Plato:

Out of the indivisible and unchangeable, and also out of that which is divisible and has to do with material bodies, [God] compounded a third and intermediate kind of essence [the soul], partaking of the nature of the same and of the other, and this compound he placed accordingly in a mean between the indivisible, and the divisible and material.⁵¹

Alice Bailey affirmed a similar relationship. The soul, she wrote, is “that entity which is brought into being when the spirit aspect and the matter aspect are related to each other.”⁵²

The vesica piscis was accorded special significance by the early Christians, and it is not surprising that they would have deemed the symbol of the fish important at the beginning of the Piscean Age. Since then, the vesica has been

incorporated into artwork and numerous heraldic emblems, and possibly inspired the shape of the bishop’s mitre and the architecture of the Gothic arch.

Two equilateral triangles can be inscribed within the vesica piscis: ACD and BCD. The two triangles have been associated with “the world above and the world below.”⁵³ If one of the triangles is laid over the other, the hexagram, or Star of David, is produced. The triangle can symbolize many things, including the Trinity, the Rays of Aspect: Will or Power, Love-Wisdom, and Active Intelligence; body/personality, soul and spirit; and the Spiritual Triad.

Several numerical relationships emerge from the vesica’s proportions. The sides of the two inscribed equilateral triangles are equal to the radius of the circles. Together, the two triangles form a rhombus ACBD whose area is equal to the square of the radius. If the radius is 1 unit, then the height of the vesica and rhombus, AB, is equal to $\sqrt{3}$, or 1.7320508... Today, we recognize this as an *irrational* (literally, “not a ratio”) number,⁵⁴ but the ancients devoted much effort to finding integer ratios

that would equal or, at least, approximate it. In his third-century BCE treatise *On the Measurement of the Circle*, Archimedes of Syracuse, determined that the true value of $\sqrt{3}$ lay between $265/153$ and $1,351/780$, that is, between $1.73203\dots$ and $1.73205\dots$. Their average is a very respectable $1.73204\dots$

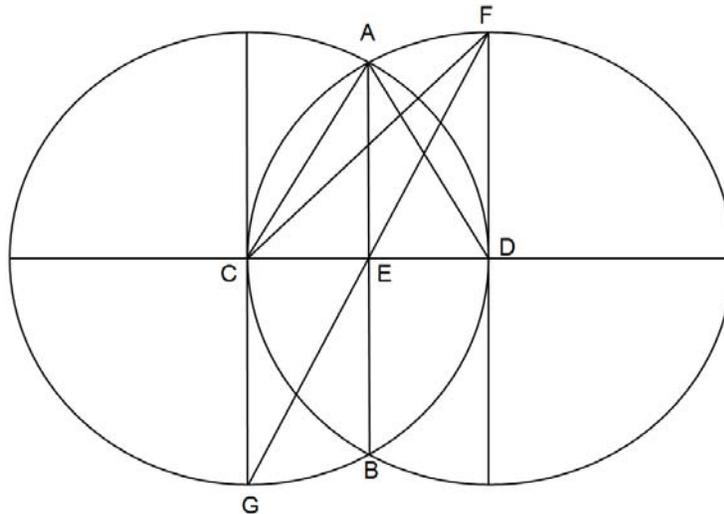
The nineteenth-century esotericist William Stirling used Greek gematria to relate the distances $CD (= 1)$, $AB (= \sqrt{3})$, and the width of the whole figure $(= 3)$ to the names of personages in Greek mythology. The numbers $1, \sqrt{3}, 3$ are in approximately the same proportions as the gematric values of Hermes ($\text{Ἑρμῆς} = 353$), Zeus ($\text{Ζεύς} = 612$), and Apollo ($\text{Ἀπόλλων} = 1061$).⁵⁵ It may be verified that $612/353 = 1.734\dots$, and $1061/353 = 3.006\dots$. The same result has also been expressed in the cryptic form: $\text{Zeus} = \sqrt{(\text{Hermes} \times \text{Apollo})}$.⁵⁶ This

equation is an example of rhetorical algebra.

Additional results for the vesica piscis are shown in Figure 2. The geometric construction provides a means to evaluate three useful square roots. In addition to $AB (= \sqrt{3})$, we have $CF = \sqrt{2}$ and $FG = \sqrt{5}$. The numbers $2, 3,$ and 5 belong to the Fibonacci series: $1, 2, 3, 5, 8 \dots$, which has the property that each value in the series is the sum of the previous two.⁵⁷

Finally, the angles generated in the figure are precisely the ones needed to create the polygons forming the faces of the five Platonic solids. The tetrahedron, octahedron and icosahedron are formed from equilateral triangles, of which ACD is an example. The cube is formed from squares, whose corners are right angles, like CDF . The dodecahedron is formed from regular pentagons whose interior angles are 108° , like CEF .⁵⁸

Figure 2. Additional Results for the Vesica Piscis



The Point, the Line, and the Circle

Figure 3. Celtic Cross.
Christian cross superimposed
on the disk of the sun.



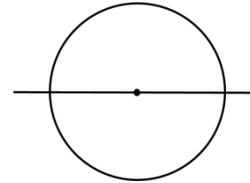
Mathematical Properties

In antiquity people had three drafting instruments: a stylus, straightedge (or ruler), and compass. With one jab at the paper (papyrus, clay, slate, or other medium) they could produce a point. With a straightedge they could draw a line. And with a compass they could draw a circle. Inevitably, their drawing was not perfect. But Plato conjectured that the things of this world are just the imperfect shadows of perfect Forms residing in a higher world. Euclid applied the same principle to conceive of an idealized point, line and circle. The point had no dimensions; it was infinitely small. The line was infinitely thin (and straight). The circle was a closed curve of infinitesimal thickness and perfectly uniform radius.

Embedded within construction of the vesica piscis are three simpler geometric shapes: the point, the line, and the circle (Figure 4). In this section the rich mathematical properties of three shapes will be studied. Comments will

also be made about three significant constants, or numbers, including π , which appear in the mathematics. The esoteric symbolism of the three geometric shapes will then be explored against the backdrop of the mathematical analysis.

**Figure 4. The Point, the Line,
and the Circle**



So small is the idealized point, that the Russian-born mathematician Georg Cantor (1845–1918) proved that an *uncountably infinite* number of points can fit on a line segment of any length. By contrast ratios, like $2/3$, $7/5$ and $31/19$, are infinite but *countable*.⁵⁹ Similarly, an uncountable number of points can fit on a circle of any radius. If, to quote William Blake, “infinity” can be held in the palm of one’s hand, it can also be held in a short line, or the circumference of a small circle.

The diameter of a circle is twice the radius, r , and the circumference can be expressed either as π times the diameter, or as $2\pi r$. The mathematical constant, or number, π is equal to 3.14159265.... Methods of calculating it will be discussed later. Table 3 lists π and two other constants: e and i , that also play important roles in the present analysis. Euler’s number, e , named for the eighteenth-century Swiss mathematician Leonard Euler, will be encountered later in this discussion. The imaginary unit, i , is the square-root of -1 .

The first two constants: π and e are *real* numbers: they can be plotted on a line, given an origin and a suitable scale. They are also *irrational*: they cannot be expressed as the ratio of two integers. Furthermore, π and e are *transcendental*, which in this context means that they are not the roots of polynomial equations with rational coefficients.⁶⁰ By contrast $\sqrt{2}$ is irrational; but it is not transcendental, because it satisfies the equation $x^2 - 2 = 0$.

Table 3. Three Mathematical Constants

Symbol	Meaning	Value
π	Ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter	3.14159265...
e	“Euler’s number.” Base of natural logarithms, and base of the exponential function.	2.71828183...
i	Imaginary unit. Root of $x^2 + 1 = 0$.	$\sqrt{-1}$

The third number in Table 3, i , is neither irrational nor transcendental (it is the positive root of $x^2 + 1 = 0$); it is an *imaginary* integer.⁶¹ It cannot be plotted on a line, yet it obeys the standard rules of arithmetic and can readily be incorporated in algebraic expressions. Other imaginary numbers can be formed by multiplying real numbers by i . Imaginary numbers were first recognized in the sixteenth century by Jeremy Cardan and Rafael Bombelli, but they were widely scorned, in much the same way as the Greeks scorned negative numbers. From Euler’s time onward, mathematicians cheerfully accepted them.

In a Cartesian coordinate system, invented by René Descartes (1596–1650), a point is represented by a pair of values of x and y . A line is represented by an equation of the form: $y = ax + b$, where a is the slope of the line and b is its intercept on the y -axis. For convenience in analyzing our point, line and circle, we shall choose a coordinate system whose origin $(0, 0)$ coincides with the point, and whose x -axis lies along the line (Figure 5). Thus the equation of the line reduces to $y = 0$.

The circle can be represented by the equation: $x^2 + y^2 = r^2$, where r is the radius. Alternatively, it can be represented in parametric form as: $x = r \cos \theta$, $y = r \sin \theta$, where \cos and \sin are the trigonometric cosine and sine functions (Figure 6). The variable θ is the angle—

measured in a counterclockwise direction from the positive x axis—of the radius vector drawn from the origin to a point on the circle.

Figure 5. Circle in Cartesian Coordinates

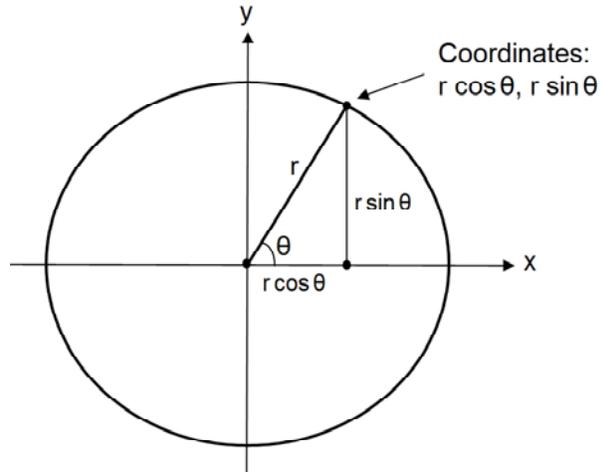


Figure 6. Sine and Cosine Functions

Sine (blue), Cosine (red)

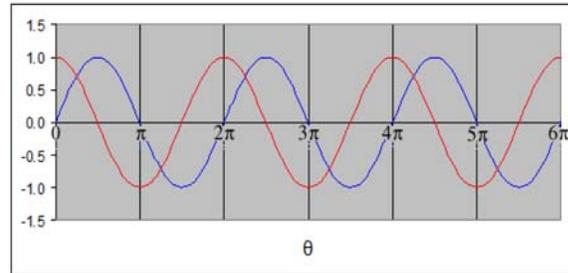


Figure 5 shows the situation where $\theta = 60^\circ$, or $\pi/3$ radians.⁶² The coordinates of the point on the circle are $r/2$, $\sqrt{3}r/2$. Note that, by Pythagoras’ theorem, the sum of the squares of the x and y coordinates equals the square of the radius of the circle; that is: $(r/2)^2 + (\sqrt{3}r/2)^2 = r^2$. As θ increases from zero to 2π (that is 360°), the radius vector sweeps through the whole area of the circle. The coordinates of the point on the circle, corresponding to $\theta = 0, \pi/2, \pi, 3\pi/2$, and 2π , are listed in the third column of Table 4.⁶³ Rotation of the radius vector can continue indefinitely; θ increases by 2π with each complete rotation.

Table 4. Points on the Circle

θ	Radius vector	Cartesian (x, y) coordinates: $r \cos \theta, r \sin \theta$	Complex value: $r e^{i\theta} = r(\cos \theta + i \sin \theta)$
0		$r, 0$	$r e^{i0} = r$
$\pi/2$		$0, r$	$r e^{i\pi/2} = ir$
π		$-r, 0$	$r e^{i\pi} = -r$
$3\pi/2$		$0, -r$	$r e^{3i\pi/2} = -ir$
2π		$r, 0$	$r e^{2i\pi} = r$

An interesting variation on the Cartesian representation is obtained by plotting the circle in the *complex plane* (Figure 7).⁶⁴ The horizontal axis is now the *real axis*; and the vertical axis is the *imaginary axis*. On the latter, quantities are multiples or fractions of the imaginary unit, i . In the complex plane, a point is represented by a complex number, which is the sum of a real part and an imaginary part.⁶⁵ A point on the circle can be expressed in the form:

$$r(\cos \theta + i \sin \theta).$$

It can be shown that this expression is equivalent to the exponential function $r e^{i\theta}$, where e is Euler’s number, equal to 2.71828..., the second of the two irrational, transcendental numbers listed in Table 2.⁶⁶

As before, Figure 7 shows the situation where $\theta = \pi/3$, or 60° . The point on the circle has the value:

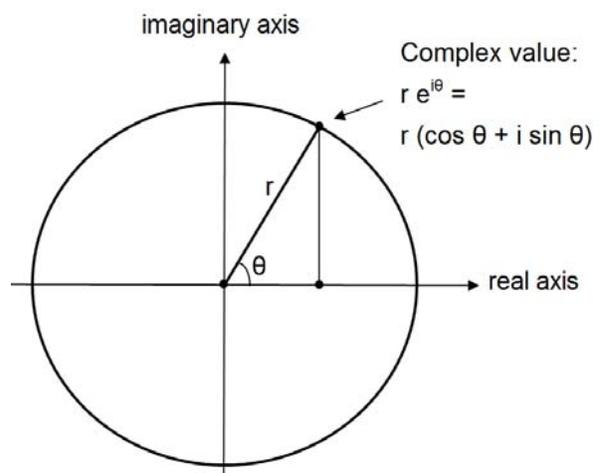
$$r e^{i\pi/3} = r \{ \cos(\pi/3) + i \sin(\pi/3) \} = r \{ 1/2 + (\sqrt{3}/2)i \} = r(1 + \sqrt{3}i)/2.$$

By Pythagoras’ Theorem, the sum of the squares of the real and imaginary parts equals the square of the radius: $r^2 (1 + 3)/4 = r^2$. Again, as the angle θ increases from zero to 2π , the radius vector sweeps through the area of the circle. Values of the point on the circle

for $\theta = 0, \pi/2, \pi, 3\pi/2$, and 2π are listed in the fourth column of Table 4.

The situation when $\theta = \pi$ calls for special attention. The radius vector lies along the negative real axis, and the point on the circle has the value $r e^{i\pi} = r(\cos \pi - i \sin \pi) = -r$. From this result, we obtain the equation known as Euler’s Identity: $e^{i\pi} + 1 = 0$. It incorporates the imaginary number i and the two most familiar irrational, transcendental numbers: π and e , expressing synthesis comparable to Einstein’s $E = mc^2$. Euler’s Identity has been described as “the most beautiful equation” and compared to a Shakespeare sonnet. The twentieth-century theoretical physicist Richard Feynman called it “our jewel” and “the most remarkable formula in mathematics.”⁶⁷

Figure 7. Circle in the Complex Plane



Ubiquitous π

The mathematical constant π traditionally was defined as the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter (or twice the radius, r). The area of a circle is equal to πr^2 . The surface area of a sphere is $4\pi r^2$ —or exactly four times the area of its equatorial plane—and the volume of a sphere is $4\pi r^3/3$. In higher dimensions, π features in the “surface areas” and “volumes” of hyperspheres.

The Hebrew Bible assigned π a value of 3.⁶⁸ More serious attempts were made in ancient

Egypt and Greece to calculate the value of π . Closely related, were attempts to “square the circle”: to construct a square with the same area as a circle, using nothing more than a straight-edge and compass. We now know that the latter attempts were futile.⁶⁹

Good approximations to the value of π were obtained by measuring the perimeter of a regular polygon inscribed in, or circumscribed around, a circle. The greater the number of sides, the closer the polygon approximates the curvature of the circle, and the more accurate is the calculated value of π . For example, an inscribed square gives a value of $2\sqrt{2} = 2.828\dots$, a superscribed square gives a value of 4, and their mean is 3.414... An inscribed hexagon gives a value of 3, a circumscribed hexagon gives a value of $2\sqrt{3} = 3.4641\dots$, with a mean of 3.232...⁷⁰ In the work referred to earlier, Archimedes of Syracuse reportedly used polygons up to 96 sides and determined that $223/71 < \pi < 22/7$; that is, the true value of π lies between 3.1408... and 3.1429..., with a mean of 3.1419.... This was a laudable effort. Yet two centuries earlier, the Chinese mathematician Zu Chongzhi reportedly calculated π to seven decimal places.

In the seventeenth-century infinite series were discovered from which π could be calculated to any desired accuracy by taking a sufficient number of terms. Examples include an infinite sum developed by Leibniz, and an infinite product by John Wallis (1655):

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\pi}{4} &= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (-1)^n \frac{1}{2n+1} \\ &= 1 - \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{5} - \frac{1}{7} + \frac{1}{9} - \frac{1}{11} + \frac{1}{13} - \frac{1}{15} + \dots \\ \frac{\pi}{2} &= \prod_{n=1}^{\infty} \left(\frac{2n}{2n-1}\right) \left(\frac{2n}{2n+1}\right) = \prod_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{4n^2}{(4n^2-1)} \\ &= \left(\frac{2}{1} \times \frac{2}{3}\right) \times \left(\frac{4}{3} \times \frac{4}{5}\right) \times \left(\frac{6}{5} \times \frac{6}{7}\right) \times \left(\frac{8}{7} \times \frac{8}{9}\right) \times \dots \\ &= \frac{4}{3} \times \frac{16}{15} \times \frac{36}{35} \times \frac{64}{63} \times \frac{100}{99} \times \frac{144}{143} \times \dots \end{aligned}$$

The relationship between π and the circle, juxtaposed against the linearity of the infinite series—using “linearity” in its everyday sense—

affirms the connection between the symbolism of circle and line. Note that the infinite sum involves only odd numbers, which traditionally are regarded as masculine. The infinite product has even number—traditionally regarded as feminine—in the numerators and odd numbers in the denominators.

These infinite series have interesting and evocative structures, but they converge slowly; one thousand terms in the infinite sum and product yield an accuracy of only two decimal places. Much more efficient methods have recently been developed, including the Bailey–Borwein–Plouffe formula, published in 1995.⁷¹ No more than forty decimal places are reckoned sufficient for any conceivable computation relevant to the physical universe; nevertheless, the calculation of more and more digits has become a challenge the world over. Today, π is known to more than 10^{13} digits. A consequence of its irrationality is that the decimal expansion of π never converges to a repetitive pattern; the sequence of digits is believed to be entirely random.⁷²

Closely related to its role in the geometry of the circle, π defines the periodicity of the trigonometric functions. It also features in definite integrals that can be evaluated by the substitution of a trigonometric function.⁷³ More surprising, π appears in areas of mathematics remote from the geometry of the circle. It appeared in Einstein’s Field Equation cited earlier. It occurs, along with the imaginary number i , in Schrödinger’s Wave Equation. Moreover, π occurs in probability theory. The *normal* (Gaussian) probability density distribution, with mean μ and standard deviation σ , is given by

$$f(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

The ubiquity of π across multiple areas of mathematics gives it greater significance than any other transcendental number enjoys. Not surprisingly, it has caught the public imagination; March 14, 2015 was celebrated as “Pi Day.”⁷⁴

Esoteric Symbolism

Throughout the ages, the circle, the line, and the point have been recognized as symbols of profound significance. They are represented in the Celtic cross, like the one shown at the beginning of this section (Figure 3). The Celtic cross is believed to be a superposition of the Christian cross on the disk of the sun.

In ancient cultures the circle often depicted the sun, the moon, or the sky, while the horizontal line depicted the earth or the horizon. The circle, bisected by the horizontal line (Figure 4), could represent the sun or moon rising above, or setting below, the horizon. Or it could symbolize the earth suspended between the dome of the firmament and the underworld. The fourteenth-century BCE Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten incorporated the circle into sacred iconography to depict the solar deity. Modern esoteric teachings once more speak of a solar deity, whose threefold structure includes the “Physical Sun,” the “Heart of the Sun,” and the “Central Spiritual Sun.”⁷⁵ Moreover, we understand that the etheric web of the Sun is patterned on “interlaced circles.”⁷⁶

The circle, with no beginning or end, represents the undifferentiated void, the primeval chaos: eternal and embracing the whole of space. The circle is the symbol of zero, the “non-number” from which the infinity of natural numbers proceeds. The rotating circle also represents the endless progression of time, day after day, year after year. Although we now know that planetary orbits are not perfectly circular, the sense of their endless rotation—and the confidence in the divine order it inspires—remains intact. The rotating circle also represents the Wheel of Rebirth, the “cyclic manifestation is the law of life,” the cyclical nature of karma.

The three-dimensional analog of the circle is, of course, the sphere. The observation that God is “an infinite sphere, whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere” has been attributed variously to Hermes Trismegistus, the fourth-century CE philosopher Marius Victorinus, and the seventeenth-century mathematician Blaise Pascal. Many

have found the observation evocative and meaningful.

The Neoplatonist Plotinus represented *Monas*, the highest aspect of his divine trinity, by the point within the circle. Significantly, it was the same as the hieroglyph of the Egyptian sun god Rā, and the same as the modern astrological symbol for the sun. Plotinus likened it to the stone, dropped into a pond that causes waves to radiate out across the surface of the water.⁷⁷

In the trans-Himalayan teachings, the point within the circle represents potency, the origin of power, the source of life. In *The Secret Doctrine*, Helena Blavatsky quoted an “Archaic Manuscript” that interpreted the circle as “divine Unity, from which all proceeds, whither all returns.”⁷⁸ Alice Bailey explained that, in the process of manifestation, the “will dynamic sweeps from the center to the periphery and builds the little world of form.”⁷⁹ Four verses in the Great Invocation begin with a reference to either the point or the center: “From the point of Light within the Mind of God From the point of Love within the Heart of God From the center where the Will of God is known From the center which we call the race of men”⁸⁰

Again quoting from her ancient manuscript, Blavatsky identified the point within the circle as the first differentiation from the primeval Unity:

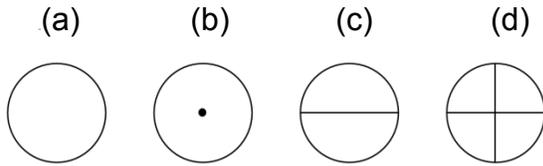
The point in the hitherto immaculate Disk, Space and Eternity in Pralaya, denotes the dawn of differentiation. It is the Point in the Mundane Egg . . . , the germ within the latter which will become the Universe, the ALL, the boundless, periodical Kosmos, this germ being latent and active, periodically and by turns.⁸¹

Referring to four sketches (Figure 8), Blavatsky discussed the bisection of the circle by one diameter, and then by two orthogonal, diameters:

The first illustration being a plain disc [(a)], the second one in the Archaic symbol shows [(b)] a disc with a point in it—the first differentiation in the periodical mani-

festations of the ever-eternal nature, sexless and infinite . . . the point in the disc, or potential Space within abstract Space. In its third stage the point is transformed into a diameter, thus [(c)]. It now symbolizes a divine immaculate Mother-Nature within the all-embracing absolute Infinitude. When the diameter line is crossed by a vertical one [(d)], it becomes the mundane cross.⁸²

Figure 8. Circle, Central Point, and Diameters



Bailey listed the same symbols in her discussion of the initiatory secrets.⁸³ She also discussed in greater detail the circle, its central point, and its bisection by the line:

1. The circle. This stands for the ring-pass-not of undifferentiated matter. It stands for a solar system or the body logoic, viewed etherically; it stands for a planet or the body of a Heavenly Man viewed etherically; it stands for a human body, viewed likewise, etherically and it stands for them all at the prime or earliest epoch of manifestation. It stands finally for a single cell within the human vehicle, and for the atom of the chemist or physicist.
2. The circle with the point in the center. This signifies the production of heat in the heart of matter; the point of fire, the moment of the first rotary activity, the first straining of the atom, motivated by latent heat, into the sphere of influence of another atom. This produced the first radiation, the first pull of attraction, and the consequent setting up of a repulsion and therefore producing
3. The circle divided into two. This marks the active rotation and the beginning of the mobility of the atom of matter, and produces the subsequent extension of the influence of the positive point within the atom

of matter till its sphere of influence extends from the center to the periphery. At the point where it touches the periphery it contacts the influence of the atoms in its environment; radiation is set up and the point of depression makes its appearance, marking the inflow and outflow of force or heat.⁸⁴

At the macrocosmic level, the circle represents the ring-pass-not of the planetary, solar or cosmic entity, the domain created from the entity's own being and for which the entity is responsible. The Will aspect radiates concentric waves of potency from the center, like ripples on the surface of a pond. Manifestation spreads out to fill the ring-pass-not, only to be withdrawn once again into the point at the end of the manvantara. On a smaller scale, the circle symbolizes the ashram, with the master at the center, radiating his or her consciousness toward the periphery where disciples interact with the outer world. The ashram eventually completes its mission, and the master's consciousness is withdrawn to the center.

This process of exhalation and inhalation is repeated at all scales, including our own. Our lives, our periods of activity and introspection, our days and nights follow the same pattern. Bailey explained the change of direction that occurs when the aspirant moves onto the path of initiation:

The aspirant must ever work from the outside to the within and must endeavor to direct his life from above downwards, if these forces are to be dominated by him and are not to control him. The initiate, however, works "from within the circle," that is the circle or field of maya. His activity must therefore be carried forward from the very heart of the mystery of these forces.⁸⁵

The circle can symbolize the causal body, which, to quote Bailey, "will palpitate in due course of time with an inner irradiation, and an inner glowing flame that will gradually work its way from the centre to the periphery."⁸⁶ Bailey added that the flame "will then pierce through that periphery"; it will "mount upward to the Triad, and (becoming one with that Triad) will be re-absorbed into the spiritual consciousness."⁸⁷

The line can represent the passage of time, the evolutionary process, and most importantly the Path of Return. The expansion of human consciousness initially is passive, and Blavatsky related the horizontal line to the feminine aspect (“the Mother-Nature”). But then the path becomes more active, and Will, a masculine quality, is symbolized by the vertical line. Addressing disciples on the First Ray of Will and Power, Bailey declared: “For you, there must be . . . a line.”⁸⁸ For those on the sixth ray: “The path that you are on leads to the outer circle of the life of God; the line goes forward to the outer rim. Stand at the center.”⁸⁹

The line can also symbolize *connection*: connection with the group and, when the antahkarana is built, with the higher mental subplanes. The vertical line is added to the horizontal, giving us the cross—a symbol whose roots go back far in history, but which became the supreme emblem of Christianity.

At the Fourth Initiation, the disciple ascends that cross to make the ultimate renunciation of the lower self.⁹⁰ The flame burns through the lower vehicles and the periphery of the causal body—though not through the monadic ring-pass-not. There remains “only the vertical line ‘reaching from Heaven to Hell.’” From then on, the “goal of the initiate (between the fourth and the seventh initiations) is to resolve the line into the circle, and thus fulfill the law and the ‘rounding out’ of the evolutionary process.”⁹¹

Analysis of the three geometric figures in both Cartesian coordinates and the complex plane yields additional insights. Cartesian coordinates adhere to a physical description of space, while the complex plane resides at a higher level of abstraction. Leibniz associated imagi-

nary numbers, irreverently, with the Holy Spirit, and called the imaginary unit i “that amphibian between being and nonbeing.”⁹² Perhaps we could say that it hovers between the “seen and unseen,” mentioned in the Nicene Creed.⁹³ Complex numbers overcome the duality of Cartesian coordinates, offering synthesis without destroying distinction.

Given the observation that the physical universe is the manifestation of Thought, and mathematics’ possible associations with Sensa, the language of high initiates, more esotericists should be encouraged to study mathematics. As they do so, they could become receptive to teachings that would be difficult or impossible for Higher Intelligences—on this planet or elsewhere—to communicate by other means.

The exponential function is a remarkable device. Normally, it models unfettered growth: the larger the value, the more rapidly it increases. Yet introduction of the imaginary unit into the function converts it, almost magically, into a sinusoidal function. The cosine and sine, identical except for a phase shift (Figure 6), model the daily, yearly and zodiacal cycles; ripples on the pond; the propagation of sound or light; vibration in all its forms.

Blavatsky commented on the first five digits in the value of π : “The Three, the One, the Four, the One, the Five . . . represent 31415—the numerical hierarchy of the Dhyān-Chohans [celestial beings] of various orders, and of the inner or circumscribed world.”⁹⁴ The assignment of the letter π to the ubiquitous number was made in 1706, by the Welsh mathematician William Jones. It is the sixteenth letter of the Greek alphabet and has a value of 80 in Greek gematria. The number 314 is the value of Metatron, מַטְטְרוֹן, in the Hebrew gematria; Metatron is the Recording Angel, or “the One behind the throne,” mentioned in the *Book of Enoch* and occasionally in the Talmud. The constant π may merit the accolade “transcendental” in more than the narrow mathematical sense.

Esotericist William Eisen included in his book most of the symbols and equations in the sec-

tion *Mathematical Properties*, above. He referred to π as one of the “two most important ratios in the universe”⁹⁵ (the other being the golden ratio, the proportions of the golden rectangle). He then attempted to interpret its value in terms of Hebrew Gematria and the Tarot. Eisen also discussed the constants e and i , providing the infinite series for the former and even describing the complex plane and citing Euler’s Identity.⁹⁶ He related all four constants, not altogether persuasively, to the geometry of the Great Pyramid of Egypt. Eisen was a pioneer in incorporating higher mathematics into his work, but he contributed little to our understanding of its esoteric significance.

Order and Chaos

Figure 9. Indra slaying the dragon Vritra with a thunderbolt. Khmer Temple Complex, Cambodia.



From ancient times order and chaos have been in a state of mutual tension. This section explores a class of mathematical problems, in which chaos arises from what appears to be perfect order, and contrasts it with mythological depictions of the conquest of primeval

chaos by divine order. A surprising, paradoxical outcome is that mathematical chaos can produce greater aesthetic value than the “primeval order” from which it emerges.

Chaos from Order

Chaotic behavior was first encountered by Henri Poincaré at the beginning of the twentieth century—and even by Isaac Newton three centuries earlier—in connection with the “three-body problem.”⁹⁷ Chaos theory became a field of serious study in the 1960s. It refers to a category of initial-value problems, usually but not necessarily defined by nonlinear differential equations, in which the solution advances in a time-like direction. In contrast to more familiar situations, a chaotic system never settles down to a constant, periodic, or exponentially divergent pattern. Instead, the solution meanders, in a seemingly random fashion, around a set of values known as a *strange attractor*.⁹⁸

The traditional belief—almost a sacred tenet of mathematics—was that, given a system of differential equations for which solutions exist, and given a complete set of boundary conditions, solutions would be calculable and repeatable using alternative calculation methods or different computers. Indeed, calculability and repeatability were considered essential elements of *determinism*.

Chaos theory identifies situations in which alternative calculation methods or different computers may yield similar values only for a finite—often small—number of steps. Thereafter the solutions diverge from one another, exhibiting comparable large-scale patterns of behavior but not reproducing the same values. Small errors or perturbations, caused by numerical rounding or discretization of continuous functions, grow exponentially until they dominate the solution. For example, different solutions might be obtained if an initial value were rounded to seven, rather than eight, decimal places. The hypersensitivity to initial conditions—and subsequent approximations—undermines two of the most cherished beliefs in science: calculability and repeatability, and it forced a reinterpretation of determinism.

The recurrence equation:

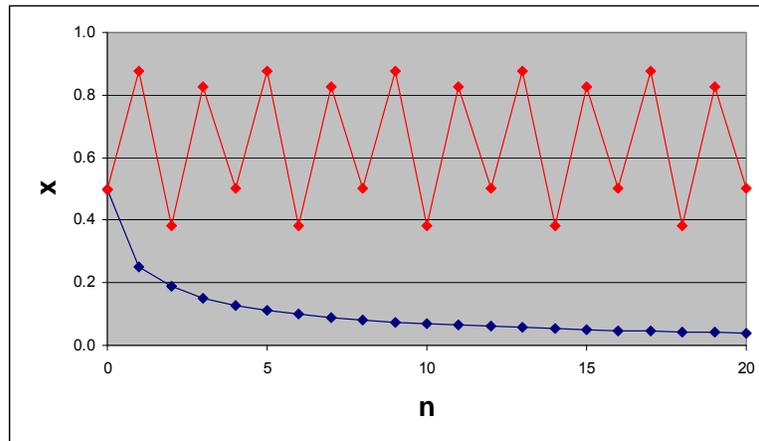
$$x_{n+1} = a x_n (1 - x_n),$$

known as the Logistic Map, provides a simple illustration of chaos. Solutions converge to a limit for values of the constant a between 1 and 3, they become periodic for values between 3 and about 3.57, and chaotic for larger values of a . Figure 9 shows calculations for three values of r and an initial value, x_0 , of 0.5. In each case, the solution proceeds from left to right.⁹⁹ Figure 10(a) shows two well-behaved

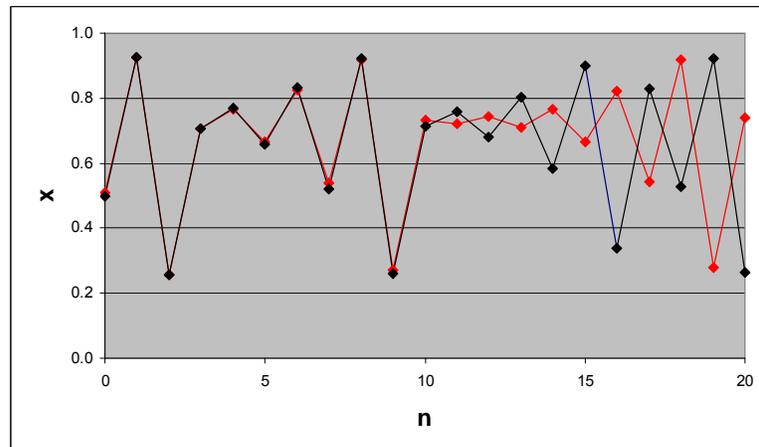
solutions: a monotonic decay toward zero, when $a = 1$, and an oscillatory solution with a period of four steps, when $a = 3.5$. Figure 10(b), where $a = 3.7$, illustrates chaotic behavior. The blue line is the solution for $x_0 = 0.5$, and the red line shows the effect of increasing x_0 to 0.51. The two solutions initially remain close together, but then they diverge as the perturbation grows in amplitude; soon the solutions lose any connection with each other. By contrast, a similar perturbation in the calculations shown in Figure 10(a) quickly dies out.

Figure 10. Calculations for the Recurrence Equation $x_{n+1} = a x_n (1 - x_n)$.

(a) $a = 1$ (blue), $a = 3.5$ (red)



(b) $a = 3.7$



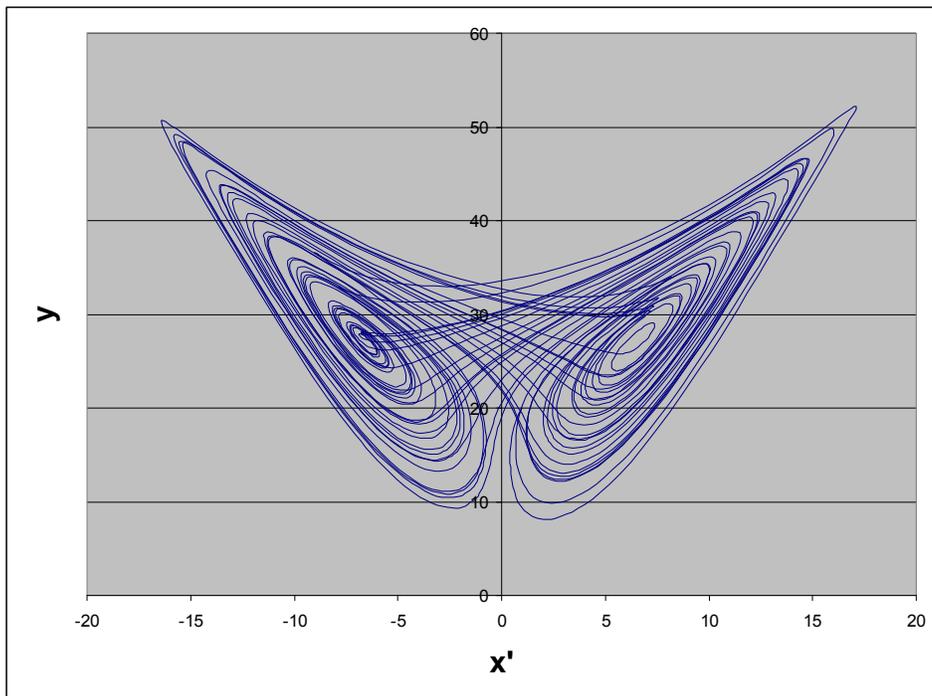
American meteorologist Edward Lorenz observed chaotic behavior in 1963 in a simple three-equation model of thermal convection:

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dx}{dt} &= \sigma(y - x) \\ \frac{dy}{dt} &= x(\rho - z) - y \\ \frac{dz}{dt} &= xy - \beta z\end{aligned}$$

The variables x , y and z represent the state of the atmosphere; t is the elapsed time; and σ , ρ and β are empirical constants.¹⁰⁰ Given a set of initial

conditions, x_0 , y_0 , z_0 , the equations can be integrated to determine how variables change over time. Over very long periods of time, the values of x and y average out to zero, and z to about 28 (the value of ρ); but over shorter periods they exhibit wide excursions. The trace of the solution in the abstract, “phase,” space defined by the coordinates x , y , z forms a strange attractor. A two-dimensional view of the attractor is shown in Figure 11.¹⁰¹ The intricate—and beautiful pattern has been compared with butterfly wings. Graphs convey some idea of the beauty of the attractor, but greater appreciation can be gained by watching its formation in real time.¹⁰²

Figure 11. The Lorenz Attractor



Two-dimensional views, like the one in Figure 11, might suggest that the trace crosses itself, but in fact, it passes behind or in front of earlier values. The solution never repeats itself. Instead, it gradually fills in the three-dimensional space of the attractor. A prerequisite for chaos is nonlinearity; for instance, Lorenz’s equations contain the products xy and xz , while the Logistic Map involves x^2 .¹⁰³

In addition to appearing in mathematical equations, chaos is observed in the motion of articulated pendulums, planetary orbits, water dripping from faucets, electrical circuits, chemical reactions, the firing of brain synapses, and—as Lorenz discovered—the weather. Weather forecasts have become more accurate with the development of newer models, but they cannot be made for more than a

few days ahead because barometric pressure, humidity, wind patterns, and other factors comprise a chaotic system. Small perturbations, in both initial values and the calculations themselves, quickly become amplified and dominate computed forecasts. What Lorenz called the “butterfly effect” suggests that a butterfly flapping its wings in one part of the world could cause a tornado or hurricane in another.

Importantly, chaotic systems contain bifurcation points at which solutions take on unforeseen properties. An example, was the value of $a = 3.57\dots$ in the Logistic Map. Solutions on one side of the bifurcation point provide no clue to behavior on the other.

Order from Chaos

The creation stories of multiple cultures described formation of the world from primeval darkness, formlessness, or chaos. In *Genesis* we read: “[T]he earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”¹⁰⁴ The *Zohar*, the primary text of the medieval Kabbalah, described the emergence of color in the void

A spark of impenetrable darkness flashed within the concealed of the concealed from the head of Infinity—a cluster of vapor forming in formlessness ... not white, not black, not red, not green, no color at all... It yielded radiant colors. Deep within the spark gushed a flow, splaying colors below.¹⁰⁵

According to the Vedas of ancient India, the world was formed from primeval chaos. *Rita*, or Order, was considered to be a divine principle that ensured social stability as well as the regularity of the seasons and night and day.¹⁰⁶ *Rita* also brought beauty and symmetry to the world; a verse from the *Rig Veda* tells us: “Firm-seated are the foundations of *Rita*, in its lovely form are many splendid beauties.”¹⁰⁷ A modern writer echoes that sentiment: “beauty is an expression of that great law of harmony and equilibrium that gives order and rhythm to the universe.”¹⁰⁸

The preservation of order, in the Vedic system, required the performance of appropriate rituals by the priests and people. It also required attention by the gods. As the champion of *Rita*, the supreme God *Indra* was locked in conflict with the dragon *Vritra*, who represented chaos. The *Rig Veda* exhorts *Indra* to emerge victorious: “*Indra*, manliness is thy strength; destroy *Vritra*, win the waters, acclaiming self-dominion.”¹⁰⁹ *Indra* scored a major victory over the dragon by sending, not one son—as many gods have done—but *twins*, the *Asvini*, into the world. He eventually killed *Vritra* with a thunderbolt (Figure 9, at the beginning of this section.)

Ernest McClain’s research showed that the story of *Indra*, *Vritra*, and the *Asvini* has a musical correspondence. Long before Pythagoras took up a similar quest, Vedic musicians experimented with musical tones, selecting as sacred certain intervals based on integer ratios of either frequency or the corresponding lengths of the pipes or strings of musical instruments. McClain demonstrated how the intervals of the perfect fourth and fifth can be represented, geometrically by the relationship between *Indra* and his sons.¹¹⁰ Those intervals, together with the octave, symbolized the emergence of aesthetic order from the chaos of infinite possibility.

Unfortunately, the fourth, fifth and octave do not provide a usable musical scale, and no satisfactory method was ever devised to identify integer ratios to represent the intervening notes. Eventually, the whole concept of basing scales on rational numbers had to be abandoned. In modern western music, every semitone in the scale is assigned a frequency ratio of $2^{1/12}$.

In the abandonment of Vedic-Pythagorean musical scales (and their derivatives), and in the discovery of mathematical chaos, the divine order, secured by *Indra* at such great cost, came to naught. Yet music of all genres plays a larger role in people’s lives than ever before. Digital processing has allowed music to be recorded and shared at a quality approaching that of live performances.

As for mathematical chaos, numerical methods of solution and computer graphics have allowed us to experience the beauty of strange attractors—geometric forms never previously seen or envisioned. We are seeing the emergence of a new kind of order, one perhaps that only now are we in a position to understand. While specific *quantities* may not be predictable, strange attractors assume the same *patterns* in every relevant calculation.¹¹¹ In this instance, and indeed more generally, mathematics is moving from a quantitative to a qualitative emphasis.

Reflections and Synthesis

Mathematics has been a crowning achievement of the fifth root race and the unfoldment of *manas*. It builds on the problem-solving skills of the concrete mind, but it also reaches into higher mental levels, where abstract concepts are formulated and manipulated. Individuals like Euclid, Brahmagupta, Ibn al Banna, Leibniz, Euler, Gauss, Maxwell, Russell, Einstein and Gödel saw reality in new ways. Mathematics is about the study, and occasionally the building, of forms at every level of reality.

Exoteric and Esoteric Mathematics

Nurtured by some of humanity's greatest minds, mathematics models the physical universe—from subatomic levels to galactic superclusters—to a degree that amazes even scientists. Laws of nature, expressible in mathematical terms, seem to be obeyed throughout the universe. Hungarian mathematical physicist Eugene Wigner exclaimed: "It is difficult to avoid the impression that a miracle confronts us here."¹¹² Yet if the WORD brought the universe into being, James Jeans' assertion that the universe is a mental construct is completely understandable. Mathematics may be part of the language in which the WORD was uttered, while the laws of nature are a manifestation of divine Will.

We must not fall into the trap of assuming that *particular* mathematical constructs have divine sanction. Euclidean geometry, musical scales based on integer frequency ratios, and circular planetary orbits all had to be discarded—

sometimes with grave concerns that God would be offended.

Pure mathematics is not constrained by observations of physical reality or by assumptions about the physical world. It long reigned supreme as "queen of the sciences," acclaimed as a self-consistent body of axioms, logical inferences, and theorems whose proofs could forever withstand assault. Although that ideal has lost credibility, pure mathematics continues to expand and grow.

Mathematics, and indeed all the sciences, are driven by the search for Truth. And, while that Truth may be narrowly defined, it is based on systems of verification that transcend individual or group prejudice. Alone among major fields of endeavor, it has remained immune to political, religious and economic pressures—not necessarily in its applications but certainly in its methods. No totalitarian regime, religious sect, or industrial oligarchy has been able to subvert the formulation or proof of mathematical theorems or to sabotage the norms accepted by the mathematical community.¹¹³

Esotericist Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) warned of a different threat. He complained about the modern world's obsession with quantification, attributing it to the growing influence of the evil demigod Ahriman: "Nothing can stand up against figures," he complained, "because of the faith that is reposed in them; and Ahriman is only too ready to exploit figures for his purposes."¹¹⁴ "[F]igures are not a means whereby the essential reality of things can be proved—they are simply a means of deception! Whenever one fails to look beyond figures to the *qualitative*, they can be utterly deceptive."¹¹⁵

Perhaps Steiner anticipated the threats posed by Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem or chaos theory; or perhaps he anticipated the use and misuse of statistics to influence public opinion; if the last, he had genuine grounds for concern. The field of statistics is driven by our imprisonment in linear time. It also represents an attempt to argue from the particular to the general, rather than from the general to the particular. Be that as it may, mathematics is not just about quantification; it reaches far beyond

numbers. Moreover, we do not know whether Ahriman exists, other than as an archetype.

Even exoteric mathematics, developed for utilitarian purposes or for its intellectual merit, has an aesthetic dimension. Mathematicians frequently comment on the “elegance” of solutions or theorems. Furthermore, the discovery of new proofs or theorems, the construction of new calculation methods, even progress in mathematics courses, can evoke a sense of awe. The sudden breakthrough in a problem that has long perplexed the individual—or the entire mathematical community—is not altogether different from the experience of a mystic encountering the divine presence.

Given such reactions among professional mathematicians of our own time, it is not surprising that a pervasive belief has existed from time immemorial that mathematics could reveal higher truths or values. That belief led people to look for, and in many instances discover, profound aesthetic and esoteric significance in numbers, geometric shapes and symbols. Aware of the tendency of the human mind to see patterns where there may be none, and aware that aesthetics is at least partly personal in its assessments, we must assess claims with caution. Nevertheless, the aesthetic and esoteric dimensions of mathematics have persuasive power that is hard to dismiss.

The implications may be far-reaching. Dorje Jinpa commented: “Once it is realized that the laws which govern art, and the laws which govern physics, and the laws which govern the natural growth of the spirit, are the same laws, we can begin to apply the discoveries made in one field to any other.”¹¹⁶ Perhaps he should have said, “the laws which govern physics and *mathematics*.”

The western esoteric literature contains many works on gematria and sacred geometry. In addition to the criteria mentioned earlier, gematria depends for its validity on the belief that letters and words have significance beyond the utilitarian purpose of recording and communicating speech. Ancient cultures sometimes claimed that their languages were of divine origin. Nobody would make such a claim about English, which has drawn upon many

earlier tongues and has made numerous concessions to cultural changes. Nonetheless, we have seen the use of English gematria in the trans-Himalayan teachings—and this usage encourages us to pay greater attention to gematria and numerology than we might otherwise feel was warranted.

This article has gone farther than most previous studies by looking for esoteric significance in equations, theorems, and other mathematical constructs. As noted in the Introduction, mathematics need not be understood in detail. Rather, it should be allowed to stimulate the intuition; it should be regarded as a basis for meditation. For example, the infinite series for π can lead the mind toward infinity in somewhat the same way as does a mandala.

The mathematics of the point, the line, and the circle epitomize order, stability, regularity, predictability, the unswerving direction, the endless turning of the Wheel. It calls to mind spiritual paths like the monastic life, with its discipline of labor and the rhythm of meditation and collective prayer. Progress is being made, and many hermits and monks have attained the heights of spirituality. But the work is methodical, and “dark nights of the soul”—which can last months or years—are endured with cheerful patience.

The mathematics of chaotic processes is quite the opposite. Order appears to break down, the future is unpredictable; solutions are organic and exploratory, and wide excursions are possible. Small causes can have large effects; indeed, the amplification of disturbances may underlie the arrow of time and irreversibility mandated by the Second Law of Thermodynamics.¹¹⁷ Mathematical chaos calls to mind the work of active discipleship, ever encountering new challenges.

Mathematical chaos is not statistical randomness; it is a new kind of order, less obvious but real and meaningful. Chaos theory models evolutionary processes in which new, unexpected, dynamic—and, most importantly, *beautiful*—forms can emerge. Life, in all its stages, from the mineral, to the vegetable, the animal, the human, and the superhuman kingdoms is modeled more accurately by chaotic systems than

by “stable” ones. Significantly, chaotic systems are unstable at bifurcation points. Such a point behaves like a teetering rock; a small push can tip the rock one way or another. If, as esotericists affirm, consciousness impinges on the physical plane, it could do so most efficiently at bifurcation points.

Mathematics, the Mysteries, and the Spiritual Path

Mathematics was once viewed as an element of the sacred mysteries. The theorems of Euclidean geometry were shared only with students sworn to secrecy. Geometry is no longer protected in that manner, but mathematics’ role in the mysteries continues. Alice Bailey described the secrets revealed at the seven initiations available within the planetary system:

These seven secrets are simply short formulas, not of mantric value, such as in the case of the Sacred Word, but of a mathematical nature, precisely worded so as to convey the exact intent of the speaker. To the uninitiated they would look and sound like algebraical formulas, except that each is composed (when seen clairvoyantly) of an oval of a specific hue, according to the secret imparted, containing five peculiar hieroglyphics or symbols.¹¹⁸

She added: “It will now be apparent why so much stress is laid upon the study of symbols.”¹¹⁹

As noted earlier, the age-old interest in “sacred mathematics” may hint at its use by the masters during the Atlantean era. Mathematics may be one of the expressions of the initiatory language *Sensa*. Jinpa declared that *Sensa*, at its highest level, is an expression of the Divine WORD. As the divine impulse descends into manifestation, it expands into archetypes, thoughtforms, and finally into a myriad of forms at lower levels of consciousness. Jinpa explained: “esoteric symbols represent ideas on a level where the parts, the dualities of opposites, are realized as a synthesis.” Perhaps in contemplating mathematical symbols, we can acquire an understanding of *Sensa* at whatever levels may be accessible to us.

Mathematics is a *universal* language in the full sense of that term. Scientists have long recognized that the mathematical laws of physics are obeyed throughout the universe. Also, Boole, Whitehead and Russell recognized that logical operations expressed in mathematical notation could transcend ordinary linguistic barriers. With appropriate explanations of notation, exoteric mathematics no doubt could be understood by beings of comparable mental ability beyond this planet. Esoteric mathematics, as a sublanguage of *Sensa*, may also be capable of expressing truths that are valid and comprehensible throughout the universe.

Like all systems of sacred symbolism, mathematics has its priesthood, whose members may seem to outsiders to be secretive custodians of truths veiled to the masses. “The mathematician is . . . regarded as the hermit who knows little of the ways of life outside his cell, who spends his time compounding incredible and incomprehensible theories in a strange, clipped, unintelligible jargon.”¹²⁰ Yet entry to the priesthood is not arbitrarily restricted. Many more people could participate—or at least take sufficient interest to break down barriers separating mathematics from the larger body of esoteric studies.

Physicist Fritjof Capra suggested that mathematics’ isolation may be coming to an end. One reason lies in greater understanding of its goals and ideals. Another—which Galileo would have endorsed—is appreciation of its *necessity*:

[T]he understanding of pattern is crucial to understanding the living world around us; and . . . all questions of pattern, order, and complexity are essentially mathematical.¹²¹

Mathematics is an attractive pursuit for individuals on the Third or Fifth Rays, especially in combination: “[T]he third and fifth rays together make the truly great mathematician who soars into heights of abstract thought and calculation.”¹²² Complementary Seventh Ray influence may enhance practical application, while Fourth Ray influence may enhance an appreciation of mathematics’ aesthetics. Every ray presents both opportunities and challenges.

The Third Ray came into manifestation in 1425, and the Fifth Ray in 1775.¹²³ The great advances in exoteric mathematics that have been made in recent centuries no doubt reflect the influence of those rays and their effect of attracting Third- and Fifth-Ray individuals into incarnation. Clearly, the Planetary Hierarchy intended to stimulate work in exoteric mathematics. There is every reason to believe that the Hierarchy also wanted relevant concepts and methods to be incorporated into esoteric mathematics. This realization makes studies of the Fibonacci series and the golden rectangle, Eisen's pioneering work, and the present work both necessary and urgent. The potential for future research is enormous, and all interested authors are encouraged to contribute.

In the approach to sixth-root-race consciousness, mathematical endeavor can be expected to move increasingly to intuitive levels. Synthesis is already overtaking analysis in importance, even in exoteric mathematics.

With an appreciation of the processes and goals involved, mathematics could open up new avenues for, and draw more people into, building the individual and collective antahkarana. For those ready to go farther, we are reminded of Alice Bailey's advice on meditation for Fifth-Ray disciples, leading up to disintegration of the causal body:

[I]t is the bending of every mental quality and the controlling of the lower nature so that one supreme endeavor is made to pierce through that which hinders the downflow of the higher knowledge. It involves also the will element (as might be expected) and results in the wresting of the desired information from the source of all knowledge.¹²⁴

Mathematics can provide one component in the expansion of consciousness needed on the initiatory path. The question remains whether a one-pointed pursuit of mathematics is a wise spiritual path. We are warned: "Anyone who over-exalts the concrete mind and permits it continuously to shut out the higher, is in danger of straying on the left-hand path."¹²⁵ Yet successful mathematicians use the higher mind to great advantage. And mathematicians in

general form one of the least likely groups to be swayed by dangerous emotional forces.

The greater challenge for mathematicians may be to overcome total absorption in their studies. Mystics face a similar challenge. For them, the solution lies in allowing love to flow horizontally as well as vertically. Mathematicians need to broaden their focus, so that they turn outward to the world. Service must become as important as understanding higher reality.

For their part, esotericists could learn much from the mental discipline that mathematicians impose on themselves. It includes insistence on rigor in the search for truth. Buddhist teachings insist:

[W]e must not believe in a thing said merely because it is said; nor traditions because they have been handed down from antiquity; nor rumors, as such; nor writings by sages, because sages wrote them But we are to believe when the writing, doctrine, or saying is corroborated by our own reason and consciousness.¹²⁶

Following the example of pure mathematics, esotericists should work from the universal to the particular and from the general to the specific. And they should understand that their quest is one of discovery more than innovation. Both mathematics and esotericism aim to discover relationships that have always existed.¹²⁷

Conclusions

This article was written in the belief that mathematics has an esoteric dimension, as well as its primary goal of exploring the reaches of the concrete and abstract mind, and its long-recognized aesthetic value. The article reviewed the development of exoteric mathematics, drawing attention to its enormous power and wide applicability, but also recognizing intrinsic limitations that have come to light since the early twentieth century.

The article briefly examined gematria and the "traditional" sacred geometry addressed in the literature. The motivation to discuss gematria stemmed largely from its appearance in the trans-Himalayan teachings. The vesica piscis was chosen to illustrate traditional sacred ge-

ometry because of intrinsic interest and also because of its connections to the material that followed. The geometry of the golden rectangle, its appearance in nature, and its relationship to the Fibonacci series, have not been discussed herein since they have been covered in great detail elsewhere. Nor has space permitted a discussion of the geometries believed to be encoded in architecture and the landscape.

The geometric symbols of the point, the line, and the circle were examined in considerable depth, from both a mathematical and an esoteric standpoint. The relevant mathematics has been explored in greater detail than previous works on sacred geometry have done. The article compared and contrasted the representation of the circle in Cartesian coordinates and in the complex plane, and the discussion extended to the three enigmatic numbers: π , e and i that feature therein.

The esoteric symbolism of the point, line, and circle has been recognized since the dawn of time, and it is discussed in the works of Blavatsky and Bailey. The line, depending on orientation, can symbolize either Love or Will. The horizontal and vertical lines can be related to the paths of discipleship and initiation, and their juxtaposition forms the cross, with special relevance to the fourth initiation. The point within the circle has rich symbolism, encompassing the Great Invocation as well as the expression of Logoc essence within its ring-pass-not.

Even with its use of analytical geometry, this article may have only scratched the surface of esoteric mathematics. The point, line and circle have still been considered within the framework of Euclidean geometry—and they are shapes that can be constructed with ruler and compass. To assert that other shapes or other geometries are “less sacred” betrays a limited perspective. A larger field of sacred geometry waits to be explored, involving more complicated shapes and other geometries. Many people already meditate on the intriguing and beautiful fractal image known as the Mandelbrot set—which, incidentally, resides in the complex plane.¹²⁸

Chaos theory, which threatens the time-honored trust in scientific determinism—even causality—was illustrated by two examples. A very simple one demonstrated the emergence of chaos, and the hyper-sensitivity to initial conditions that makes long-term predictions impossible. The second involved the integration of coupled differential equations to demonstrate the geometry and beauty of a strange attractor. Chaos, in the mathematical sense, may represent the breakdown of order. But from a larger perspective, it may imply the emergence of new kinds of order, ones that model the evolution of life at all its levels.

Given the observation that the physical universe is the manifestation of Thought, and mathematics’ possible associations with *Sensa*, the language of high initiates, more esotericists should be encouraged to study mathematics. As they do so, they could become receptive to teachings that would be difficult or impossible for Higher Intelligences—on this planet or elsewhere—to communicate by other means. Correspondingly rich opportunities exist for mathematicians to move toward esotericism by contemplating the larger implications of their work; many may already have done so but lack the terminology and philosophical framework to express their insights.

During the fifth root race mathematics has primarily been a quest for Truth at the mental level—both concrete and abstract. As we approach the emergence of the sixth root race, it will likely expand to the intuitive level.

The limitations of exoteric mathematics and its applications are already coming to the surface. Its utilitarian value has never been greater, but the fundamental premises on which mathematics rests no longer go unquestioned. Certainly, we cannot yet speak of the rise and fall of mathematics, but the cracks in the walls of the once mighty edifice point in the direction of evolving human consciousness. The outer form is being weakened to allow the indwelling life to expand and express itself in new ways. As time goes on we can expect greater emphasis to be placed on the aesthetic, intuitive and esoteric dimensions of mathematics. A group ef-

fort will be most successful, and hopefully this article will stimulate interest and encourage work on a broad front.

-
- ¹ Bertrand Russell, letter to Gilbert Murray, April 3, 1902. Online: http://www.notable-quotes.com/r/russell_bertrand_iv.html#UvOiqPUtCyHGP3ps.99. (Last accessed Nov. 11, 2015).
- ² Marcus P. F. du Sautoy, *A Brief History of Mathematics*, part 1. Online: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00sr3fm>. (Last accessed Aug. 1, 2015).
- ³ Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, New York: Lucis, 1922, 224.
- ⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, New York: Lucis, 1934, 379.
- ⁵ Dorje Jinpa, *Sensa: The Lost Language of the Ancient Mysteries* (Ashland, OR: Pentabarba, 2012), 168.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 169.
- ⁷ Except for the use of graphical methods and animated simulations—and except for Eisen’s work mentioned herein—the sacred mathematics in the literature is based on elementary arithmetic and the geometry of the straight-edge and compass.
- ⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1922), 5.
- ⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology I* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1936), 159.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.
- ¹¹ Where the relevant tools are covered in educational curricula varies from place to place. The author learned all the methods of analytical geometry used here in high school. Chaos theory had not yet been discovered by the time the author completed college. Knowledge of numerical methods for integrating partial differential equations was acquired “on the job.”
- ¹² William Eisen, *The Universal Language of Cabalah* (Marina del Rey, CA: DeVorss & Co. 1989).
- ¹³ People who would be loath to admit incontinence or sexual impotence eagerly boast ignorance of mathematics—and are applauded for doing so.
- ¹⁴ Jagadguru Shankaracharya, *Vedic Mathematics* (New York, NY: Samuel Weiser, 1965).
- ¹⁵ Plato, *Timaeus* 31C-32C. Desmond Lee (ed.), *Timaeus and Critias* (London: Penguin Classics, 1965), 31C.
- ¹⁶ The Arrow Paradox, one of several posed by the Greek philosopher Zeno, claimed that motion is illusory, because an arrow appears to

be stationary during infinitesimal intervals of time. Newton and Leibniz laid the foundations of the differential calculus by showing that the *ratio* of distance traveled to the corresponding time interval remains finite as the latter tends to zero.

- ¹⁷ In the age of Scholasticism, whose most famous exponent was Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), theology wore that mantle.
- ¹⁸ Deriving the arithmetic expression for $x \vee y$ is left as an exercise for the student.
- ¹⁹ In classical mathematics, tautological axioms like “the whole is greater than the part” were distinguished from *postulates*, which were believed to be self-evident from experience. For example, Euclid’s first postulate was: “It is possible to draw a straight line from any point to any other point.” Notions of self-evidence have since been discarded on the grounds that they limit a theorem’s range of application, and no distinction is now made between axioms and postulates.
- ²⁰ Tensors are arrays of variables or functions that can be manipulated as an algebraic unit, subject to applicable rules. For example, the tensor G , which describes the curvature of four-dimensional space-time, is an array of $4 \times 4 \times 4 \times 4 = 256$ elements. Fortunately, from a computational standpoint, only 20 are mathematically independent of one another.
- ²¹ Schrödinger’s cat, in the famous thought experiment, is simultaneously alive and dead.
- ²² Measurement and observation imply the involvement of human consciousness.
- ²³ Some theoretical physicists claim that properties of Schrödinger’s Wave Equation can be derived from axioms of symmetry alone, without reference to empirical data.
- ²⁴ James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe* rev. ed. (London, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1930/1948), 139. Most scientists have simply ignored Jeans’ assertion, few have tried to refute it, and some have endorsed it. See for instance: Richard C. Henry, “The Mental Universe,” *Nature* (vol. 436, no. 7, July 2005), 29.
- ²⁵ Harriette A. Curtiss & F. Homer Curtiss, *The Key to the Universe* (Albuquerque, NM: Sun Books, 1917), 17.
- ²⁶ Inconsistency may be obvious in a small numbers of simple axioms, for example: $A > B$, $B > C$, $C > A$. But it may not be apparent in large, complicated axiomatic systems.
- ²⁷ These criticisms are not addressed to statistical mechanics, which has played a central role in fields like thermodynamics.

- 28 For a good overview of traditional sacred mathematics, see John Michell, *The Dimensions of Paradise* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1971).
- 29 The canonical Hebrew Bible was written in Hebrew. The *Septuagint*, published in Alexandria for use by Jews of the Diaspora, consisted of Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible and additional books known as the *Apocrypha*. The whole of the New Testament was written in Greek.
- 30 It may be noted that the numbers 6, 90 and 900 are missing from Table 1(b). Letters once occupied those positions, but they had fallen into disuse by the time of classical Greece. Clearly, the letter–number equivalences were decided at a very early period in Greek history.
- 31 Note that Hebrew is written from right to left. The numerical values are given in the order of their English transliterations (left to right).
- 32 Latin and English do not use letters as numerical symbols, and different rules have emerged for assigning numbers to the letters of the respective alphabets. Rules must also be devised for dealing with archaic letters no longer in general use, or with new letters, like k, imported from Greek after the Latin alphabet took on its classical form.
- 33 Frederick B. Bond and Thomas S. Lea, *Gematria: A Preliminary Investigation of The Cabala Contained in The Coptic Gnostic Books* (London, UK: Thorsons, 1917), especially appendix C. One such phrase is “Son of Man,” ΥΙΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥ, with a value of 2,960, or 80×37 —or twice the value of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ.
- 34 See for example, Gary L. Cobb, *Three Religions, One Temple Mount* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2007), 252.
- 35 Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, (New York, NY: Lucis, 1925), 306.
- 36 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1951), 427.
- 37 *Revelation* 13:18.
- 38 Aside from being divisible by 37, the number 666 is the grand total of the numbers in the 6×6 Magic Square of the Sun, in which each column, row and diagonal sums to 111. This value, the sum of the numbers on the perimeter, the sum of the four central elements, and 666 itself are all divisible by 37. It is worth noting that esotericists Rudolf Steiner and Max Heindel claimed that Christ was a spirit of the sun.
- 39 The RAN code contrasts with the Alpha Number (AN) code, which assigns the numbers 1 through 26 to the alphabet, without repetitions. The RAN and AN codes both reduce to the same root values. For more on the English gematria see William Eisen, *The English Cabalah* (Camarillo, CA: DeVorss, 1980).
- 40 Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology* I, 346. Capitalization in original. Note that on p. 155 of the same book, Bailey identified 22 as the number of the adept.
- 41 Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1960), 79. Capitalization in original.
- 42 John Berges, *Sacred Vessel of the Mysteries* (Northfield, NJ: Planetnetwork Press, 1997); also *Hidden Foundations of the Great Invocation* (Planetnetwork Press, 2000). For information on the Great Invocation see Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1957), 488ff.
- 43 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 80.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 See for example Curtiss & Curtiss, *The Key to the Universe* and *The Key of Destiny*.
- 46 See for example Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 4.
- 47 For a discussion of ley lines see for example Paul Screeton, *Quicksilver Heritage* (Wellingborough, UK: Thorsons, 1974).
- 48 For a brief introduction to this topic, see the website:
<https://www.mathsisfun.com/numbers/golden-ratio.html>. (Last accessed Aug. 19, 2015).
- 49 Michell associates the left-hand circle with matter, and the right-hand one with spirit; see Michell, *The Dimensions of Paradise*. Mayananda offers the opposite association; see Mayananda, *The Tarot for Today* (Zeus, Easton, Pa: 1963), 139.
- 50 Mayananda, *ibid.*, 138-139.
- 51 Plato, *Timeus* (trans: Benjamin Jowett), Internet Classics Archive, §35A. For a discussion of Plato’s writings on the soul, see John F. Nash, “Plato: A Forerunner,” *The Beacon*, July/Aug. 2004, 18-24.
- 52 Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 35.
- 53 See for example Michell, *The Dimensions of Paradise*, 70.
- 54 Irrational numbers will be discussed in more detail later.
- 55 William Stirling, *The Canon* (London: Elkin Matthews 1897), 108, 136-137. A better approximation can be obtained by reducing the

- value of Zeus to 611, and a tolerance of ± 1 is often accepted in gematria.
- 56 David Fiedler, *Jesus Christ, Sun of God* (Wheaton, IL: Quest, 1993), 72.
- 57 David P. Myers & David S. Percy, *Two-Thirds*, London: Aulis, 1993, appendix.
- 58 Michael S. Schneider, *A Beginner's Guide to Constructing the Universe* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994), 37.
- 59 For a readable account of Cantor's work on transfinite numbers see Edward Kasner & James Newman, *Mathematics and the Imagination* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1940/1968), 48ff. A set of *countable* numbers can be "lined up" in parallel with the natural numbers 1, 2, 3, No such relationship can be established with *uncountable* numbers.
- 60 A polynomial equation is an equation of the form: $a_0 + a_1x + a_2x^2 + a_3x^3 + \dots = 0$.
- 61 Eisen mistakenly classified i and the golden ratio as transcendental. See *The Universal Language of Cabalah*, 160.
- 62 One radian, equal to approximately 57.3 degrees, is the angle subtended by an arc equal in length to the radius of the circle.
- 63 Note that $\cos(0) = \cos(2\pi) = 1$; $\sin(0) = \sin(2\pi) = 0$; $\cos(\pi/2) = 0$; $\sin(\pi/2) = 1$; $\cos(\pi) = -1$; $\sin(\pi) = 0$; $\cos(3\pi/2) = 0$; $\sin(3\pi/2) = -1$.
- 64 Several mathematicians contributed to development of the complex plane, notably Gauss.
- 65 A line in the complex plane is represented by equating the real part of a complex expression to zero: $\text{Re}\{(a + i)(x + iy) + b\} = 0$.
- 66 One way to demonstrate the equivalence is by expanding the cosine, sine, and exponential functions as Taylor series and comparing corresponding terms.
- 67 See for example <http://www.livescience.com/51399-eulers-identity.html>. (Last accesses Aug. 24, 2015).
- 68 *1 Kings 7:23-26*; *2 Chronicles 4:2-5*.
- 69 The theoretical impossibility of squaring the circle was proved in 1882. Notwithstanding, the Indiana House of Representatives passed a bill, fifteen years later, that would have incorporated such a method into state law. The method yielded a value of $\pi = 3.2$. Fortunately, the bill died in the state Senate.
- 70 Unfortunately, the ancients lacked accurate methods of calculating square roots.
- 71 This series, developed by Simon Plouffe and included in a 1995 paper by David H. Bailey, Peter Borwein, and Plouffe, is not only highly efficient; it also has the property that individual terms can be calculated in the hexadecimal (base-16) expansion for π .
- 72 For example, the decimal expansion of $22/7$ —often used as an approximation to π —is 3.142857142857..., which converges to endless repetition of the digits 142857.
- 73 For example $\int dx/\sqrt{1-x^2}$, over the range $-1 < x < 1$, can be evaluated using the substitution $x = \sin \theta$, and yields the value π .
- 74 According to the American mode of writing dates, March 14, 2015 was 3-14-15. A special celebration was observed at 9:26:54 (or 5) in the morning.
- 75 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 111.
- 76 *Ibid.*, 479.
- 77 Plotinus, *Sixth Ennead*, 6th Tractate. See also Karen Armstrong, *A History of God* (New York: Ballentine, 1993), 102-3.
- 78 Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine I* (New York, NY: Theosophical Publishing Co., 1888), 1. Capitalization in original.
- 79 Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age I* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1944), 335.
- 80 Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, 488.
- 81 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine I*, 1. Capitalization in original.
- 82 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine I*, 4
- 83 Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 165-166.
- 84 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 159-160.
- 85 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 182.
- 86 Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation*, 31.
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology II* (New York: Lucis, 1942), 352.
- 89 *Ibid.*, 372.
- 90 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 479.
- 91 *Ibid.*
- 92 Kasner & Newman, *Mathematics and the Imagination*, 87; Fritjof Capra, *The Web of Life* (New York, NY: Anchor, 1996), 143.
- 93 See for example *Book of Common Prayer* (New York, NY: The Episcopal Church, 1979), 358.
- 94 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, 90.
- 95 Eisen, *The Universal Language of Cabalah*, 64.
- 96 *Ibid.*, 162ff.
- 97 The three-body problem concerns the motion of two planets orbiting a sun. Newton recognized that such motion is unstable and concluded that a Deity was needed to return errant planets to their proper places. Poincaré was

- the first to encounter a strange attractor, though he did not coin the term.
- 98 More generally, an *attractor* is a set of values to which a dynamical system tends, as $t \rightarrow \infty$, for a range of initial values.
- 99 Calculations and graphs by the author.
- 100 Edward N. Lorenz, “Deterministic Nonperiodic Flow,” *Journal of Atmospheric Sciences* (vol. 20, 1963), 130-141.
- 101 Calculations and graph by the author. The equations were integrated by an explicit, forward-difference method, using Lorenz’s own values of the constants: $\sigma = 10$, $\rho = 28$, $\beta = 8/3$. The horizontal axis in the graph is rotated 12° from the true x -axis. Specifically, $x' = x \cos \theta - z \sin \theta$, where $\theta = 12^\circ$.
- 102 Two videos of the Lorenz Attractor, available at the time of writing, can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYE4JKAXSfY> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dP3qAq9RNLg>. (Last accessed Sept. 29, 2015).
- 103 One consequence of the nonlinearity is that solutions of the relevant equations cannot be expressed as the sum of more elementary solutions.
- 104 *Genesis* 1:2-3. KJV.
- 105 *Zohar*, 1 Bereshit A, 1:1 (Stanford, CA: Pritzker), vol. 1.
- 106 *Rita* is the root of our words “ritual,” “rite” and “right.”
- 107 *Rig Veda*, IV. 23.9. Reproduced in Abinash Chandra Bose, *Hymns from the Vedas* (Mumbai, India: Asia Publishing House, 1966), 7.
- 108 Dorje Jinpa, “Beauty,” *The Esoteric Quarterly* (Summer 2015), 77-80.
- 109 *Rig Veda*, I. 80.3, pp. 10, 175. Bose explained that “win the waters” may be translated as “win the light.”
- 110 Ernest McClain, *The Myth of Invariance* (York Beach, ME: Nicolas Hays, 1976), 24-28. Later in the same work, McClain identifies a number of other Vedic musical correspondences, including an explanation of the dances of Shiva.
- 111 See the discussion in Capra, *The Web of Life*, 135-136.
- 112 Eugene P. Wigner, (1960). “The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences.” Richard Courant lecture in mathematical sciences, New York University, May 11, 1959. Reproduced in *Communications on Pure and Applied Mathematics* (vol. 13, 1960), 1–14.
- 113 Totalitarianism and sectarianism are regarded as negative characteristics of the Piscean Age. Alice Bailey even attributed the “conquests of science”—and presumably mathematics—to Piscean attitudes. Perhaps these, too, are coming to an end as we move into the Aquarian Age. See her *Education in the New Age* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1954), 3.
- 114 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Dornach, Switzerland, November 1, 1919. Reproduced in *The Incarnation of Ahriman* (trans.: M. Barton), Rudolf Steiner Press, 2006.
- 115 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, November 4, 1919. Reproduced in *The Incarnation of Ahriman*. Emphasis in original.
- 116 Jinpa, “Beauty.”
- 117 Ilya Prigogine, “The Rediscovery of Time,” *The World View of Contemporary Physics* (Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York, 1988). The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that entropy of closed systems can only increase. A glass can shatter, but the shards can never reassemble themselves. Self-organizing systems and biological growth, in which entropy decreases, take place in open systems in which energy is exchanged with the environment.
- 118 Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 165.
- 119 *Ibid.*
- 120 Kasner & Newman, *Mathematics and the Imagination*, 13.
- 121 Capra, *The Web of Life*, 152-153.
- 122 Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology* I, 205. See also 204, 212.
- 123 *Ibid.*, 26, 67, 411. The author is indebted to a reviewer for drawing attention to the relevance of these cycles to the present work.
- 124 Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation*, 17-18.
- 125 *Ibid.*, 134.
- 126 *Kalama Sutta of the Anguttaranikayo*. Quoted in Henry Olcott, *A Buddhist Catechism*, part 3, §195, 196. Online: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/tbc/tbc09.htm>. (Last accessed October 29, 2015).
- 127 The author is indebted to a reviewer for these suggestions.
- 128 For images and videos of the Mandelbrot Set see <http://www.madore.org/~david/math/mandelbrot.html>. (Last accessed Sept. 30, 2015).

A Meditation on the Incarnation of the Word: Perspectives from the Gospel of Thomas in an East-West Synthesis

Irina Kuzminsky

Abstract

This article explores the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas and the concept of the Word both in the Christian tradition and in Eastern sources. The springboard into this meditation is the influential opening of John's Gospel, which identifies Jesus with the Christ and as such, with the Logos or Word. Through this identification with the Word as the creative agency of the Divine, understood archetypally as the Goddess or the feminine aspect of the Godhead, Christ as incarnated through Jesus is seen to bridge the masculine and feminine aspects of God. The Gospel of Thomas is then examined and seen to provide a different perspective on Jesus and his relationship to the Word. If John's gospel focuses on the exclusivity of Jesus as the sole incarnation¹ of the Word through history, Thomas speaks of the potential exclusivity of us all as fragments of the divine essence, a view closer to the esoteric understanding. The message of Jesus in Thomas is as fresh, as radical and as relevant as it ever was. It is a message common to Eastern and Western Wisdom teachings and constitutes another example of how Wisdom may manifest in a myriad different guises in the overlapping traditions of West and East, and yet remain One. The poems are intended to add a meditative dimension to the ideas being explored.

Introduction: The Word

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)²

Thus begins the Gospel of John, which contains some of the most resonant and powerful words ever written on the essence of the creative power of the Divine. Proclaimed in

the small hours of Easter Sunday at the most important service of the Russian Orthodox Church, and at Christmas by most Western Christian denominations, these words carry within them both mystery and certainty, a certainty which culminates each year in the promise of the Resurrection and the mastering of the darkness by the light.

Embedded in the ancient Orthodox liturgical rite, these words and the rite itself, open the door onto a deeper esoteric layer of Christianity, despite the exoteric focus of the Church as an institution. Ironically, and despite John's avowed purpose to proclaim the exclusive nature of Jesus as Christ and only Son of God, his words cannot fail to provide such an opening, raising as they do the question of the identity of the Word and the meaning of Its Incarnation in human form.

For John the Evangelist, Christ is unambiguously the Word or Logos, and as such, embodies the creative agency of God:

He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. (John 1:2-3)

About the Author

Irina Kuzminsky gained her doctorate from Oxford University where she travelled on a Commonwealth Scholarship, subsequently being elected Junior Research Fellow in Humanities at Wolfson College. Irina's work encompasses poetry and writing, music and dance, focusing on women's spirituality and the inner traditions of the world's religions. She has been published in the UK, Australia and the US, and her performances and music have been acclaimed in the UK, Germany, US and Australia.

Furthermore, Jesus is equated by John with Christ and hence with the Word:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us ... Full of grace and truth ... For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:14-17, 18)

In the next verse, John has John the Baptist declare Jesus the only-begotten Son of God, a position reinforced throughout the entire narrative of John 1. John's point is that because Jesus the Christ as the Incarnation of the Word joins within himself both human and divine, he and he alone is able to close the cycle of Creation and Fall. This belief forms the bedrock of Christian theology in which Jesus acts as Redeemer and Savior.

Yet, Jesus himself speaks differently. At the end of John 1 when Jesus finally speaks he refers to himself as the Son of Man (another possible translation being the "child of humanity"). This is actually his favored way of speaking of himself throughout the synoptic gospels also, to which the Gospel of Thomas adds another term, the "Single One," an important concept which will be gone into later in the course of this paper. When questioned about his true identity (for example in Thomas 13) Jesus' response is both more nuanced and more far-reaching than sits comfortably in any dogmatic religious framework. Thus, for the purposes of this discussion, we will set aside Christological considerations and the well debated question whether Jesus, the Son of Man, was in equal measure human and divine, the two natures coexisting in his and only his person in a hypostatic union. The other side of this debate is represented by those who saw Jesus as only divine, or only human, but overshadowed by the divine Master being, the Christ, during the years of his ministry. These questions have been extensively debated from the inception of Christianity as a religion and hammered out at Church councils until the final defeat of the Aryan heresy at the Council of Nicea, which affirmed the doctrine of the hypostatic union as a core tenet of the faith. The powerful Gospel of John could be said to have played a key role in these later theologi-

cal concepts and in this formulation of the hypostasis, as did the conflation of the story of Jesus with that of other divine redeemers and avatars.

I do not presume to venture into this debate now, but I do venture to suggest that perhaps it has little to do with what Jesus himself taught and how he saw both himself and the rest of us. What we will see from the Gospel of Thomas is that if the human and divine natures come together in Jesus, they do so potentially in all of us, created as we are in God's image. Indeed, that was the kernel of Jesus' teaching. He can be seen as the example or the prototype of one who has realized this and who can thus help and guide others towards the same state. The Kingdom is here and now; God is present in our own flawed world, Jesus proclaims again and again. Could we but make the return to our true "Single" state we could return to this Kingdom as sons and daughters of God. The sayings from the Gospel of Thomas claim to offer a roadmap for this return.

At the heart of the return to the pre-Fall state and the seeing of the Kingdom here and now lies, I believe, the mystery of the Word Who is God, just what "It" represents and why "It" has such redemptive powers. This question remains regardless of whether one accepts Jesus as Christ and the Incarnation of the Word, or whether one sees him as a clear and pure vessel for the agency of the Word.

There are two sources which may serve to deepen our understanding both of God as the Word and of the role and teaching of Jesus.

The first of these is the Gospel of Thomas, which is essentially a collection of sayings or logia (from the Greek logia pl., logion sing. – sayings or saying) attributed to Yeshua or, in English, Jesus. Long lost to us, it is rapidly becoming established as a seminal Christian text since its rediscovery as part of the Nag Hammadi Library in 1945. These logia present Jesus' teaching with what reads as a minimum of filtration, or indeed, interpretation.

But there is another tradition which speaks of the creative agency of the Divine as the Word that can help deepen our understanding both of

Jesus' appreciation of the Kingdom as being present here and now, and the role of Christ as the Incarnation of the Word in Christian doctrine. This other tradition also helps us clarify Jesus' awareness of the Kingdom as being in this world. It is to this other tradition founded upon the Indian Vedas that we shall turn next. Given the persistent belief that Thomas himself preached and was martyred in India, this link is perhaps not as far-fetched as it might at first appear.

Vac: Vedic Goddess of the Spoken Word

Prajapatir vai idam asit:

In the beginning was Brahman

Tasya vag dvitiya asit;

With whom was Vac or the Word

Vag vai paramam Brahma.

And the Word is the Supreme Brahman.³

So reads the *Krishna Yajur-Veda, Kathaka Brahmana*, XII:5. All of creation issues forth from Vac, the Word, Who is Brahman. Vac is second in this text because she is within Brahman as potential, just as the Son, the Word is the second member of the Christian Trinity existing in relation to the Father or Source. The resonances between this concept of Vac and the opening of the Gospel of John are too great to be ignored. It is a correspondence which at the very least furnishes another proof of the deep structural and archetypal reality underlying the universe. The central understanding is clear in both accounts, Western and Eastern: as the Word is one with God, Vac and Brahman are One. The Brahman itself, the Unspeakable, goes forth as Vac, the Word, and becomes Speakable.

In the Indian conception, if Brahman (also called Parashiva) is the immoveable, changeless Absolute, the Ultimate beyond all categories, without name or form, Vac—or the Supreme Shakti—is the Dynamic Brahman⁴ who moves and flows, instigating vibration which manifests in names and forms thus creating the universe. The sound of this first vibration, the primordial sound of the origin that gave rise to all matter, was said by the Indian sages to be

the Sanskrit *Om*.⁵ In his synchronization of Christianity and Hinduism, Fr. Bede Griffiths placed the word Om at the centre of a Cross in a circle sitting on a lotus as a symbol for Christ the Word from whom creation comes, emphasizing the identity of the Eastern concept of the Word with Christ.

This ancient idea that matter originates in vibration or the utterance of the Divine Word is being upheld by some of the latest scientific research into the composition and origins of matter. For instance, a number of string theorists claim that the entire physical universe can be reduced to a vibration in space. In essence, according to this theory, every particle (whether electron or quark or even something still undiscovered) is a tiny filament of vibrating energy called a string. Vibration and consciousness are inseparably one, as the *Yoga-Vasishtha* V:78 says.

Therefore, in superstring theory the basic constituent of matter is actually a vibrating string, as particles themselves are understood to be different oscillation patterns of tiny one-dimensional strings rather than point like objects.⁶ Every vibration furthermore will have a frequency, and our senses can pick up these frequencies, for instance, as sound waves, or in the form of electromagnetic radiation to be processed by our brains via our eyes. As the prominent neurosurgeon Dr Eben Alexander writes, “the current neuroscientific model of brain function relies on information processing as being wholly the result of vibration... Neuroscience would say everything you have ever experienced is nothing more than those electrochemical vibrations in the brain—a model of reality, not reality itself.”⁷ In fact, in a manner of speaking, quantum science seems well on the way to proving that physicality as such does not exist, and that information and consciousness are at the basis of all that is. It is logical to speculate that thought itself is therefore a vibration and a subtle form of information, which impacts on the rest of matter, both subtle and gross. The position arrived at is not as different from the Indian concept of *Maya* or the Eastern understanding of the world as a vibration of consciousness.

The Bible parallels the ancient Vedic understanding of vibration or sound creating the worlds in its assertion that it is the Word, the spoken utterance, which is responsible for creation: God *says* let there be light, and there is light. Similarly, the Spirit of God *moves* (the prime originating movement or vibration) upon the waters, and God *speaks* the Divine Word (Vac) of Creation. Vac derives from the Sanskrit “*vach*” meaning “to speak,” and, as utterance, is the mother of all sounds and of speech, besides being the Mother of the Vedas and of all the worlds. To emphasize her identity with Brahman, the Word as God, Vac herself is “the unborn” (*Shatapatha-Brahmana* VII 5-2:21), “the One” *ekam*, “the One Real” *ekam sat*, who extends as far as Brahman extends (*Rig Veda* 10.114-8), and who is seen as the Absolute Reality and Truth itself, the supreme power underlying creation. As the absolute force in the universe, she both possesses and embodies the creative power without which nothing can come into being, or, to paraphrase John, without which “nothing was made that has been made.” As the creative power that informs, manifests and exceeds the cosmos, it is not difficult to see Vac in a later guise as the Shakti, the Supreme Energy, forever one with the pure Consciousness of Shiva; nor, in a different time and place, as the Logos of John, the Word who is God. While remaining transcendent as the Supreme Shakti who is the Brahman (just as the Word is God), not only does the Goddess engender creation, she lives in it, incarnating in all names and forms as the immanent Godhead who can be found in the world. When Jesus speaks in Thomas and the other gospels of the Kingdom that is present in this world, he is developing this theme of the immanence and eternal all-presence of the Divine here and now.

Vac later became conflated in Hindu thought with the goddess of flow, music and speech—Saraswati as the Great Shakti, whose name means “the flowing one,” from *saras* meaning “flow” or “motion.” Saraswati is an independent goddess, but when she is paired with anyone it is usually with Brahma, the creator god of the Hindu trinity, thereby emphasizing her role in Creation. (Vishnu is the preserver in

this philosophy, while Shiva is the destroyer.) Saraswati is also the goddess of Wisdom and learning, and in the hymn of the *Rig Veda* 10.125, Vac, her precursor, speaks of herself in terms strongly evocative of Wisdom in Proverbs—knowledge of Her is the highest knowledge available to Man and Vac makes the true knower of Wisdom powerful and blessed beyond all.⁸ In a further parallel between the two traditions Wisdom conceals herself in the created world, just as the Shakti is veiled by Maya, and “the world knows her not,” neither recognizing nor honouring her, just as the world does not recognize the Word or Logos although the world was made by him, as John 1:10 states:

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

There are of course more direct Western influences on John's Logos, such as Philo of Alexandria (1st century BC-AD), for whom the Logos creates the ideas that mould matter, and who was himself influenced by Plato; and Heraclitus of Ephesus (6th century BC), who saw the Logos as the principle underlying and governing the universe. These influences have been extensively researched, therefore, an in-depth investigation will not be offered here. Nevertheless, Heraclitus and Philo most probably formed the immediate springboard for John's inspired meditation and a brief summary of their principal thoughts is needed in this context. In fact, Heraclitus was acknowledged by St Justin as the first to recognize the Logos, and thus as a Christian before the fact. For Heraclitus the Logos is akin to the mind of God, being the rational structure, universal law or truth which controls and orders the universe. It is also that which links all things; hence all things are unified in it. Human beings are able to link to the Logos or divine law by virtue of the matching logos which is inside every human soul as fire. Similarly, in the Indian tradition, every human being is one with the Brahman through his or her Atman, the indwelling core of divine consciousness in each soul. Ultimately, for Heraclitus, we can understand the order of the world through the Logos, because we contain the logos within us. Thus, the Logos speaks to all, and its wisdom is one. How-

ever, most people do not recognize this, and therefore fail to see the underlying order of the world. The primary element for Heraclitus was the ever-living Fire and in it he also saw the unification of opposites as well as the intelligence that holds everything together. As such, the Logos can be said to manifest through Fire.⁹ These themes, such as the primacy of Fire (both as the Kingdom and as Jesus himself), the unity or transcendence of opposites, and the blindness of most people to what is inside them and links them to all of creation, will all be seen to be prominent in the Gospel of Thomas.

Philo saw the Logos as the domain of ideas and also as the eldest son or first born of God, responsible for creation. For him too, the Logos was a link, linking principle or bond, holding everything together in a manner not dissimilar to Heraclitus, though for Philo, this additionally makes the Logos a mediator or connecting point between God and man, as humans are children of the Logos.¹⁰ Given the transcendence of Philo's God (anthropomorphizing God was an abomination for this Hellenised Jew), the Logos becomes necessary as an intermediary being to make God known to man through this function of mediation or intercession. Initially, Philo identified Wisdom or Sophia and the Logos as different principles, with the Logos secondary to and proceeding from Sophia. Sophia comes into being at the beginning and then Yahweh creates the "Son," and thus the universe, together with her. Accordingly, she is the Mother of the Logos, while Yahweh is the Father. The Son is then seen as being in the Image of both the Mother and the Father. In Thomas, Jesus introduces this idea of the Mother of Creation,

Who is Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas? And how does he see himself? A recurrent theme in the Gospel of Thomas is that of the "Single One." As the "child of humanity" (or Son of Man) as Jesus repeatedly calls himself, he is "Single" and calls on his followers to become the same, "single ones" such as he, if they are to enter the Kingdom. The Single One is one who has transcended and united within him or herself male and female, outer and inner, above and below....

speaking of her as the Mother who gives life (Thomas 101), making Thomas overall concur more closely with this, Philo's earlier position. Later, Philo confused Sophia and the Logos, seeing them as almost, though not quite, identical, and this in turn influenced the writings of the Church Fathers, some of whom saw Sophia as the Logos, and thus Christ as Sophia, with others conflating her with the Holy Spirit.¹¹ In fact, Sophia's standing in Christian theology has always been somewhat nebulous—is she or is she not part of the Trinity through identification either with the Son or the Holy Spirit? Or is she outside that structure entirely, occupying a position akin to God the Mother who is excluded from the traditional male-oriented Trinity, but who sometimes enters through the back door as a Wisdom figure? Philo left the door

open to both interpretations through his own shifting views. What remains clear is that Philo's shifting ideas played a big part in the development of Christology, enabling the identification of Christ, as the Word or Logos, with the feminine principle of Wisdom or Sophia.

John's Logos is most likely derived from these sources. Yet when we consider his depiction of the Logos as incarnated in Jesus, what we see is far closer to the feminine aspect of the Godhead who goes forth, both creating the world and incarnating in it, than it is to the active rational principle of the cosmos of the Greek philosophers, or to Philo's Logos who both is and is not personified.

Vac, Saraswati, God the Word, the Shakti, and their association with Wisdom: these are all threads which draw together, witnessing how people throughout history have attempted to give form and expression to an underlying re-

ality which they sensed. And there is a way in which all of these threads can be seen as coming together in the figure of Jesus. We touch here on the core of the great mystery in which the Christ, through his identification with the Logos or Word, becomes the masculine incarnation of the dynamic creative power of the Absolute which is traditionally seen as feminine, and is thus truly the image of both the Father and the Mother. And Jesus, as the transparent carrier of this Christ energy, becomes imbued with this very same Image, this same melding of archetypal feminine and masculine into one integrated inseparable Whole.¹² In Thomas this is the very same image he calls us likewise to enter into. Jesus' own name in Thomas for this state has best been translated as the "Single One."

The Single One

Jesus said to them,
"When you make the two into one,
and when you make the inner like the outer
and the outer like the inner, and the upper
like the lower,
and when you make male and female into a
single one,
so that the male will not be male, nor the
female be female ...
then you will enter the kingdom." (Thomas
22)¹³

Who is Jesus? Specifically, who is Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas? And how does he see himself? A recurrent theme in the Gospel of Thomas is that of the "Single One." As the "child of humanity" (or Son of Man) as Jesus repeatedly calls himself, he is "Single" and calls on his followers to become the same, "single ones" such as he, if they are to enter the Kingdom.¹⁴ The Single One is one who has transcended and united within him or herself male and female, outer and inner, above and below, as Thomas 22 so eloquently states. This theme of the Single One affirms both the concept of the Word as being in the Image of both Father and Mother and links Jesus to the perfection of Christ as the Word in his transcendence of dualities.

The Single One, according to Jesus, is able to discern the Kingdom in the midst of this world,

seeing past the illusion of separation to the universe permeated—as it is, for those who have eyes to see—by the Energy and Power of God. That One is a "living spirit," who, crucially, has gone beyond the dualities of male/female, transcendent/immanent, body/soul. And Jesus as such a "Single One" invites us to be whole in the way in which he is whole. This path to Wholeness can be construed as the path of complete individuation, the process whereby we become the undivided, awakened and fully human Anthropos. If you are whole or unified, as Jesus says in Thomas 61, you are filled with light. If you are divided and thus in thrall to duality, you are filled with darkness. After all, the real power of the devil, one of his essential tasks, is to divide and scatter. But the "Father" is whole and Single, with no divisions of male and female, upper and lower, outer and inner—and that too is Christ.

However, despite this explicit call in Thomas 22 to transcend the male/female duality, humans, being what they are, caught in the constructs of their time and culture, soon interpreted this state of Singleness to be "male," meaning beyond the works of the female, thus beyond birth and death, and beyond flesh and matter. This worldview clearly underpins Simon Peter's demand in Thomas 114 that Mary "should leave us, for females are not worthy of life." Jesus' response is that the crucial thing is to become a "living spirit" and that every female who makes herself male, as he himself will make Mary male, will enter the Kingdom. To cease being female means in this context to go from the perishable and mortal, subject to death, to the imperishable and immortal, to become the virgin spirit who is able to enter the bridal chamber and attain Oneness again.

"Becoming male" rapidly became a popular trope for the Church Fathers to resort to when they had to deal with women who clearly did not demonstrate the moral and physical inferiority considered to be endemic to the female sex. Thus women who exhibited sanctity, virtue and incredible fortitude and moral perfection were granted the accolade of "becoming male," the male being the model of perfection, or *vir perfectus*.¹⁵

The background to this worldview (and to Thomas 114) was the dualistic philosophy of Aristotle, one of the fundamental building blocks of the ancient Mediterranean world, whether Judaic, Roman or Greek. Amongst a comprehensive list of value-ridden dual oppositions, it pitted male against female, mind against body, human, specifically human reason or logos, against animal, with the second member of each pair firmly embedded in an inferior position. Women, by their very nature, were regarded by Aristotle to be part of the animal kingdom and therefore devoid of human reason which was the province of the man.¹⁶ And since the Divine was considered to be the source of reason, the male was in a privileged relationship to it and superior through his very nature to the woman.

This philosophical premise, based on Aristotle's faulty biological premise that females are "cold" and do not participate actively in generation, continued to be influential in Western thought, for instance, in the scholastic speculations of Thomas Aquinas (1225-74), who argued that the female soul was inferior to the male soul, a position derived directly from the Aristotelian view that woman did not have a rational soul and was both rationally and physically inferior to man. Aristotle was one of the principal influences on the thought of Thomas Aquinas who substantiates many of his arguments by reference to the Greek as "his" philosopher. In fact, Aristotle was being rediscovered and translated into Latin in Western Europe in the course of the twelfth century, a rediscovery which was to have a tremendous impact on subsequent European thought. Albertus Magnus (1193-1280), the master of Thomas Aquinas, was also heavily influenced by Aristotle and forcefully reiterated his definition of woman as inferior and a misbegotten man.¹⁷ While Aquinas does assign the rational soul to both men and women, and while he does not concur with Aristotle's definition of a woman as a deformed or defective male (as she literally is for Aristotle), he does see women as generated accidentally due to interference with the natural process to produce males, and therefore, inferior as a sex. For Aquinas women's bodies are inferior, and the perfec-

tions and imperfections of their bodies are seen by him to affect people's souls. Hence Aquinas concludes that men's souls are generally superior to those of women because men's bodies are stronger and more perfect than those of women.¹⁸ But there are exceptions of course, as is implied in Thomas 114. Grace can overcome inferiority and at least for Aquinas women might be less human than men, but they are still of the same nature, not animal as for Aristotle.

This whole Hellenistic philosophical perspective is clearly articulated in Peter's objection to Mary Magdalene and his assertion that women are not worthy of Life in Thomas 114. But equally clear is the way in which Jesus and the whole Gospel of Thomas with its vision of the Single One subvert this dualistic view, calling explicitly for the integration of female and male in the perfected human being restored to wholeness, or Anthropos. In fact, the discrepancy and direct contradiction are so marked, that many scholars, including Stevan Davies, have made a strong case for viewing logion 114 as a later addition to Thomas, stemming from a time when the movement to exclude women from the inner circles of the church and from positions of authority was gathering increasing momentum. For some of the Early Church Fathers themselves after all, including Augustine, Diodorus and John Chrysostom, woman was not made in the Image of God, or only grudgingly so, despite the clear position of Gen 1:26-27. The sublime logion 113, however, makes an inspired and logical ending to the collection of sayings, calling out to us yet again to see what is there:

The disciples asked him: "When will the kingdom come?" Yeshua answered: It will not come by watching for it. No one will be saying, Look, here it is! Or, Look, there it is! The Kingdom of the Father is spread out over the whole earth, and people do not see it. (Thomas 113)¹⁹

There is also a nice symmetry and mirroring effect here with logion 3 at the beginning which affirms:

Jesus said: If your leaders say to you, "Look! The Kingdom is in the sky!" then

the birds will be there before you are. If they say that the Kingdom is in the sea, then the fish will be there before you are. Rather, the Kingdom is within you and it is outside of you. (Thomas 3)

By contrast, logion 114 reads as if it were tacked on to the end.

The Kingdom of the Father and a Return to pre-Fall Consciousness

Blessed are the single ones and the chosen ones, for you will find the Kingdom. Because you emerged from it you will return to it. (Thomas 49)

The Gospel of Thomas opens with the bold assertion that the one who understands the hidden sayings of Jesus will not taste death (Thomas 1), because that one will be beyond both birth and death and the world in which birth and death occur. That one will inhabit the Kingdom of the Father.

What underlies these two worlds which appear superimposed on each other—one subject to birth and death, the other a perfect Creation? In Biblical terms, the world of birth and death is the world of the Fall. In some dualistic or Manichaean Gnostic literature, it is called the world of the female as these Gnostics took their cue both from the story of Eve’s seduction by the serpent and the prevailing Graeco-Judaic philosophy. This in turn echoes a prominent strand in Hindu and Buddhist thought which views the world as Maya or an illusion to be seen through and transcended. Maya is literally that which issues forth or arises (“ya”) from the source or cause, “Ma,” the universal mother, and is thus usually perceived as fe-male. (Maya is usually understood as an illusion in the sense of the world not being what it appears to be, rather than in the sense of not existing.) In Thomas too there is a call to transcend this world of birth and death. Those “not born from a woman,” Thomas 15 states, belong to the Kingdom. Likewise, restating the same idea, those who pre-exist the fallen world are blessed (Thomas 19 – “Blessed is one who existed before coming

into being”), because they are the Anthropos, the original human who has not fallen away from being whole and Single and succumbed to dualism.

As for the world of the Kingdom inhabited by the Anthropos, the human being created in God’s image, it seems to stem directly from the first creation story of Genesis. All too frequently passed over in discussions of the Creation and Fall is the fact that Genesis contains two creation stories. The opening one takes place during the first seven days of Creation, beginning with the uncreated light and ending with the seventh day on which God proclaims His creation to be good and rests. Man too is part of this first creation, appearing on the sixth day:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ... (Gen 1:26)

And so God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them. (Gen 1:27)

Because this original human being is made in the image and likeness of God, he/she partakes of both the human and the divine—and, importantly, predates Adam and the Fall. This Anthropos or Single One, the “child of humanity” or “Son of Man,” is also within us (Mary 8),²⁰ similar to the Atman or the matching logos of Heraclitus found inside every soul. This is our hidden treasure, linking us to the first Creation which is the Kingdom of the Father.

Know yourself, Jesus calls us as did the oracle at Delphi, know the face you had before we all had faces, know yourself as the Single One, and nothing will be hidden from you, precisely because the Anthropos, the original human, is created in the image of God and partakes of the divine.²¹

Jesus said: One who knows everything else but who does not know himself knows nothing. (Thomas 67)

Self-knowledge returns to us the original state of Singleness and the virtually unlimited powers of the original human being through the resolution of dualism. Jesus implies as much when he tells us in Thomas 106 that you be-

come fully human when you make the two into one, or in Thomas 48 when he says that if two can make peace or come into harmony within one house they will be able to perform miracles, “move mountains.” They have returned to the state of being Single, the state of the original human being created in the Image of God, and as such, nothing is beyond them. Self-knowledge remains the portal of entrance to this state, as Thomas 3 asserts:

When you understand yourselves you will be understood. And you will realize that you are Sons of the living Father. If you do not know yourselves, then you exist in poverty and you are that poverty. (Thomas 3)

Babies and little children are free to enter the Kingdom, as Jesus repeatedly says, because they are still “Single,” not ruled by any dualist ideas or the separation and divisions these imply (outer versus inner, upper versus lower, male versus female). And when Jesus speaks of infants and babes, particularly those who are seven days old, as being preternaturally wise and perfect (“The old man will not hesitate to ask a seven-day-old baby about the place of life and he will live” Thomas 4, “These infants taking milk are like those who enter the Kingdom” Thomas 22), the reference is most likely to the first seven days of Creation before the Fall. These infants would therefore be both young and ancient beyond measure.²² To become like them is therefore to become Single and whole, outside and beyond any dualities. Besides, as Jean-Yves Leloup points out, the Jewish rite of circumcision takes place on the eighth day, so a seven day old child is not officially discriminated by membership of a gender, nation or religion.²³

The mystery of Christ incarnated, both fully human and fully divine, shows us glimpses of the face these infants share, the face we had when we were a part of the original light of the first Creation. Thomas 15 speaks of this face before the face—not born of woman and not a child of the Fall but of the Source itself, and by implication, fully sharing in the attributes of the Father: “When you see someone not born from a woman, prostrate yourselves and worship him; he is your Father.” Gnosis in Thomas

(and in the Gospels of Philip and Mary) means a return to that being in the light when we could both know and be fully known, see and be fully seen, and thus inhabit the Kingdom.

To reiterate, this Kingdom of the Father can be equated with the first seven days of Creation which culminated in the creation of Man, male and female, in God’s image. And this Kingdom has not disappeared from the face of the earth, as Jesus says again and again; it has simply become difficult to see. It permeates this fallen world, even if its presence is invisible to most. They are the ones who have eyes but do not see. As an interesting aside, in *The Ringing Cedars Series* by Vladimir Megré, the word *chelovek* or “man” in Russian is given a capital M to reflect its gender-neutral status, its associations with the divine and the manifest eternal Mind. Thus, Man’s potential, in Megré’s fascinating work, and the paradise on earth which we can choose to inhabit once more, read like a contemporary version of these same ideas.²⁴ Anastasia, a mystical figure in the series who reveals her philosophy about Man’s relationship to Nature, the Universe and God, attempts to provide a roadmap for a return to the Kingdom which is even now spread out upon the earth could we but see it, while her vision of the high destiny of Man derives from the same blueprint as the Anthropos or Jesus’ Single One. Significantly her name, Anastasia, means “resurrection.”

The realization which the Gospel of Thomas and Anastasia and other teachers and mystics lead us toward, is that to live in the Kingdom of God is essentially to be alive to the perception of the Word (Vac or Shakti) throughout creation—or see what is truly before us with the eyes of the pre-Fall state or the child.²⁵ In Thomas 113 Jesus speaks of the Kingdom as not being here or there, not having any time or space coordinates, for it permeates all of existence as the Word that is there in the very cracks of matter. So there can be and is no simple condemnation of the fallen world in Thomas, nor of matter, or of the body, because the Kingdom is also to be found there, even though its presence is invisible to most, concealed as it is within the world sidewise. But to see clearly and to be in the Kingdom is to re-

turn to the original Oneness of the Single One—the two becoming one which they ever were and ever are, opposites uniting, and the two polarities of masculine and feminine reintegrating into Wholeness—the Shakti melding with Shiva, the Shekhinah reunited with Yahweh²⁶—the Word inseparable from God because the Word is God.

Sidewise

The dispersal of Tiamat
The sacrifice of Sati
The fall of Sophia
Sidewise
Between the cracks
Turned sidewise
Inside the light
She is concealed
Within the world She has created

Who now will churn the ocean?
Who now will call her forth
To come together with the One She loves?

(Irina Kuzminsky)

The belief is that when the exiled Shekhinah is reunited with Yahweh heaven on earth will be reinstated. Esoterically this can be seen as the enactment of the Sacred Marriage which restores balance, harmony and peace to the earth—the return of the Kingdom.

The Spirit of Wisdom

Jesus said: He who drinks from my mouth will become like I am, and I will become he. And the hidden things will be revealed to him. (Thomas 108)

In a broader sense, the Gospel of Thomas is about Jesus' words as Wisdom teachings, or Jesus as "Word" in a literal sense. His story and his personality (in contrast to personhood) are ultimately not relevant here to his central message. But the words he speaks can both guide and awaken us, and show us how to return to the Kingdom of God which is our inheritance. These ideas are similar to passages from the synoptic gospels wherein Jesus takes on the attributes of Wisdom in sayings such as Thomas 28, 108, 90, 92, 93, and 94, are similar to passages from the synoptic gospels wherein Jesus takes on the attributes of Wisdom. In

fact, Jesus' relation to Wisdom in Thomas echoes some of the ambiguity of Philo's confusion of the Logos and Sophia, as Jesus appears to be both the son of Wisdom (she is the true mother who gives life) and, as her image, is imbued with her attributes and able to speak as her.

Thus in Thomas 108 Jesus says that whosoever drinks from his mouth, drinks his wisdom, his words, and so becomes, like him, a child of the Living One, the Father. This logion makes deeper sense of what are, for some, troubling words in the Gospel of Philip regarding Mary Magdalene (and for others quite the opposite): that the Savior loved her more than the others and that he kissed her often on the mouth.

The companion of the Son is Miriam of Magdala.

The teacher loved her more than all the disciples;
he often kissed her on the mouth. (Philip 55)²⁷

Elsewhere Philip clarifies:

The realized human is fertilized by a kiss,
and is born through a kiss. (Philip 31)

What is clear for those who have eyes to see is that these passages refer to a sacred kiss or the sacred embrace of Jesus and Mary.²⁸ Jesus kisses Mary Magdalene on the mouth so that she may drink his Wisdom, his Word, and become like him the spirit of wisdom, a "living spirit" who will be instructed by Wisdom herself to see and know. Sharing the same breath and spirit with Jesus through the kiss, Mary Magdalene becomes, accordingly, "the woman who knew the All," as the *Dialogue of the Saviour* testifies: "This word she spoke as a woman who knew the All."²⁹

Seeing

People cannot see anything that really is without becoming like it. (Philip 44)

Jesus said: Recognize what is right in front of you, and that which is hidden from you will be revealed to you. (Thomas 5)

Harold Bloom writes, "Seeing what is before you is the whole art of vision for

Thomas's Jesus."³⁰ "Seeing what is" is the crux of the teaching—see what is in front of you and you will know everything, Jesus says, and he seeks to awaken that seeing through violent paradox, through parable, through Zen like koans that silence the mind with their convolutions of thought. Jesus seeks to shock, to awaken, to provoke, for that is the way in which the mind can be silenced, and the veils of ignorance or Maya rent through to allow a glimpse of Wisdom with her direct knowing and direct vision. Thus, in Thomas 2 and 3, we hear that to find the sought kingdom is deeply disquieting, not at all what you might expect, while Thomas 56 affirms that the world and worldliness are a carcass, dead and illusory—and yet it is this same world in which the Kingdom is found. The Fall makes the first Creation difficult to see, the Gospel of Thomas tells us, but it is still there. In the Tantric tradition too, Samsara is also Nirvana, as the world is also the Kingdom, though to truly see this we must undergo the fire of egoic annihilation. In acknowledgement of this, the Gospel of Thomas continually speaks of the "elect," with many called but few chosen, because all too few are willing to walk the path of self-realization or follow Jesus into the Fire.

Seeing the world as the Kingdom, Jesus transcends both dualism and the world abhorrence which afflicts those who realize that the world is indeed veiled by illusion. Seeing for them becomes synonymous with rejection and even revulsion, but for Jesus, seeing through is precisely that—seeing through to the truth, to the reality of the Kingdom which is there in the midst of this very same world. "Split a piece of wood" or "lift up a stone," as Jesus says, "and I am there" (Thomas 77). Again, we return to the Word as God in the world; Vac, Shakti, or the Word as the creative principle of God through whom the world is made, waiting to be discovered and seen.

In Hindu thought, the multiple roles that Shakti encompasses hint at the mystery of God in the world and this mystery's final resolution. For Shakti can appear as the creative principle through which the world is made; the veil of illusion drawn across the world; the play or *lila* of the Divine; the energy of Wisdom which

informs the world and leads us toward the realization of truth; and the force which cuts through evil and destroys illusion in the guise of the demon-slaying goddesses Durga or Kali in order to bring liberation to both gods and humans. The definitive Tantric realization is to see the Ultimate Reality in the midst of the world, not just apart from it. Once one has come to see this all-presence—not only outside nor only inside but both—one comes to inhabit what Jesus terms the Kingdom of God.

The "True Mother of All"

For my mother made me to die,
but my true mother gave me Life. (Thomas 101)³¹

In Gnostic thought Sophia can play multiple roles, beginning with her identification with the Wisdom of God, conflated in some Eastern Orthodox thought with Christ as Wisdom and as Word. However, the name of Sophia can also denote the fallen energy who created the Demiurge, who in turn created the world of the Fall and of death. Therefore, in this guise, she is responsible for this fallen creation, a world in which she herself is enmeshed and awaiting liberation. Sophia is likewise the Divine Mother, the "true mother" who imparts breath or spirit to her creation and is concealed within it, yet reaching out to those who seek and have eyes to see, to lead them into Life. As such, she is that aspect of God responsible for Creation, usually, though not exclusively, seen as the Divine Feminine. She has been called Shakti, Vac, Sophia, Devi, to say nothing of Isis, who is also praised as the Divine Word bringing illumination, or Kwan Yin, the "Divine Voice" who, according to Helena Blavatsky, calls forth the Universe.³² Her names are many yet all point to the One Supreme Energy of the creative Word.

In this manner, the Western Sophianic tradition and Gnosticism contain an interesting correlation to the image of the two mothers of Ilogion 101, one who gives death, the other who gives life, in the image of the two Sophias, one fallen, one God the Word. This thematic is present in texts such as the *Dialogue of the Saviour*, with its call by the "Lord" to "destroy the works of womanhood (or of the female)" and

the ensuing dialogue (see Dial. Sav. 144:12-23). The idea here, consistent within itself, is that if women cease to give birth there will be no more death, because “Whatever is born of woman dies” (Dial. Sav. 140)—hence Matthew’s interpretation of the call to obliterate the “works of womanhood” as an understanding that women should no longer give birth (Dial. Sav. 144). There are echoes of this position in the already discussed notorious Thomas 114 with Simon Peter’s call for Mary to leave because she is female. There Simon Peter not unnaturally confuses the “works of womanhood” (meaning the cycle of birth and death) with women themselves as human beings, something which is clearly not the case in the *Dialogue of the Saviour* where Mary is granted preeminent status among the disciples.

In a final twist of paradox regarding the two mothers, the true mother who gives life is often reviled by the world as the Whore. Thomas 105 reads, “One who knows father and mother will be called the son of a whore” and this is reminiscent of the Nag Hammadi text, *Thunder Perfect Mind*,³³ in which this true “mother of all,” the Divine Feminine, is both holy and scorned. She is hidden within Creation, hidden in plain sight as it were, but debased by the world She has created and which does not know Her.

I am the honoured one and the scorned one
I am She who engulfs and She who releases
I am the initiator of the breath
My eyelid closes and a cycle ends
And then begins when once again it opens
I dance through space
And weave strands strings and superstrings
of light
Which takes on shapes and patterns in my
weaving
Which I see and am seen through by My
eyes
I am pure Being and Non-Being
And Beyond
I am the death of all your hopes and their
rebirth
I am quite simply
What I AM
And you may name me Mother.

(From *Sophia Songs*, Irina Kuzminsky)

Yet, knowledge of Her, just like knowledge of Vac in the Rig Veda, remains the highest knowledge, and, when attained, brings us to the Tantric realization that Samsara is Nirvana: not immanence or transcendence, but both together. The Kingdom is here.

The Father’s kingdom is spread out upon the earth, And people do not see it. (Thomas 113)

It is interesting to speculate that Mary Magdalene’s later reputation as a prostitute or whore might have a deeper archetypal layer. Having become a child of the Light, a living spirit alongside Jesus, having drunk Wisdom from his lips, she enters the bridal chamber as a Single One to become one with the light in a Sacred Marriage. And her fate as “the woman who knew the All,” and who carries some of the archetype of the Divine Feminine, has also been to be debased and labelled a Whore. Thus, she shares in the paradox of the sacred debased by the fallen world, a world which is no longer in relation with or turned toward God.

Clothes and Maya

To know the grace of true communion with him,
One must be clothed in clear light. (Philip 106)

To attain true communion, or the Sacred Marriage with the Christ, and enter the bridal chamber, becoming one with the light, we must first shed our own garments, the illusions we cling to, and become ourselves clothed in light. This idea of shedding the garments of illusion, or Maya, in order to enter enlightenment and thus the Kingdom, constitutes a further parallel between the Eastern and Western traditions, and is clearly articulated in the Gospel of Thomas. In fact, clothing or being clothed in illusion is something the Gospel of Thomas takes quite literally. First and foremost, Jesus asserts that we human beings are greater than the garments we wear and the food we eat—we should not focus on these, for they shall be provided for us, as shall all outer contingencies of life, by a benevolent and con-

scious universe. (Thomas 36, Matthew 6:28-33, Luke 12:22-31). And if we put the quest for the Kingdom and for Wisdom above all else, we shall be choosing the one thing that is most important in life, the pearl of great price, as parable after parable makes clear. Hence Jesus' rebuke of Martha and endorsement of Mary who has chosen "the better part" in listening to the Word:

Mary has chosen the better part,
and it shall not be taken from her. (Luke 10:42)

But, in addition, and more importantly, clothes become synonymous in Thomas with our fallen mortal bodies themselves. Nakedness and removing clothes is symbolic of dissolving the illusion of separation from the light and returning to the world before the Fall and before the newly discovered shame of Adam and Eve—the time of the Beginning which is also the End.

His disciples asked him: When will you appear to us? When will we see you? Jesus replied: When you strip naked without shame and trample your clothing underfoot just as little children do, then you will look at the son of the living one without being afraid. (Thomas 37)

Therefore, when you are baptized into Christ, in the words of the Church, you put on Christ as a garment, removing your own now superfluous one. This garment is constituted of light, and what the Anthropos does in returning to the Father and claiming his birthright, is to put on this transfigured body of light, which is incorruptible and not subject to birth or death. This body has been called by many names—the "diamond body," the "resurrected body," the "light body," but essentially it is a body transfigured by a marriage of matter and spirit, which come together to create a new immortal substance. The Gospel of Philip says of this body:

The Teacher rose beyond death ...
His body was whole,
He had a body, but it was the true body;
ours is transient,
an image of our true body. (Philip 72)

However, people who have attained this realization are no longer "at home in the world" which clings to its illusory divisions and poverty of consciousness. They are no longer of it, and the world of the Fall neither "knows" them nor loves them: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world ... therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19) So they take off what the world has attached to them, the clothes of the flesh, the covering of Maya, and are free to leave and reclaim their heritage and their freedom:

Mary asked Jesus: Who are your disciples like? He replied: They are like little children in a field that does not belong to them. When the field's owners come they will say: "Give our field back." They will strip naked in the owners' presence and give it back, returning their field to them. (Thomas 21)

Radical Freedom and Radical Responsibility

Anyone who doesn't hate his father and his mother as I do cannot be a disciple of mine. And anyone who doesn't love his father and mother as I do cannot be a disciple of mine. (Thomas 101)

The heritage and freedom that Jesus offers are what John terms "sonship," the gift to become "sons of God" who are "born of God" (John 1:12-13). As the Logos or Word, Jesus as perceived by John, is the Son forever turned towards the Father or Source. For Thomas, he is One through whose example we can resume our own "sonship," becoming children of God, our light turned towards and merging with the Light from which we came. As "sons," as the Gnostic gospels affirm, we become clothed in incorruptible bodies of light, and whether this is called the resurrected body or the diamond body is largely a matter of vocabulary and tradition. But this "sonship" is only achieved by following a path of radical freedom from all attachments.

It is in this context of radical freedom that we can best understand the structure of the Gospel of Thomas. Thomas is free from story, any

story or narrative of the life of Jesus, implying that, in this context, he too is free from parentage and descent from any but his “real parents.” The synoptic gospels do their best to provide genealogies and narrative but Jesus himself speaks differently. When told that his mother and his brothers are searching for him, he asks rhetorically—who are my mother, my brothers or my sisters? Those who hear the word of God and act upon it are my mother, my brother, my sister. These words from the synoptic gospels appear harsh (see Luke 8:20, Matthew 12:48, Mark 3:31-35), but the Gospel of Thomas contains words which are even harsher. In Thomas 101, Jesus says, in effect, my mother gave birth to me into death or falsehood,³⁴ but my true mother has given me life. This distinction between being “born of woman” and being born in the Image of God is a recurrent theme in Thomas. Both Thomas 55 and Thomas 101 have Jesus ordering his followers to hate their fathers and their mothers, which Thomas 101 then supplements by Jesus’ command to love “his father and mother as I do” in order to be his disciples, pointing again to the distinction between one’s “true” and one’s “false” parents. Jesus is calling for freedom from even the closest family ties which must be shed along with one’s garments, for in shedding its garments the ego (to use our language) must shed any attachments, any protective mechanisms and any history. Only when you can see yourself naked, as Thomas 37 says, and can face what you are in your heart without being ashamed will you be a “son,” the “child of the Living One,” returning to the state of Adam and Eve before the Fall and before they knew shame, and beyond that, to the first Creation.

But to be true children of the light with all the radical freedom that grants us also demands radical responsibility. Responsibility is inseparable from freedom. To attain freedom and rebirth into the Image of God one must pass through the fire, or we might say, endure an arduous process of self-knowledge and individuation. Only then will we be able to bring forth the light which is within us. And it is the light which comes from a person of light, as

Jesus states, which allows the Kingdom to become visible.

There is light within a man of light, and he lights up all of the world. If he is not alight there is darkness. (Thomas 24)

Light is within a person of light. But if the responsibility to shine that light inside you is not taken you are responsible for the darkness of the world. This statement from Thomas 24 is a more extreme version of the synoptic gospels’ injunction not to hide your light under a bushel. You cannot choose invisibility; you cannot choose to hide what you have been given, or not only will what you have been taken away from you—the implicit threat of the parable of the talents—but *you* will be the cause of the darkness in the world.

Yet, this is a path requiring wisdom and strength to survive in what is often a hostile world, hence the often repeated injunction to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves (see Thomas 39, 32). It is also a path that requires fortitude and commitment in the face of difficulty. The Gospel of Thomas, therefore, often reads like a document for the elect, a spiritual elite even. Jesus says:

... I will choose one of you out of a thousand and two of you out of ten thousand. They will stand up and they will be one alone. (Thomas 23)

There are many standing by the door, but only the single will enter the bridal suite. (Thomas 75)

“Many are called but few are chosen” is the message implicit in all of the gospels. But that is because, in the end, very few are willing to walk the path back to the Beginning with all the discipline, responsibility and hardships this entails, even though that is the only choice we have, as the Gospel of Thomas makes clear, if we are truly to be living and not dead, becoming once again children of the Living One.

Did I ask God
To throw me on the anvil
And hammer me repeatedly
Upon the block
And forge me

Thrusting me
Seven times seventy
Into the fire?

(Irina Kuzminsky)

Which God?

But who is this God who we are called to be born of and become “sons” of in the manner of Christ, this God whom Jesus names Father? The God who is one with the Word, or in a different terminology, the Brahman who is one with Vac, or Parashiva who is one with Parashakti? Here we sense that we are touching the root of the mystery which Jesus is pointing towards and which he embodies. That mystery which is so great and so disruptive that when Thomas (in Thomas 13), gives his reply to Jesus’ question of “who am I,” and clearly comes close to the truth, both his reply and Jesus’ subsequent revelation are too shocking and dangerous to disclose. There is a clue to the substance of this revelation in the fate of the Persian Sufi, mystic and poet, Al-Hallaj (858-922), who was martyred and killed for his proclamation *Ana al-haqq*—“I am the Truth, i.e. God!”³⁵

I saw my Lord with the eye of the heart.
I said:
Who art thou?
He answered:
Thou.

(Al-Hallaj)

From the Western tradition, the great mystic Meister Eckhart writes of the same truth:

“God’s being is my being and God’s primordial being is my primordial being. Wherever I am, there is God.” “The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me.”³⁶

But which God is this? Scarcely the masculine deity pictured sitting on a cloud, or the tribal God of sacrifice and power who calls for his enemies to be exterminated. Even in the early years of Christianity, as the contemporary Orthodox theologian Jean-Yves Leloup points out, the great Christian theologians warned against anthropomorphizing words such as Father and Son.³⁷ God is Father, rather, as

Source and Ground, the great Unknown, the Unknowable Abyss intimated in the Book of Job. This God is both the Abyss and yet intimate enough for Jesus to call him Abba.

This God of Jesus is in some ways closest to the Shakta conception of Kali as primary Goddess and Ground of Being, so evocatively given voice to by the 18th century Bengali poet seer, Ramprasad.³⁸ In his songs to Kali, Ramprasad captures much of the paradox, the mystery, the fierceness and the gentleness of the Divine, along with its intimacy and sheer Unknowability in one. Beyond the ken of human beings, beyond speech and the knowable, Kali, to paraphrase John Woodroffe, is the “Void (Shunya) of all which we know,” and “at the same time the All (Purna) which is Light and Peace,”³⁹ encompassing, as does the God of Job, both destruction and grace.

In Tantric Shakta traditions Kali appears as the formless Consciousness and the Primal Shakti, the source of the original movement or vibration from which the world is manifested. To recover her blissful fullness is to go beyond the dualism of the created world—to the state where above is as below, the inner as the outer, and male and female are one, the Single One, as logion 22 so beautifully states.

Names of G-d

Some call You the Unknowable
Some speak of You as Dark
While others dance in drunkenness
Seek You in grapes, in pressing and in Wine
Still others sense your mysteries in the Way
Or speak of Wisdom and unfathomable Space
The One from Whom all Buddhas know their birth
While prophets speak of the supreme I AM
And mystics probe into Your darkness
But sweetest to my heart
Most piercing is Your Name of Kali
Your Naked IS-ness scarcely covered by this Name
– Thus do I simply call You
– Mother.

(Irina Kuzminsky)

In a further parallel, Kali is seen to bring purifying fire and destruction to the world, yet this Fire itself proves to be grace. Jesus in Thomas 10 speaks as this aspect of the Divine, the Unknowable or Black mystery of God that ignites the world and sets fire to it. "I have thrown fire on the world. Look! I watch it until it blazes." (Thomas 10)⁴⁰

In Thomas 16, as in the synoptic gospels, Jesus speaks of bringing not peace but a sword, and a heightened separation between people, between those who see and those who do not see. It is as though the teachings of Jesus crystallize human beings into the heart essence of what they are, and the choices they make—good or evil, knowledge or ignorance, light or darkness, seeing or blindness, fullness (*pleroma*) or emptiness (*kenoma*)—become that much more stark. The very presence of Jesus in the world as one who is so much of the light that he becomes the uncreated light (as aptly said by Harold Bloom)⁴¹ polarizes people into that choice. You cannot serve two masters, as Jesus says. You must, in the end, choose.

In the *Dialogue of the Saviour* Mary speaks of Jesus in terms similar to those in which he speaks of himself:

Mary said,
"Master, you are awesome and marvellous,
And like a devouring fire
to those who do not know you." (*Dialogue of the Saviour* 140-141)

And Thomas 82 implies not only that Jesus is Fire, but that the Kingdom itself is Fire, therefore fire is grace itself.

Whoever is near to me is near the fire.
Whoever is far from me is far from the Kingdom. (Thomas 82)

Can this not also be the fire of the burning bush which is bathed in the flames of the presence of God yet is not consumed by them? And, continuing on from this analogy, would it not be possible to relate the Fire of which Jesus speaks to the fire of the Kundalini Shakti as she rises to unite at the crown chakra with Shiva, bringing in her ascent the experience of light and enlightenment, which is none other than a revelation of the Kingdom? There are

many well-documented accounts of the experience of Kundalini as a burning sensation, as fire which burns away all our dross and all that is extraneous to our true essence until our body itself becomes the burning bush. The fundamental experiences of awakening to our true nature are surely common to all human beings, whatever images or words we may clothe such experiences in.

Be Passersby

Be passersby. (Thomas 42)

The children of the pre-existent light, the children of the Living One, are called to be passersby in this poverty-stricken world, which does not know them and which can no longer hold them. Jesus speaks of this mode of being in the synoptic gospels when teaching his followers how to live in a world which is foreign to them, saying, "But you are not of this world as I am not of this world." (John 15:10) To be a passerby is to be a wanderer, never quite at home, and not to allow the illusions of the world to adhere to you, walking in the gaps as it were, without attachment. Not surprisingly, there are echoes of the Hindu and Buddhist teachings here on non-attachment—not being drawn in by the good or the bad experiences of life, the pleasurable or the painful, criticism or praise, but to keep walking towards the goal of light, of enlightenment. Being passersby allows us to remain unattached to the temporal and to enter the radical freedom of being a child of the light. We are, after all, only custodians, not owners of anything here, and to be a passerby is to acknowledge that and live it in full consciousness, knowing that all will pass. The only constant in this world, as Thomas 63 proclaims, is change and the unknowable. There is nothing here that we can control, no security to be had in an illusory changing world. So a passerby ultimately lives by having trust in the universe. He or she finds their security in the Unknowable and the Unknown.

The Gospel of Thomas is above all a living Word transmitted by the Living Word, showing us how to regain the Kingdom, the paradisiacal world which Anastasia sees as returning once again to the earth. The transfiguration

that is asked of us to make this possible is an ability to stay burning in the divine light, the Fire, yet, like the burning bush, not be consumed by it. In Thomas 82 Jesus implicitly equated both himself and the Kingdom with Fire. This burning in divine light impels him to take action—to become the Light and to lead others to it. In the same way, this divine burning calls us to action. The Kingdom, Jesus shows us again and again, is in the doing and the being.

Fuel for the Fire

My Kali bid me set the world on fire
 This sacred passion was the path for me
 But did She think to tell me as I lit my pyre
 That I myself was fuel and must ignite like
 tinder and catch fire?
 For only burning embers set dry seasoned
 wood on fire
 And only that which has consumed itself in
 fire
 Has then the heat and light to set the world
 on fire.

(Irina Kuzminsky)

Jesus says of the Path: “When you give rise to that which is within you, what you have will save you.” But “If you do not give rise to it, what you do not have will destroy you.” (Thomas 70) This journey of self-knowledge, seeing and transformation is by no means easy. But is there really a choice? The living do not die, and the dead do not live, as Thomas 11 proclaims. And yet, though many are called so few are chosen. But it is we ourselves who do the choosing. We are the ones who may elect to follow this path and regain the Kingdom and our inheritance as children of the Living One.

Therefore, “Whoever finds the correct interpretation of these sayings will never die.” (Thomas 1)

Be passersby.

Be filled with light and resurrect in this life.⁴²

For the “child of humanity is within you” as Mary says. (Mary 8)

And shine your light lest we should all be plunged into the darkness.

Conclusion

“In the Beginning: the Word.”

The opening of John’s gospel began this meditation and it is fitting to return to it now.⁴³ Actually in the Greek from which the Church Slavonic translation of the Russian Orthodox Church is derived, the wording is subtly different.

En arche en o logos

In the Beginning was (is) the Word

Kai o logos en pros ton Theon

The Word (Logos) is toward God

Kai Theos en o logos.

And God is the Word.⁴⁴

From the above we can see that the Church Slavonic captures the directional quality of “pros” which implies movement toward. The Word is turned toward God. Hence at the heart of all existence and life, even of the existence of God, is relation. The Word is in the Beginning, and it is turned toward God. The feminine is traditionally linked most closely to love and relation, as well as to creation (through birth), and this is no less true of the Divine in its Feminine aspect. The goddesses who represent aspects of the Great Feminine or Supreme Shakti herself often either have love and yearning for union as their central motivation, or are in a state of total union or identification with the Source. Thus Vac is Brahman; Kali, in the Tantric understanding is the Universal Mother and the formless Consciousness at the Source of all; Parashakti is one with Parashiva, as the Word is one with God.

Any profound encounter with the Gospel of Thomas shows us a way to regain that relation to God. And what is the Kingdom other than the whole of Creation perpetually turned toward and existing in relationship with God.

The living Word of the Gospel of Thomas, as spoken by the Word made flesh and existing among us through the Incarnation of Christ, points us towards the very secret of life and of who we were made to be. That is the true treasure of the Gospel of Thomas. Yet, Thomas need not be seen as a replacement for other gospels, but rather, as complementary to them,

presenting us with additional perspectives on Jesus' teaching. Thomas demonstrates how all True revelations meet in their attempts to express the Inexpressible and show a path for attaining the realization they point towards. In this, the Gospel of Thomas is no different to other revelatory texts. Its particular merit is perhaps its universality. Jesus' message is presented here in the form of Wisdom sayings, a form which would be more familiar and accessible to those who come to the teachings from other traditions, including Eastern ones. The insights in Thomas open up vistas of correspondences with these other traditions and their understanding of the creative Word, self-realization, and the spiritual path. As a radical and yet universal message, the Gospel of Thomas speaks also to modern-day Western spiritual seekers who are no longer content with unquestioning acceptance of traditional theological teachings, but yearn for their own experience of God or the Divine. For women in particular, Thomas' transcendence of dualism and hierarchy discloses the way to reclaiming Jesus' truly radical and liberating message and serves as an invitation to see him embodying archetypal feminine and masculine attributes as Christ, the incarnation of the Word, as embodying both archetypal feminine and masculine attributes.

¹ Incarnation is used here both in its sense as the Incarnation of Christ, the Word, in Jesus, and also, more generally, as "assuming flesh" in the world of matter.

² Unless otherwise stated quotations from the New Testament are from the King James Bible.

³ Like many, my first introduction to this text was through Sir John Woodroffe (aka Arthur Avalon) in *The Garland of Letters* (Leeds, UK: Celephaïs Press, 2008), 4. Slightly varied translations are possible such as: "Prajapathi (who is Brahman) is truly abiding (or eternal); And Vac his companion is truly abiding (eternal); So Vac is the Supreme Brahman."

⁴ A term from Woodroffe in *The Garland of Letters*, p.10. "It is this rigid, unwasting, enduring Ether which is Vajra ... the static manifestation of the static Brahman, in which the Dynamic Brahman as Sarasvati flows or

moves. The former is Shunya, the void of space, in which all movement takes place."

⁵ Interestingly, and significantly, Dr. Eben Alexander M.D. came to the same experiential conclusion during his NDE, naming the Source at the heart of all as the Om vibration. See Eben Alexander, M.D., *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012), and *The Map of Heaven* (Sydney: Macmillan, 2014).

⁶ For definitions of string theory, see Brian Greene, *The Fabric of the Cosmos* (London: Penguin, 2004), 345; Heinrich Päs, *The Perfect Wave* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014).

⁷ Alexander, *The Map of Heaven*, 140-141.

⁸ For an excellent introduction to Vac (Vak), see John Woodroffe, *The Garland of Letters*. His seminal research on the ancient texts and the Tantric tradition in particular cannot be bypassed and remains the foundation for most other Western exploration of this rich and important spiritual and philosophical tradition. For Wisdom in Proverbs, for example, see Proverbs 4:6-7, 3:13-18.

⁹ See particularly Heraclitus, Fragments B1, B2, B12; B10 on all things issuing from the one; B30, B31 on the ever-living Fire; B12, B49a on change; B34 on hearing and not understanding; B41 on Wisdom as knowledge of the thought by which all things are steered through all things. A good online annotated source for the Fragments of Heraclitus with Greek text and English translations is: www.heraclitusfragments.com, a project maintained by Randy Hoyt. Most of the translations are from John Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy* (London, 1920).

¹⁰ For Philo, see Philo, *The Works of Philo*. Trans. C. D. Younger, (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1993).

¹¹ For more on Philo and Sophia, see Thomas Schipflinger's excellent book, *Sophia-Maria. A Holistic Vision of Creation*. Trans. James Morgante (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1998).

¹² In a similar vein, Jean-Yves Leloup in *The Gospel of Thomas* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2005), 205, writes: "The Son is the Image and Likeness of both [celestial Father and Mother], incarnating the two in One."

¹³ There are several scholarly translations of the Gospel of Thomas available. Each contains an

- element of interpretation and reconstruction of the text but all are based on a solid study of the original. The ones I have particularly made use of are: Jean-Yves Leloup, *The Gospel of Thomas* (Rochester, Vt.: Inner Traditions, 2005); Marvin Meyer and Harold Bloom, *The Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Harper, 1992); Marvin Meyer (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition* (New York: HarperOne, 2007); Stevan Davies and Andrew Harvey (series ed.), *The Gospel of Thomas* (Boston: Shambhala, 2004). All translations used in the body of the text are from Stevan Davies' rendition of Thomas unless otherwise specified.
- ¹⁴ "Single" or "whole" are both possible translations of *monakhos*.
- ¹⁵ On "becoming male," the Early Church Fathers and the "woman problem," see Dr Marie-Henry Keane O.P., "Woman seen as a 'problem' and as 'solution' in the theological anthropology of the Early Fathers: *Considering the Consequences*," paper presented to the Catholic Theological Society of South Africa, Oct 1987, online at: www.catherinecollegelibrary.net/theology; Kari Vogt, "Becoming Male: One aspect of an Early Christian Anthropology," in "Women: Invisible in Church and Theology," Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Mary Collins, eds. *Concilium: Religion in the Eighties* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1985), 72-83. Reprinted in Janet Soskice and Diana Lipton, eds. *Feminism and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 49-62.
- ¹⁶ See Aristotle, *The Generation of Animals*. Trans. A. L. Peck, (London and Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, 1943), II.iii, 175, for his contention that woman is a deformed or defective male. Also, see his *Politics*, in which Aristotle contends that woman's lack of reasoning power puts her in the same category as children and the insane.
- ¹⁷ Albertus Magnus, "De Natura et Origine Animae," in *Opera Omnia*, Monasterium Westfalorum, 1955, vol. XII, *Quaestio 22*, p.135:53-4. Quoted by Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen* (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, London, 1993), 429, n.37.
- ¹⁸ For Thomas Aquinas see Kristin M. Popik, "The Philosophy of Woman of St. Thomas Aquinas" in *Faith and Reason* (Christendom College Press, Ft. Royal, VA, 1978), 16-56. To find articles online taken from her doctoral dissertation, see: www.catholicculture.org/culture/libraryview.cfm?recnum=2793. Popik is the first woman to receive a Ph. D from the University of St. Thomas (Angelicum) in Rome.
- ¹⁹ Translation from Jean-Yves Leloup, *The Gospel of Thomas*.
- ²⁰ See Jean-Yves Leloup, *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* (Rochester, VT.: Inner Traditions, 2002).
- ²¹ See also John 10:34 "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?"
- ²² For this understanding I am indebted to Stevan Davies. See further, Stevan Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas*, p. 2.
- ²³ Leloup, *The Gospel of Thomas*, 71.
- ²⁴ Vladimir Megre, *The Ringing Cedars Series*. (Ringing Cedars Press, 2005).
- ²⁵ Hinting at a similar understanding, Amritanadamayi Ma, or Amma, the 'hugging Saint' from Kerala, has participants in her retreats wear bracelets one of which reads: "The childlike innocence deep within you is God."
- ²⁶ It is stated in the Zohar that the whole first five books of the Torah exist so that the Shekhinah can be reunited with Yahweh.
- ²⁷ All translations from the Gospel of Philip are taken from Jean-Yves, Leloup, *The Gospel of Philip* (Rochester, Vt.: Inner Traditions, 2004).
- ²⁸ See for a further development of this thematic, Jean-Yves Leloup *The Sacred Embrace of Jesus and Mary* (Rochester, Vt.: Inner Traditions, 2006).
- ²⁹ See *The Dialogue of the Saviour*, 139:13. This translation is from Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 26. Other translations have "everything" or "completely" instead of "the All." There is a good version of *The Dialogue of the Saviour* in Marvin Meyer, with Esther A. de Boer, *The Gospels of Mary. The Secret Tradition of Mary Magdalene the Companion of Jesus* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004). Most scholars agree that the Mary in this Dialogue is Mary Magdalene, as her portrayal here is consistent with her appearances in other texts. However, for a different perspective which leaves open the possibility of the Mary here being Mary the Mother of Jesus, see Anna Cwikla, "Strategic Ambiguity and Convenient Assumptions: The Identities of Mary in the Dialogue of the Saviour" Oct 19, 2012. Uni-

versity of Alberta Religious Studies Graduate Seminar. Published online at: www.academia.edu/.

30 Harold Bloom, in Marvin Meyer and Harold Bloom, *The Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Harper, 1992), 126.

31 As translated and restored by Leloup, *The Gospel of Thomas*.

32 Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine, I* (Los Angeles: Theosophical University Press, 1888), 307. As cited by Celeste Jameson and John F. Nash in “Musical Harmony, Mathematics and Esotericism,” in *The Esoteric Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Summer 2015, 64.

33 “For I am the first and the last.
I am the honoured one and the scorned one.
I am the whore and the holy one... [...] I am the one who is disgraced and the great one.”

For the full text of *Thunder Perfect Mind*, see *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*. Ed. Marvin Meyer (New York: HarperOne, 2007). The text is structured as a series of polarities and in each case the speaker transcends dualism and encompasses both opposing poles of the polarity.

34 This is a difficult restoration. Logion 101 can be read “For my mother gave me falsehood...” or “For my mother, who has given birth to me, has destroyed me...” or “For my mother made me to die...” See Marvin Meyer, with Esther de Boer. *The Gospels of Mary. The Secret Tradition of Mary Magdalene, the Companion of Jesus* (New York: Harper-SanFrancisco, 2004), 34, 106, fn.99.

35 Al-Hallaj, Mansur. *The Tawasin* of Mansur Hallaj is available online at: www.HolyBooks.com, in a translation by Aisha Abd Ar-Rahman At-Tarjumana. The extract of the poem quoted is from the chapter “*The Ta-Sin of the Point*” 12.

36 *Meditations with Meister Eckhart*, versions by Matthew Fox. (Rochester, Vermont: Bear & Company, 1983), 20-21.

37 Leloup, *The Sacred Embrace of Jesus and Mary*, 62.

38 Ramprasad Sen, mystic Bengali poet (1718-1775). For a beautiful collection of Ramprasad’s poems to Kali see Lex Hixon, *Mother of the Universe: Visions of the Goddess and Tantric Hymns of Enlightenment* (Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Books, 1994).

39 Woodroffe, *The Garland of Letters*, 223. The *Mahanirvana-Tantra* praising Kali attempts to give a flavour of the nature of the Absolute:
“Resuming after Dissolution Thine own nature dark and formless, Thou alone remainest as One, Ineffable, and Inconceivable. Though appearing in form Thou art yet formless; though Thyself without beginning, multiform by the Power of Maya, Thou art the beginning of all, Creatrix, Protectress and Destructress that Thou art.” IV. 34.

40 In a similar vein to Kali’s destruction of the demonic forces, Revelation 19:11-16 contains a vision of Jesus as the warrior armed with a sword wielding destruction: “From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations ... he will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty ...”

41 Bloom, in Meyer and Bloom, *The Gospel of Thomas*, 127.

42 You must awaken while in this body, for everything exists in it: Resurrect in this life.” Philip 23 in Leloup, *The Gospel of Philip*.

43 Elaine Pagels in *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Random House, 2003), makes a good case for John’s gospel having been written as a direct response to and refutation of the Gospel of Thomas in an attempt to undermine it, presenting an alternate image of Jesus as uniquely divine, and belittling the figure of Thomas who keeps appearing as the doubting and questioning disciple who has to be “put in his place.” It is hard to refute her arguments, and yet in some ways John’s gospel transcends its writer’s intentions, opening the door to a more mystical and personal relationship with Jesus’ teachings.

44 Leloup, *The Sacred Embrace*, p. 61. For a beautifully nuanced, poetic and philosophically profound discussion of the Logos in John, see Leloup, Chapter 5, “*And the Word Was Made Flesh*,” in *The Sacred Embrace*.

Lama Govinda's Quest for the Truth: A Summary of His Life - Part II

Iván Kovács



Lama Anagarika Govinda¹

Eternity and Infinity in the spiritual or religious sense are not mathematical values but experiences common to all people who have reached a certain spiritual maturity, and most of all the great leaders of humanity in the fields of culture and religion. Lama Govinda, 1977²

Abstract

This is the second and concluding installment of the two-part article dealing with the spiritual quest of Lama Govinda. It begins with the expedition that he and his wife, Li, undertook into Western Tibet and describes in some detail their challenging but rewarding experiences. The remainder of the article summarizes Govinda's and Li's years of productivity, and their joint mission to make Tibetan Buddhism known to the wider world by means of their art, book and lectures. The article concludes with Govinda's death in the San Francisco Zen Centre in California. As in Part I, this article includes appropriate quotations from Govinda's own writings to render the text more colorful.

The Journey to Tsaparang

The point of departure from which the Govindas set out on their expedition to Western Tibet was the Almora Hill station in the

Almora district in the state of Uttarakhand. This undertaking became possible after lengthy preparations and organization, something for which Li had taken most of the responsibility. It was also thanks to her that they had found a sponsor for their expedition, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, to which Li had committed herself by providing a written record of their trip. When they had finally secured enough men and mules to transport their belongings, they left Almora on the morning of July 22, 1948.³

About the Author

Iván Kovács is qualified as a fine artist. As a writer he has published art criticism, short stories and poems, and more recently, articles of an esoteric nature. He is a reader of the classics and modern classics, a lover of world cinema, as well as classical and contemporary music. His lifelong interest in Esotericism was rounded off with several years of intensive study with the Arcane School.

Govinda and Li both gave a written account of their travels, albeit each of them from their own perspective. Govinda, always the philosophical thinker and poet, could not be bothered to comment on the day to day details and hardships of their journey. His writing became more descriptive only after their first pilgrimage to Mount Kailas, a pilgrimage to which he devoted three entire chapters in his book, *The Way of the White Clouds*.⁴ Li, on the other hand, did not shy away from verbalizing her frustrations and the personal hardships which are an inevitable part of such an enormous undertaking. Yet, she was never bitter or resentful. And even while describing the extreme conditions of their journey, she retained a capacity to express herself in imaginative and creative ways. To illustrate this point one only needs to quote her on some of the specific weather conditions that she and Govinda experienced:

A storm then broke. The rain nearly froze us while the wind howled like hungry wolves around us. Oh, those winds! They are Tibet's *worst enemy*, and if I was ever asked to picture them I would draw a hundred thousand ice-bound daggers with the head of a howling wolf for every hilt.⁵

The landscapes they encountered were stupendous, but the region was sparsely populated. Ken Winkler describes the setting as "a tough, unrelenting land, but preserved deep in its eroded hills and ruined monasteries were remnants of frescoes, icons, and images of incredible beauty and sanctity. It is hard to imagine what became the larger attraction for the Govindas, the faded glories of the earlier artistic and religious fervor or the natural beauty of this harsh and rugged country."⁶

Govinda introduces Mount Kailas—the first great highlight of their journey—with the following words:

There are mountains which are just mountains and there are mountains with personality. The personality of a mountain is more than merely a strange shape that makes it different from others – just as a strangely shaped face or strange actions do not make an individual into a personality.

Personality consists in the power to influence others, and this power is due to consistency, harmony, and one-pointedness of character. If these qualities are present in an individual, in their highest perfection, then this individual is a fit leader of humanity, either as a ruler, a thinker, or a saint, and we recognise him as a vessel of divine power. If these qualities are present in a mountain we recognise it as a vessel of cosmic power, and we call it a sacred mountain.⁷

Mount Kailas is a major pilgrimage site for Buddhists and Hindus alike and stands isolated in the center of the Trans-Himalayan ranges at an elevation of 22,000 feet. It has a symmetrical peak that is capped by snow and ice that rests on a rocky plinth thousands of feet high. Four of Asia's major rivers have their sources in the region, namely the Brahmaputra, the Indus, the Sutlej and the Karnali.⁸

However, the magic and splendor of Mount Kailas does not stand isolated. As viewed from the south, the sacred mountain forms a triangle with Lake Manasarovar in the right foreground and Lake Rakshastal in the left foreground. Lake Manasarovar is relatively round in shape with a 55-mile circumference and 120 square mile surface area and is a fresh water lake.⁹ Lake Rakshastal is unevenly shaped with a surface area of 97 square miles and is a salt water lake.¹⁰

Lama Govinda comments on the spiritual significance of the two lakes, informing us that the geographical position of the two lakes corresponds to their relationship to light and darkness. Manasarovar, being in the east represents the beginning of the day, while Rakshastal in the west symbolizes the beginning of the night. Moreover, the Tibetan name for Manasarovar, Tso Mapham, stands for the invincible forces of the Buddhas, while Rakshastal is called Lha-nag-Tso, the Lake of the Dark Deities.¹¹

True to pilgrim tradition, Govinda and Li circumambulated Mount Kailas, which took them about four or five days. Despite the profound effect that the mountain had on Govinda, his description of the actual pilgrimage is at best sketchy. This might be attributed to the strange

phenomenon which makes the mountain appear to be so close that one could almost touch it, while at the same time it appears to be ethereal and intangible, like the emanation of something more profound. Li, in her article describing the experience as published in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* in the April 22, 1951 edition, defined Mount Kailas as having a “dreamlike” quality.¹²

Less than a week later, Govinda and Li entered a valley which Govinda described as being reminiscent of the Valley of the Kings near Thebes. Even the white-washed buildings that stood out at the foot of the mountains reminded him of the cubic Egyptian temple structures. By all appearances, the place looked like a Buddhist monastery where they hoped to get shelter, but the place seemed to be deserted, so they pitched their tent outside the walls near the river.¹³

The following morning the Govindas sent their caravan leader to the abbot to announce their visit, and were finally granted permission to meet him. After exchanging pleasantries they explained to the abbot that they needed fresh pack animals for the next stage of their journey, but the abbot declined, stating that he could spare neither men nor yaks because they were needed to help with the harvesting. Govinda then produced the Lamyig (travel pass) from Lhasa, which entitled them to transport and food supplies at local prices, but the abbot laughed derisively, and his attitude of friendliness changed to defiance.¹⁴

Outwardly, Govinda appeared to be calm, but he realized that they had reason to worry. Instead of pressing his point he expressed his admiration to the abbot of how nicely the walls were decorated, thus shifting the subject to the abbot and the monastery itself. The abbot showed them some sacred scriptures which seemed to be familiar to Govinda. But they contained strange names and mantras that made him doubt whether they could be Buddhist texts. The next day, when the caretaker showed them around, he led them in an anti-clockwise direction around the monastery, a strange and improper way of doing things from

the Buddhist perspective, and it finally dawned on Govinda, that the monastery was not Buddhist at all, but Bön.¹⁵

The monastery’s true identity was further confirmed when the Govindas were allowed to see things in greater detail. For instance, the familiar “Wheel of Life,” depicted among the frescoes of the porch, did not have the usual twelve divisions, but thirteen. And a figure that looked like Amitabha had white as its body color instead of red, and was seated on an elephant throne instead of a peacock throne, and bore the name “God Shen of the White Light.”

Later that day, after they had returned to their tent, it was the abbot himself who paid them an unexpected visit. To their surprise, they realized that he now seemed to be an entirely different man, with none of the proud aloofness and sarcastic smile. The Govindas praised everything that they had seen, further ensuring the abbots goodwill towards them and the necessary number of yaks, as well as guides needed for the continuation of their journey. Thus the morning of the next day they were gratefully on the move again.¹⁶

Govinda describes the last stage of their journey before their arrival at Tsaparang in *The Way of the White Clouds* in a chapter entitled *The Valley of the Moon Castle*.¹⁷ He gives a detailed account of how they had to ford a river by means of a rope bridge that only had two steel cables for its main support, which were hanging side by side with nothing but short planks and sticks upon them that were fastened with ropes and wires. The yaks had to be unloaded and the luggage carried separately across the bridge. But once it was the turn of the yaks to make the crossing they refused to step on to the swaying bridge and had to be allowed to swim across the river. This was a risky thing to accomplish because there was only one place on the opposite shore where they could safely get out of the stream—all the other places were so steep that they would surely have drowned. With some clever maneuvering and stone-throwing the yaks were prevented from being swept downstream and safely made it to the other shore.¹⁸

The mood of Govinda's narrative changes when he continues as follows:

In spite of all the dangers and troubles we were richly rewarded by the indescribable grandeur of the canyon country which unfolded itself in all its fantastic beauty the deeper we penetrated into this region. Here the mountain scenery is more than merely a landscape. It is architecture in the highest sense. It is of awe-inspiring monumentality, for which the word "beautiful" would be far too weak, because it is overpowering by the immensity and abstract purity of its million-fold repeated forms that integrate themselves into a vast rhythm, a symphony of stone, without beginning or end.¹⁹

As they plodded on along the difficult terrain, Li Gotami observed that the straight up-and-down traveling they were forced to endure seemed to go against all laws of gravity and had a nightmarish quality. And having reached the Valley of the Moon Castle, she compared the terrain to that of a different planet.²⁰ "Here the bizarre-shaped crags and hills appeared as if they were something out of a dream of a post-impressionist artist and we stood spellbound at the sight," she wrote.²¹

They camped there for more than a week because their guides would not go any further and practically deserted them, leaving them only with their luggage. Govinda and Li Gotami, however, were strangely unperturbed, captivated by the surrounding peace and silence. Signs that the place had been inhabited a long time ago were evident from numerous caves that had been hollowed out of the rock formations, many of them connected by inner staircases and passages. They also saw the remains of temples, stupas, monasteries and ancient castles. To their great surprise, they found the main temple not only intact but covered with a golden roof, and its walls painted with ancient frescoes dating back to the end of the tenth century.²²

But to Govinda's and Li Gotami's good fortune, the Valley of the Moon Castle was not entirely deserted. There were a few herdsmen who grazed their sheep and goats on the pastures of the valley, and Dawa-Dzong (Tibetan

name for the Valley of the Moon Castle) also had a district governor. To procure fresh pack animals the Govindas needed the governor's authorization, but unfortunately he was away touring his jurisdiction. While they waited for this official to return Govinda and Li Gotami visited the sights and did a lot of sketching.²³

Finally, a messenger arrived and informed them that the yaks which they had been waiting for had been secured and would reach them in a day or two. After the yaks were brought, as promised, Govinda and Li Gotami loaded the animals and embarked on the last lap of their journey. It was on the late afternoon of 2 October 1948, after they had emerged from a gorge and turned the spur of a mountain, that they suddenly beheld the castles of the ancient city of Tsaparang.^{24 25}

The Treasures of the Lost Kingdom of Gugé

The first impression of Tsaparang as described by Govinda reads as follows:

As if woven of light the city stood against the evening sky, enhaloed by a rainbow, which made the scene as unbelievable as a *fata morgana*.²⁶ We almost feared that the scene before us might disappear as suddenly as it had sprung up before our eyes, but it remained there as solid as a rock on which it was built. Even the rainbow – in itself a rare phenomenon in an almost rainless country like Western Tibet – remained steady for quite a long time, centred around the towering city like an emanation of its hidden treasures of golden images and luminous colours, in which the wisdom and the visions of a glorious past were enshrined.²⁷

Govinda interpreted the presence of the rainbow as a good omen. Nevertheless, this did not negate the fact that they were forced to live and work under the harshest conditions. Their dwelling for the duration of their stay was a crude stone hut which stood in front of a cave. The cave itself was the dwelling of a shepherd who had a wife and child, and who also acted in the capacity of caretaker of the remaining three temples, all of which had withstood the

ravages of time. It was this caretaker, named Wangdu, who supplied the Govindas with water, brushwood, and milk. Being miserably poor, he was only too glad for the little money that he received in payment for his services. Apart from the Govindas and Wangdu and his family the place was devoid of human habitation.²⁸

The task that the Govindas had come to perform in Tsaparang was to catalogue the surviving artworks, a monumental undertaking that was to test not only their willpower and determination, but also their adaptability and ingenuity. The manner in which their task was to be executed was rather complex. One method was by means of copying and tracing the frescoes, of which there was a staggering number. These were to be found in the two temples known as the White and the Red Lhakhang, and thus named because of the color of their outer walls.²⁹

Govinda described these frescoes as being of the highest quality that they had seen in or outside of Tibet. They virtually covered the walls from the floor right up to the high ceiling, “lavishly encrusted with gold and minutely executed,”³⁰ their range extending from the darkest corners, and up to a height that fell beyond the reach of human sight. Despite the great detail, some of these fresco-figures were as Govinda describes “of gigantic size.”³¹

Apart from the frescoes, there were the larger than life-size golden statues, “gleaming amidst the warm colours of the frescoed walls,” and according to Govinda’s perception, more alive than anything they had seen before of their kind. They were so imposing that apparently even the conquering hordes responsible for the downfall of Tsaparang had refrained “from defiling the silent majesty of these images.”

There is no absolute code which divides the world into “good” or “bad” or which tells you what you must do. Buddhist morality is based on freedom, i.e. individual development. As the idea of sin is foreign to the Buddhist, he does not believe in eternal condemnation. Heaven and hell are within us and the possibility of salvation is open to all living beings.

When they started to work, Govinda and Li traced as many of the frescoes as time and opportunity would allow. Govinda writes that “(m)erely to trace these delicate lines accurately demanded the most intense concentration, and it was a strange sensation to relive the feelings and emotions of people who had lived almost a millennium before us.”³²

Each day, before commencing with their work, they first performed their devotions, or *puja*, with offerings of light and water, which signified consciousness and life, and then recited the formulas of refuge and self-dedication at the feet of the golden Buddhas.

This filled them with renewed inspiration so that they could perform their task, even forgetting hunger and cold or other hardships.³³

The hardships referred to were numerous and soon became apparent, when with the passing of time, temperatures started to drop. Govinda records this as follows:

The temple walls were so cold that it became almost impossible to touch them without suffering excruciating pain, so that even tracing became a torture. Li had to keep her bottle of Chinese ink inside her *amphag* to prevent it from freezing and had to breathe from time to time on her brush to thaw the ink which tended to get solid after a few strokes . . . I remember once when she wept in despair on account of the excessive cold that made it almost impossible for her to hold the brush, her tears were frozen before they could reach the floor and bounced up from it as beads of ice with a thud.³⁴

Govinda had problems of his own. Because many of the frescoes were painted higher up

on the walls, he had to build a rough scaffolding on pyramids of stone blocks, which were gathered from the debris outside the temples. At times, these had to be built and dismantled more than once a day. It was back-breaking work, and Govinda's feet were getting frozen, so he had to go outside the temple to warm up in the sunshine and to get his circulation going again.³⁵

Another problem that the Govindas encountered was the uneven distribution of light in the temples. The primary source of light came from a window high up on the opposite side from the main image. The light from this window served to illuminate the statue, and its reflection suffused the rest of the temple, but only moderately. It was sufficient to admire the frescoes and other objects, but sadly deficient when it comes to the drawing or painting of the small details. Because the light was continuously shifting, the Govindas had to follow it from one place to another, and often use sheets to reflect light into dark corners or other places where the pillars obscured the view. As a result, they frequently had to abandon what they were working in favor of other tasks where the light offered greater illumination.³⁶

Amidst all the beauty and splendor, Govinda and Li worked ceaselessly from morning to evening. They were convinced that they would be the last people from outside Tibet who were privileged to see these artworks, and thus found it necessary to preserve them by means of their tracings and photographs.³⁷

Days of Consternation and a Race against Time

During the second week of their stay at Tsaparang the Govindas were surprised by the arrival of a nun who had come there in the company of a monk who was in charge of another temple—the Temple of Maitreya—not far from the ruined city. She began to question them in a rather haughty manner, and although Govinda and Li tried to explain the nature of their work, she did not seem to understand and threatened to cut off their water and fuel supply if they did not stop. Even an authorization from the Lhasa Government didn't make much

difference to her, because she questioned the document's authenticity.³⁸

After a moment's reflection Govinda's thoughts turned to his guru, Tomo Geshe. Although he didn't expect that a simple nun in this far off corner of Tibet would have heard of Tomo Geshe, he nevertheless mentioned to her that he was their guru, and that they had both been staying at Dungkar Gompa only last year. To Govinda's and Li's surprise the nun's attitude changed instantaneously, and she told them that she herself came from Dungkar and that Tomo Geshe Rimpoche was her Tsawai Lama (root guru). The Govindas in turn mentioned the names of several inhabitants of Dungkar Gompa that the nun recognized. Thus the ice was broken and a personal contact established which later would prove to be most valuable.³⁹

When Govinda and Li invited the nun to their quarters at Wangdu's cave, and showed her photographs which Li had taken at Dungkar, the nun could see with her own eyes that they were telling her the truth. Furthermore, when Govinda showed her Tomo Geshe's seal underneath the little Buddha image which he had received from him and always carried with him, the nun reverently bowed down to receive Tomo Geshe's blessings.⁴⁰

Despite the fortunate outcome, their encounter with the nun had to be taken as a warning of how precarious their actual situation was. Thus they continued their work with even more urgency, and took care to keep their activities as secret as possible. This, however, only lasted for about two weeks. Returning from their work one evening they heard the sound of a drum coming from the valley. The sound came nearer and nearer until Govinda and Li were filled with a sense of foreboding. Soon armed horsemen appeared from the foot of the valley, and Wangu informed them that the Dzongpön (governor) of Tsaparang had arrived.⁴¹

The following day Govinda and Li had no choice but to interrupt their work, call upon the Dzongpön, and try to explain the purpose of their stay in Tsaparang and the nature of their work. Although the Dzongpön listened, he did

not appear to be convinced, and even when they showed him their official papers, he told them that he could only allow them to do their work if he received confirmation from Lhasa that their documents were genuine. To follow up on this might easily take four to five months. By that time their provisions would be exhausted, and they would be reduced to eating nothing more than raw wheat, which they would have to grind themselves. Govinda, as ever, kept up a stiff front and told the Dzongpön that they had no objection to having their papers verified and would not mind waiting.⁴²

The Dzongpön changed his tactics and pointed out that Govinda and Li were only entitled to work in the temples founded by Rinchen Zangpo. He insisted that the temples of Tsaparang were not founded by Zangpo, but only those of Tholing, the only place where the Govindas were allowed to work. Govinda contradicted this, and told the Dzongpön that he himself had read in ancient Tibetan books that the temples of Tsaparang are mentioned among those that had been built by Rinchen Zangpo. The Dzongpön demanded to know which books those might be, and Govinda, taking a chance, did not mention *The History of the Kings of Guge*, but replied that he had read it in *The Blue Records (Dep-ther sNgon-po)* by gZon-nud Pal-ldan. This answer seemed to impress the Dzongpön, who was not able to refute Govinda's contention. Dropping the matter he told them that they would have his decision later.⁴³

Disheartened and depressed, Govinda and Li returned to their stone hut and spent an uneasy night in which they worried so much they hardly managed to sleep. Govinda writes that “(w)e spent hours in silent meditation, feeling that only the intervention of higher powers could help us.”⁴⁴

It turned out that the “higher powers” were, indeed, favorably disposed towards them. The next morning the Dzongpön came to see them in person. He was accompanied by servants who bore gifts of food. Instead of telling the Govindas to quit Tsaparang, the Dzongpön explained to them that the nun, who had met

them earlier, had told him that Govinda and Li were Nangpas (followers of the Buddha) and personal disciples of Tomo Geshe Rimpoche. In fact, he himself considered Tomo Geshe to be his personal Guru, and held him in the highest regard. He apologized for having distrusted them, but now that he knew that they were all disciples of the same guru, he gave his approval to their doings. They were welcome to continue on the condition that they finished their task within a month, thus allowing them to leave before the winter when the passes to India would close. The Dzongpön provided them with another Lamyig (pass) for their return journey. Two days later he left on a journey, but not before saying that he hoped to meet them at Shipki, a village at the foot of the pass leading to India.⁴⁵

Govinda and Li continued their work, following a ceaseless routine by which they made use of every available daylight hour. As the weather got colder even their watches stopped and they both suffered from headaches and nausea.⁴⁶ Then, one evening in mid-December, a group of rough-looking fellows arrived who spent half the night carousing in Wangdu's cave. The following morning a sinister-looking one-eyed man called on the Govindas to inform them that the Dzongpön had given orders that they had to leave Tsaparang and were to be escorted to the frontier pass. The Govindas were not happy with this news because several of the panels that they had been working on were only half finished. Govinda told the man that they would be ready to leave only if the Dzongpön would give them a few days more to finish the work. And in order to win more time, he wrote a letter to the Dzongpön and sent it off with one of his servants. Although Govinda did not expect a favorable reply, he knew that it would take at least a week for the servant to return with an answer—just enough time to finish their work.⁴⁷

And indeed, things worked out just as they had expected. The messenger had stayed away exactly a week, giving Govinda and Li the needed time to finish. In his own words, Govinda concludes as follows: “We left the temples with deep gratitude. Our task had been fulfilled

and what we had gained, no worldly power could take away from us.”⁴⁸

The Trials of the Return Journey

The homeward journey was no easy feat, and in comparison, Tsaparang had been warm and comfortable. The guide that had been assigned to the Govindas was none other than the “Dzongpön’s rascally one-eyed servant . . . who tried to get rid of his duty as soon as possible by pushing (them) somewhere over the frontier in a totally uninhabited region, where (they) would have perished from lack of food, shelter, and transport.”⁴⁹ It was at Govinda’s insistence that they kept to the main caravan route, and if necessary, putting up with the prospect of having to wait until the passes would open again.⁵⁰ The guide’s unruly behavior finally forced the Govindas to employ another guide, a man called Sherab, who turned out to be the one-eyed rascal’s opposite: faithful and solicitous, so that the Govindas felt a real friendship towards him.⁵¹

The greatest ordeal the Govindas were facing on their return journey was trekking over a frozen river. This undertaking proved to be hazardous due to the uncertainty about whether the ice was solid enough to carry their weight, and also because of its mirror smooth but uneven surface. They had engaged about twenty people from the last village where they had been staying to help with their luggage. But once they had reached the icy surface very little progress was made, because they could barely walk a few steps without falling. By evening, they pitched camp on a narrow boulder-strewn strip of dry land, and that night for the first time they felt comfortably warm, partly to the lower altitude, and partly because the sky had become overcast.⁵²

The following morning they found themselves snowed in, and the Govindas were wondering how they would be able to continue their journey. However, far from impeding their progress, they discovered that the snow helped them to walk on the ice without slipping. The trek over the frozen river took six days before they finally emerged at the village of Tyak, at which point they parted ways with the villagers who had assisted them. Their guide, Sherab,

arranged for a new team of yaks, horses, and also people from various villages – an easy task – because they were back again on the regular caravan route. They crossed the Shipki Pass, without incident and descended into what Govinda called “the happy valley” of Poo, which they reached at the end of January.⁵³

Final Initiations in the Happy Valley and Farewell to Tibet

The passes over the Himalayas were closed and would only open again in spring. This meant a three months wait. Thus the Govindas had no other choice but to be patient.⁵⁴ They found accommodation in the local rest-house which was run by Namgyal, an old Nyingma Lama known for his great religious devotion and knowledge. Although the Govindas had run out of provisions and money, Namgyal assured them that he would take care of them until such time as they were able to pay him back. He treated them as if they were members of his own family, discussing religious subjects with them, and even giving them access to his religious books—his most precious possessions.⁵⁵

One day Namgyal came to tell the Govindas that he had dreamt seeing a rainbow over their bungalow, which could only mean a lucky event, such as the arrival of a saintly person. This omen proved to be correct when the next day a lama arrived and put up in a little out-house belonging to the compound. The following day the lama called upon the Govindas, and to their great surprise they recognized the lama as the Abbot of Phiyang, the very same lama they had visited at Tsaparang. Govinda had described the abbot as the kindest and most unassuming person, yet one who had great learning and wisdom. At Tsaparang they regretted only being able to spend a short time with him; but now that their paths had crossed again the lama offered to instruct them in the most advanced methods of Tantric Sadhana and Yoga practices.^{56 57}

As the daily instructions proceeded under the Phiyang Lama’s guidance, they were finally crowned by two esoteric initiations. These were given in short succession, and introduced the Govindas to many new aspects of medita-

tive practice that belong to the most ancient tradition of Tibetan Buddhism as preserved by the Nyingmapas (lit.: ‘The Old Ones’). Govinda explains that “(i)n these initiations all the psychic centres (chakras) were employed and activated,” a process which he describes in some detail in his book *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*.⁵⁸ As described in Part Four of this book, *The Path of Integration*, these are intricate procedures consisting of breathing exercises in combination with energy transfer as visualized and directed between the various energy centers, and consequently falling under the broad classification of kundalini yoga.⁵⁹

Therefore, the long wait for the passes to open was not spent in idleness, but in gaining new knowledge and wisdom, rounding off Govinda’s and Li’s education and training in a practical and fruitful way which would not have been possible without the assistance of such an extraordinary person as the Phiyang Lama. Govinda elaborates on his exceptional qualities and services as follows:

Before Phiyang Lama left Poo he performed a very remarkable ceremony which culminated in a baptism or purification through fire, so to say a counterpart or natural complement to the Tsewang, the purification and spiritual renewal through the Water of Life. This ceremony (*me-dbang*) was remarkable . . . for the way in which all participants were actually enveloped by the flames of the fire, without anybody being hurt . . . The procedure was as ingenious as it was impressive. While Phiyang Lama intoned the *mantras* of consecration, he held an earthen bowl with fire in his left hand, and with the other he threw a fine incense powder (made of some local shrub or tree bark) through the open flame, issuing from the bowl. The powder ignited instantly, and being thrown in the direction of the devotees, who were sitting in a group before the lama, the fire enveloped them for a moment in a flash-like flame that vanished before it could burn anybody.⁶⁰

At last, towards the end of April, the passes were opening. While the Govindas were assembling their caravan for their final return to

India, the Phiyang Lama set out for his monastery in the district of Tsaparang. Before he left he gave the Govindas his blessing.⁶¹

The Govindas also said their farewells to Sherab, who had looked after them like a son, and to Namgyal, whose hospitality had been exceptional. In the last chapter of his book, *The Way of the White Clouds*, Govinda sums up their adventure as follows:

And so we left our “Shangrila,” the Valley of Happiness, and returned to the world, not knowing that Tibet’s hour of fate had struck and that we would never see it again, except in our dreams. But we knew that the Gurus and the treasures of memory that this unforgettable country had bestowed on us would remain with us till the end of our days and that, if we succeeded in passing on to others even a part of those treasures and of the Gurus’ teachings, we would feel that we had repaid a little of the debt of gratitude that we owe to Tibet and to our Teachers.⁶²

Interaction with the Wider World

Although Govinda and Li were never to return to Tibet again, their joint mission to disseminate on a larger scale what they had learnt and experienced regarding Tibetan Buddhism and the Path of Liberation still lay ahead. Govinda was one of those individuals who always knew how to share his life experiences with his fellow human beings no matter their stage of personal development. This was already apparent when he was still a young and aspiring artist and writer in Capri. Now in his early fifties, his knowledge and wisdom were equal to that of a *sannyasin*, a word which so aptly applies to one who has “passed across the burning ground . . . (and who) . . . through detachment from the little self and attachment to the greater Self . . . has left behind all that might hinder and hamper his service.”

After a period during which they moved around in various places in India, they finally settled down in W. Y. Evans-Wentz’s house, on Kasar Devi ridge near Almora. Evans-Wentz now lived in San Diego, California. Evans-Wentz had been on the lookout for reliable people who could inhabit his property,

and who could be entrusted with its upkeep and maintenance. Secluded, yet not inaccessible from social amenities, the place would prove to be a refuge in which the Govindas could live and work undisturbed, and thereby initiate the most productive period of their lives.

Although the area was sparsely populated the Govindas' neighbors turned out to be people with whom they had much in common: "Krishna Prem, the Englishman who became a Hindu monk, lived 16 miles farther up on the trail; Earl Brewster (a friend from Govinda's Capri days) had a large house on the ridge, filled with books and paintings; and living in a small lean-to near a Kali temple was Alfred Sorenson (Sunya), (Govinda's) reclusive, somewhat silent friend from Shantiniketan." The privacy which the Govindas so highly valued would last several years, and on quiet mornings Govinda would work at his small desk and labor over articles and stories that would later be published in a variety of Indian and European journals.⁶³

Govinda's book, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, was one of the major works among his writing at this time. The English translation was first published by Rider & Company in London in 1959, closely followed by the American edition in 1960, which was published by E. P. Dutton & Co in New York. Ken Winkler, Govinda's biographer, writes that "(i)t is not a book easily understood by beginners: although Lama Govinda used Western references and quoted European mystical poets and philosophers, some understanding of Buddhist terminology is essential."⁶⁴ Early in *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism* Govinda stresses the importance of Buddhism as a living experience and writes as follows:

Each new experience, each new situation of life, widens our mental outlook and brings about a subtle transformation within ourselves. Thus our nature changes continually, not only on account of the conditions of life, but – even if these would remain static – because by the constant addition of new impressions, the structure of our mind becomes ever more diverse and complex,

whether we call it 'progress' or 'degeneration', we have to admit the fact that it is the law of all life, in which differentiation and co-ordination balance each other.⁶⁵

Winkler points out that Lama Govinda always acknowledged his indebtedness to his Western heritage, but he was adamant about his own situation as regards his convictions and beliefs. Although he never directly attacked or condemned orthodox Western views, Govinda made it clear that he considered fundamental Christian attitudes to be restrictive and prone to locking a person into one-way-thinking.⁶⁶ Govinda confirms this in the following:

There is no absolute code which divides the world into "good" or "bad" or which tells you what you must do. Buddhist morality is based on freedom, i.e. individual development. As the idea of sin is foreign to the Buddhist, he does not believe in eternal condemnation. Heaven and hell are within us and the possibility of salvation is open to all living beings. What we need nowadays are not ready-made solutions – the world, after all, is full of them, and there is no lack of revelations of truth – but we need the spirit of liberal and unconditioned investigation which enables us to discover the truth by ourselves.⁶⁷

Thirty years had passed since Govinda had left Europe, and much had changed in the meantime. Winkler writes that the Cold War and the threat of nuclear annihilation had become the new major factors of anxiety and conflict. He writes that most people had little trust in the post-war promises, and protested against what they considered meaningless and threatening in their societies. Young people, particularly in Western Europe, were looking for alternatives, which resulted in a growing interest in other cultures, especially those that were disappearing. And now that Govinda had decided to return to Europe, his message and mission as an emissary of Tibetan Buddhism couldn't have been more appropriate or relevant.⁶⁸

Govinda's first stop was in Venice, Italy, where he participated at an international religious conference at the request of the Italian government. The purpose of the eight-day con-

ference was to discuss the fundamental problems of spiritual life, a topic close to Govinda's heart. The fact that the trip was fully paid for by the Italian government was hardly an offer that he could ignore. This was followed by an invitation from the Tibet and Buddhist societies in London, who asked him to speak to their members. There he spoke of Tibet's tragedy in a series of lectures, followed by talks in Europe about the problems that Tibetans were facing due to the imposition of Chinese order on their country.⁶⁹

Govinda, of course, had Li by his side, and Winkler described them as "(a)rticulate, handsome and extremely visible in their artistic robes, (they) were a great attraction wherever they went. Personally, they were very gratified by the outpouring sympathy, and became quite adept at handling interviews and discussions . . . When they returned to India they were minor celebrities, and a new chapter in their lives had begun."⁷⁰

Although the Govindas' visit to Europe had been a success, they were glad to be back at Kasar Devi. Govinda was writing again, and engaged in completing his autobiography, *The Way of the White Clouds*. Impressed with the Western interest in Tibet and her culture, he felt that his new book would be an ideal way to meet the demand. Li busied herself with more practical matters, such as the running and maintenance of the estate, which also had fruit trees that demanded constant care. Nevertheless, she found time to sit on a wall outside the house and do some sketching.⁷¹

However, the privacy of the Govinda household couldn't last forever. Govinda had made a lasting impression on the world when he and Li had visited Europe, and now he started to be sought out as a guru and authority on Tibetan Buddhism. In 1961 a small group, headed by

two well-known American poets, Gary Snyder and Allen Ginsberg, visited the Govindas at Kasar Devi. Snyder wanted to know more about meditation techniques, while Ginsberg wanted to know about the use of drugs in meditation.⁷²

In 1965, Govinda and Li returned to Europe at the invitation of Arya Maitreya Mandala (AAM), a Tantric and Buddhist order that was started by Govinda with Tomo Geshe Rimpoche's encouragement and sanction in 1933.^{73 74} The AAM has three main objectives, namely the practical realization of the

Dharma, assisting those who sincerely seek to understand the teachings, and the development of religious practices best suited to the West.⁷⁵ Thus, in his capacity as founder of the AAM, most of Govinda's time was taken up by seminars, lectures and meetings, and with each new gathering, more and more people came to participate, and respectfully ask his advice. Apart from this, Govinda also had to make time to speak with the publishers of his soon-to-be-published book, *The Way of the White Clouds*.⁷⁶

In *The Lost Teachings of Lama Govinda* the Editor Richard Power sums up the prevailing situation as regards the East-West cultural surge as follows:

In 1966, *The Way of the White Clouds* was published. Commercial jets and mass communication made the world much more intimate. Infused by the diaspora of the Tibetans and popularized by writers such as Jack Kerouac, Allan Watts, and Ram Dass, as well as Snyder and Ginsberg, Eastern religion in general and Buddhism in particular exploded in the consciousness of the West . . . Many ardent seekers and dedicated workers . . . reached out to Govinda during the halcyon days of the late 1960's and

There cannot be growth without changes. To live is not only to be, but to become . . . as long as we are in the process of becoming there is life and growth. The worst thing for us is the inability to change . . . as long as there is change, there is hope. But he who believes he has reached perfection has only reached a dead end, because he has ceased to strive.

early 1970's. They included several individuals in San Francisco, California, which was, of course, one of the hotbeds of the West's revolution in consciousness.⁷⁷

Now there was a need for Govinda to go further afield than Europe. This led to his and Li's tour of America in 1968. The Govinda's visited Chicago, New York City, Buffalo, New York, Cleveland, Ohio, and Tulsa Oklahoma. Having started in mid-September, they arrived in California in early November, and a few days later they lectured at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. They also visited Big Sur, Sausalito, and San Diego, the latter to pick up the ashes of their friend Evans-Wentz, who had passed away on 17 July, 1965.⁷⁸

On their next journey, which they started at the end of 1971, the Govindas were traveling for an entire year. Li actively participated on this tour by giving lectures on Tibetan Art. Their first stop-over was in Malaysia and the Philippines, after which they lectured on the West Coast of America. Then they proceeded to Europe and South America. Winkler remarks that one must admire the enterprise which they showed considering their ages. In October 1972, the Govindas even visited South Africa where they laid the foundation stone for the first chorten (Buddhist shrine) on the continent.⁷⁹

In 1975, the Govindas accepted an invitation from Tarthang Tulku Rimpoche (a Tibetan teacher and founder of Dharma Publishing)⁸⁰ to live at the Nyingma institute in Berkley, California. It was an ideal place for them to stay, because meals were provided, outside visitors prohibited, and silence enforced. Thus Govinda was able to prepare his *Psycho-Cosmic Symbolism of the Buddhist Stupa* for publication, a collection of his lectures from Shantiniketan, which Dharma released the following year.⁸¹

Late in November that year Govinda suffered his first serious stroke, which left him completely debilitated for several days, but from which he made a good recovery. In late August 1977, Govinda and Li left California for Europe where the West German government had organized an exhibition in Bonn of their

artworks and publications. This included a book by Li entitled *Tibetan Fantasies*, consisting of paintings, poems, and music for children. Govinda gave a series of lectures and seminars first in Germany and later in Switzerland, and by the end of the year they returned to California and considered the possibility of remaining in America permanently.⁸²

On their return to California, the Govindas were given shelter in the local Zen center in the Mill Valley, which is situated north of San Francisco. Govinda expressed his regret for not returning to their Indian friends and family, but he was concerned about Li who had developed Parkinson's disease, and he felt that she would receive better treatment in America than India. In return for the comfort of their lodgings Govinda gave four monthly lectures for the Zen center. Ken Winkler writes that "(p)roviding shelter for a man whom they considered an embodiment of the Dharma underscored their lecture series on meditation, spiritual directions and conscientious living."⁸³

Final Years

In 1978, both Govinda and Li had to face up to problems with ill health. Govinda had a gall-bladder operation, and Li suffered from hallucinations caused by her medication. Govinda was confined to bed for a month, and Li preferred to be left alone. They became permanent residents in America and thus entitled to government health payments, but their medical bills had mounted to thousands of dollars, and friends had to intervene to meet the debt.⁸⁴

However, on the positive side, shortly after resolving their health problems, the Govindas went into negotiations with Dharma Publishing to get Li's photo book, *Tibet in Pictures*, published. The book saw the light of day in 1979, and bore testimony to their joint efforts from their Tsaparang expedition. The book appeared in two volumes, was beautifully bound, and bore witness to the statuary in the temples of Tsaparang and the Kumbum of Gyantse that has been destroyed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

In 1980, the Govindas visited India for the final time and gave up their house at Kasar De-

vi. Govinda felt that change was inevitable, and expressed his thoughts three years later in an article as follows:

There cannot be growth without changes. To live is not only to be, but to become . . . as long as we are in the process of becoming there is life and growth. The worst thing for us is the inability to change . . . as long as there is change, there is hope. But he who believes he has reached perfection has only reached a dead end, because he has ceased to strive.⁸⁵

Kasar Devi was legally secured, and the property's title transferred to the Degungpa Order, who was henceforth responsible for its administration. The Govindas' books, papers and household items were finally moved off the ridge by a long line of bullock carts. Li was unhappy about these developments, and preferred to consider it only a temporary measure, hoping that their return was only a matter of time.⁸⁶

The house in Mill Valley had become a refuge for Govinda and Li. A friend, Yvonne Rand, would visit them daily and take care of their needs. A nurse in an adjoining room also provided a constant, though unobtrusive source of aid and comfort. In his last years, Govinda was confined to a wheelchair, but this did not stop him from being productive. He still wrote numerous articles. In 1981, his most ambitious book, a culmination of forty years' work, *The Inner Structure of the I Ching*, was published. He considered it his most important book.⁸⁷

In May 1984, Arya Maitreya Mandala exhibited Govinda's books and paintings, and also presented lectures by Indialogists and society members. This tribute was paid to Govinda in Stuttgart, West Germany, but due to ill health the Govindas were unable to attend.⁸⁸

Lama Govinda's last written communication was to an English Buddhist friend, Sangharashita, who had also traveled with him in Italy, a country on which Govinda thought back with deep affection. In the following excerpt Govinda says:

I am a great admirer of Italian art, and like you, I always uphold the importance of Eu-

ropean culture. Without knowing the roots of our own culture, how can we absorb the essence of Buddhist culture?

Four days later, on January 14, 1985, Govinda tried to tell Li and a friend a story, but his narration was interrupted by a final stroke, and he died in his wife's arms.⁸⁹

Conclusion

This article is but a summary of Lama Govinda's highly eventful life, and an attempted testimony of how it is possible to reconcile Eastern and Western values within the mental framework of a single individual. The majority of quotations in this article referring to the Tibetan experience come from *The Way of the White Clouds*, and serve as an incentive to the reader to experience Govinda's writings first hand. His more scholarly works will be discussed in a forthcoming and independent article that will examine the *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism; Creative Meditation and Multidimensional Consciousness; and The Lost Teachings of Lama Govinda*.

-
- ¹ The photo of Lama Anagarika Govinda is from the *Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia*. Use permitted for non-profit educational use only. http://www.chinabuddhismencyclopedia.com/en/index.php/File:Radio_lama_Anagarika_Govinda.jpg#filelinks. (accessed October 9, 2015).
 - ² <http://www.spaceandmotion.com/Philosophy-Lama-Govinda.htm> (accessed August 30, 2014).
 - ³ Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys* (Shaftesbury, UK: Element Book Limited, 1990), 78.
 - ⁴ Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds* (1966; reprint; London: Rider, 2006), 197 - 219.
 - ⁵ Li Gotami, *Illustrated Weekly of India*, from an article dated April 15, 1951, 29.
 - ⁶ Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 81.
 - ⁷ Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds*, 197.
 - ⁸ Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 83.
 - ⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Manasarovar (accessed April 5, 2015).
 - ¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Rakshastal (accessed April 5, 2015).
 - ¹¹ Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds*, 202.

-
- 12 Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 85.
13 Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds*, 221.
14 Ibid., 221 – 222.
15 Ibid., 222 – 223.
16 Ibid., 225 – 226.
17 Ibid., 228 – 234.
18 Ibid., 229.
19 Ibid.
20 Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 89.
21 Li Gotami, *Illustrated Weekly of India*, from an article dated April 29, 1951, 29.
22 Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds*, 232 – 233.
23 Ibid., 233 – 234.
24 Ibid., 233 – 235.
25 Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 90 – 91.
26 *Fata Morgana*, Italian for “mirage.”
27 Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds*, 235.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 236.
30 Ibid., 237.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 236.
33 Ibid., 237.
34 Ibid., 238.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 238 – 239.
37 Ibid., 240.
38 Ibid., 241 – 242.
39 Ibid., 242, 247.
40 Ibid., 242.
41 Ibid., 245.
42 Ibid., 246.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 247.
45 Ibid.
46 Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 97.
47 Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds*, 253.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 261.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., 262.
52 Ibid., 263.
53 Ibid., 264 – 265.
54 Ibid., 266.
55 Ibid., 266 – 267.
56 Ibid., 248 – 249.
57 Ibid., 269.
58 Ibid., 272.
59 Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2012), 127 – 209.
60 Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds*, 273.
61 Ibid., 281.
62 Ibid., 282.
63 Ibid., 121, 125.
64 Ibid., 127.
65 Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, 35.
66 Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 130.
67 Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Why I am a Buddhist*, (Mahadodhi Youth League, Sarnath, undated), 4.
68 Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 137.
69 Ibid., 138.
70 Ibid., 138 – 139.
71 Ibid., 139.
72 Ibid., 140.
73 Richard Power, *The Lost Teachings of Lama Govinda*, (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 2007), xxxiv.
74 <http://www.arya-maitreya-mandala.org/> (accessed July 7, 2015).
75 Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 152.
76 Ibid., 151.
77 Richard Power, *The Lost Teachings of Lama Govinda*, xxxiv.
78 Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 154.
79 Ibid., 155 – 156.
80 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarthang_Tulku (accessed July 10, 2015).
81 Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 157.
82 Ibid., 158.
83 Ibid., 159.
84 Ibid., 160.
85 Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Buddhism as Actuality, Beyond Pessimism and Optimism*, (The American Theosophist, Fall 1983), 361.
86 Ken Winkler, *A Thousand Journeys*, 163 – 164.
87 Ibid., 164 – 165.
88 Ibid., 168.
89 Ibid., 168 – 169.

A Model of the Human Atom

José Becerra

Abstract

In this short essay, the author drafts a model of the occult constitution of a human being consistent with the most recent theories about the ethereal space-time matrix discovered by quantum physics, theories that have confirmed core tenets of the Ancient Wisdom and previous clairvoyant research in nuclear physics

Introduction

According to Hindu philosophy, the fundamental operating principles of the universe are sattva, rajas, and tamas. In terms of material substance, these three gunas correspond to the chargeless neutron (sattva), the positive proton (rajas) and the negative electron (tamas) of the physical atom.

Modern (quantum) physics has shown that these three functional units of the atom are comprised of elementary particles. These elementary particles are 12 fermions (6 quarks and 6 leptons) and 4 bosons (virtual force-carrier particles).

As of 2012, a fifth boson, the mass generating Higgs particle, has completed the current standard model of quantum physics accounting for everything in the material universe except the force of gravitation. It is possible that sub-quark particles exist, but current physical instruments are not powerful enough to detect them.

In contrast to the elementary particle theory on which the standard model is based, the string theory states that the point-like units of particle physics can also be modeled as one-dimensional objects called strings. The properties of mass, charge and spin would be determined by their vibrational state. In this way, all of the different elementary particles may be viewed as vibrating waves.

A *closed* vibrating string would provide an adequate physical model of the *elementary vortex* that generates matter in the living

energy field which we call space-time. Such vortex has been claimed to have been observed or visualized by the use of clairvoyant powers before the discoveries of modern quantum physics.

The Ultimate Physical Atom

In 1878, Edwin Babbitt published a diagram of “the general form of the Atom” in his book *The Principles of Light and Color*.¹

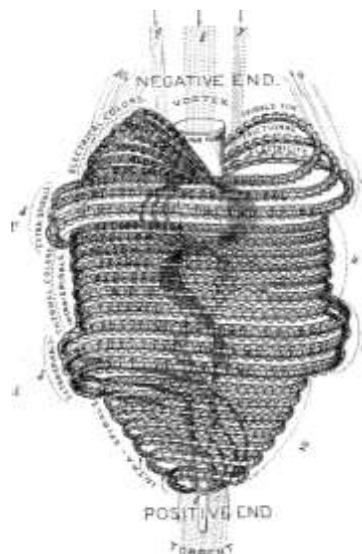


Figure 1. Babbitt's diagram of the atom.

In 1909, Annie Besant (1847–1933) and Charles Leadbeater (1847–1932) first published the results of their clairvoyant research since 1895 in the book *Occult Chemistry*.² They reported a revised version of Babbitt's atom, named “ultimate physical atoms” (UPA,) a chiral pair of 10 vibrating “whorls” or spirilla (3 major and 7 minor) in closed loops.

About the Author

Dr. José Becerra is a retired Commissioned Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service who has worked along with the New Group of World Servers in the fields of science, medicine and mathematical epidemiology at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for close to 30 years.

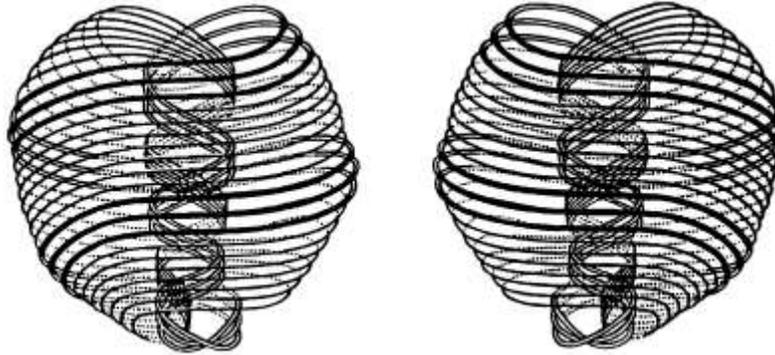


Figure 2. Ultimate Physical Atoms according to Besant and Leadbeater

The congruence between these extrasensory perceptions of subatomic vortices and a possible “sub-quark state of the $E8 \times E8$ heterotic superstring” of quantum physics has been proposed by the theoretical physicist and Theosophist Stephen Phillips. He initially published his correlation of ideas in the book *Extra Sensory Perception of Quarks*³ and later in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*⁴ and his website.⁵

Abstract⁴ - A century-old claim by two early leaders of the Theosophical Society to have used a form of ESP to observe subatomic particles is evaluated. Their observations are found to be consistent with facts of nuclear physics and with the quark model of particle physics provided that their assumption that they saw atoms is rejected. Their account of the force binding together the fundamental constituents of matter is shown to agree with the string model. Their description of these basic particles bears striking similarity to basic ideas of superstring theory. The implication of this remarkable correlation between ostensible paranormal observations of subatomic particles and facts of nuclear and particle physics is that quarks are neither fundamental nor hadronic states of superstrings, as many physicists currently assume, but, instead, are composed of three subquark states of a superstring.⁶

A rebuttal by a scientist of the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research group⁷ and Phillips’s reply⁸ were also published. Another re-

buttal to Phillips’s analyses by a Yale University chemist has also been published.⁹

Still, Phillips upholds his views maintaining that “the existence of the Higgs field and the validity of the Higgs vortex/string model of quark confinement was published by Besant & Leadbeater 56 years before physicists conceived [the Higgs] particle.”¹⁰ According to Phillips, Geoffrey Hodson (1886–1983) had also reported evidence of similar subatomic “strings or flux tubes” in the 1950s.⁹

As Above, So Below

According to Alice A. Bailey in her book *The Consciousness of the Atom*, there are four kinds of atoms.

First, the atom of the chemist and physicist.

Secondly, the human atom, or man.

Thirdly, the planetary atom, energised by a planetary Logos, or the Heavenly Man.

Fourthly, the solar atom, indwelt by the solar Logos, or the Deity.¹¹

At the human scale, the correspondence of the physical atom of the chemist would be the “permanent atom” appropriated by the Spirit-Soul. The permanent atoms would engender *concentric* atomic, buddhic, mental, astral and physical quantum shells or bodies.

Permanent atom. Those five atoms, with the mental unit, one on each of the five planes of human evolution (the mental unit being also on the mental plane) which the monad appropriates for purposes of manifestation. They form a stable centre and are

relatively permanent. Around them the various sheaths or bodies are built. They are literally small force centres. (Extracted from the Glossary of *Letters on Occult Meditation*)¹²

Thus, it is plausible to postulate a model of the nucleus of the human atom comprised of a permanent Monadic essence (represented by the positive life of the protons) within a temporary egoic Soul (represented by neutrons). This nucleus would be enclosed by electron shells corresponding to the planes and subplanes of the solar system.

Bailey sums it up thus:

We have four states of intelligent activity, which we might term consciousness, self-consciousness, group consciousness, and God consciousness. These demonstrate through four types of atoms: first, the chemical atom and all atomic forms; secondly, the human atom; then, the planetary atom; and finally, the all-encompassing solar atom. Ensouling these atomic forms can be seen manifesting all sub-human types of life, from the life of the atom of substance to the informing life of the higher animals, then that life which we call human, that of man, the thinker; next, the Heavenly Man, and then the great Life of the solar system, Whom the Christian calls God, or the Logos.¹⁰

Addressing the Law of Attraction (or Love) in *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, Djwhal Khul states that all energy in the solar system is the energy of the logioic physical “*permanent atom*” and that the “solar sphere” containing “the seven spirillae of the logioic [physical] permanent atom” is “closely similar” to Babbitt’s atom (pp. 1180-82).

... all energy, demonstrating in the solar system, is after all the energy of the *logioic physical permanent atom*, having its *nucleus* on the atomic subplane of the cosmic physical. This physical permanent atom (as is the case with the corresponding atom of the incarnating jiva), has its place within the causal body of the Logos on His own plane; it is, therefore, impressed by the to-

talinity of the force of the egoic cosmic lotus, or the attractive quality of cosmic love. This force is transmitted to the solar system in two ways: Through the medium of the **Sun**, which is in an occult sense the *physical permanent atom*; it, therefore, attracts, and holds attracted, all within its sphere of influence, thus producing the logioic physical body: through the medium of *the planes which are the correspondences to the seven spirillae of the physical permanent atom* of a human being.”¹³

Earlier in the Treatise (p. 1059), Khul had stated that “... in the human atom the *spiral cyclic* activity is egoic and controlled from the egoic body.” This “spiral cyclic activity” is apparent in Babbitt’s atom.

Fractals in an Ethereal Space-Time Matrix

Therefore, the UPA observed by Babbitt, Besant, Leadbeater and Hodson would provide a useful dynamic model for sub-quark strings or fiery vortices of etheric energy. These vortices would generate—by condensation—the elementary particles of matter in the living matrix of space-time.

The physical body of a human being would thus be composed of physical atoms replicating the UPA archetype. At higher (i.e., astral, mental) energy levels, these UPA would correspond to the permanent atoms appropriated by the Monad in a causal body.

In a concentric model of the permanent atom, the atomic, buddhic, mental, astral and physical bodies and planes, as well as the causal body itself, would appear as shells around a central Monadic point of fiery energy, the Jewel of a 12-petalled egoic lotus. Each atomic subplane of a plane would contain a replica of this archetype of the atom, at the physical, the human and the solar atom scale, in a fractal pattern.

According to theoretical physicist Frank Wilczek, the ethereal nature of space, correcting “the human illusion that space is empty,” has reemerged in quantum field models.¹⁴ The need to account for the density of “empty” space (the cosmological constant), comprising

95% of matter (the “dark” or transparent matter of the universe), has also forced physicists to reconsider Einstein’s reluctance to accept “a space-filling material ether” co-substantial with the space-time matrix.

Evolution of the Human Atom

Group consciousness is a mark of human evolution. Human atoms self-organize in groups that could be mapped to 7 energy levels (“valence electron configurations”) defining the 18 families of chemical elements. Four basic types of orbital patterns of electron clouds, accounting for electron blocks of size 2 (s orbital), 6 (p orbital), 10 (d orbital) and 14 (f orbital), provide the electromagnetic mechanism for chemical affinity. The laws of chemical affinity rule the formation of groups of atoms or molecules.

The chemical transmutation of individual physical atoms, by the process of radioactive decay (alpha particles, beta particles, gamma rays), would correspond to stages in the Path of Initiation of the human atom. After the third initiation, the neutrons comprising the causal body of the Helium-like Soul would decay into primal Hydrogen-like atoms of protons and electrons.

Conclusion

The Greeks believed in four essential constituents of matter. Given that, according to esoteric postulates, the physical body (earth) is not a principle, water, fire and air would then correspond to the three fundamental operating principles in the universe: sattva (air), raja (fire) and tamas (water). A fifth constituent, the ether, would unify the theoretical model of matter in agreement with the most-recent findings of quantum physics.¹⁵

Four fundamental forces of nature have been discovered in this ethereal space-time matrix. Between the strong nuclear forces of the physical atom and the weak gravitational forces of the solar system, a vortex model of interacting spiritual, egoic and physical forces of the human atom is presented in this manuscript.

Although “all models are wrong; some models are useful.”¹⁶ The UPA observed by Babbitt,

Besant, Leadbeater and Hodson would provide a useful model of the occult constitution of the human being and the human evolutionary progress. As Bailey reminds us, “it does no harm to speculate if the effect is to give us a broader vision, a wider tolerance, and a greater and wiser optimism.”¹⁰

¹ Edwin Babbitt, *The Principles of Light and Color: the Healing Power of Color* (reprint; 1878; Secaucus, NJ, Citadel Press, 1878).

² Annie Besant, Charles W. Leadbeater, *Occult Chemistry*. Revised Edition edited by A.P. Sinnett (London, UK, Theosophical Publishing House, 1919. <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/16058>. (accessed October 13, 2015).

³ Stephen M. Phillips, *Extrasensory Perception of Quarks* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1980). http://www.smphillips.8m.com/pdfs/ESP_of_Quarks.pdf. (accessed October 13, 2015).

⁴ Stephen M. Phillips, “Extrasensory Perception of Subatomic Particles,” *Journal of Scientific Exploration*. Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 489-525, 1995. <https://www.scientificexploration.org/journal/volume-9-number-4-1995>. (accessed October 13, 2015.)

⁵ Stephen M. Phillips, *Sacred Geometries and Their Scientific Meanings: The Interface between Science and the Transcendental*. <http://www.smphillips.8m.com/>. (accessed October 13, 2015)

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Dobyns, YH. “Report of Referee on Extrasensory Perception of Subatomic Particles.” *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 527-538, 1995. <https://www.scientificexploration.org/journal/volume-9-number-4-1995>. (accessed October 14, 2015).

⁸ Stephen M. Phillips, “Reply to Dobyns,” *Journal of Scientific Exploration* Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 539-548, 1995. <https://www.scientificexploration.org/journal/volume-9-number-4-1995>. (accessed October 15, 2015.)

⁹ J. Michael McBride, *Serious Scientific Lessons from Direct Observation of Atoms through Clairvoyance*, Department of Chemistry, Yale University, New Haven, CT. <https://webpace.yale.edu/chem125/125/history99/8Occult/OccultAtoms.html>. (accessed October 12, 2015).

-
- ¹⁰ Stephen M. Phillips, *Re-discovery of the Higgs Boson?* <http://www.smphillips.8m.com/news.html>. (accessed October 15, 2015).
- ¹¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Consciousness of the Atom* (reprint; 1993; New York, NY: Lucis Publishing Co, 1922. Orig. 1922 edition at: <https://archive.org/details/consciousnessofa00bail>. (accessed October 19, 2015).
- ¹² Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation* (New York, NY: Lucis Publishing Co. <https://archive.org/details/lettersonoccultm00bail>. (accessed October 19, 2015).
- ¹³ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (reprint; 1977; New York, NY: Lucis Publishing Co., 1925).
- ¹⁴ Frank Wilczek, "A Brief History of Ether," in *The Lightness of Being* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008).
- ¹⁵ "Wave Structure of Matter in Space: Outline of a New Paradigm." Adapted from Geoff Haselhurst's introduction to his *Wave Structure of Matter in The Dynamic Unity of Reality*. <http://www.ngsm.org/agni-yoga/wsm.htm>.
- ¹⁶ George E. P. Box, *Statistics for Experimenters* (ed. W. G. Hunter, W: Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 1978).

Radiation

Dorje Jinpa

Having attained the state of the Sun and Moon, one illuminates the corners of the world with the light of one's own body. (Nagarjuna)

In the early 20th century scientists discovered that radioactivity was a process involving the spontaneous transmutation of matter into energy. According to Einstein's famous equation $E=mc^2$, a tremendous amount of energy is released through the transmutation of a very small amount of matter. The Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul, in his *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, a book which Albert Einstein once checked out of a library in New York City,¹ says that the Law of Radiation, which governs the transmutation/radiation process, operates in a like manner in all the kingdoms of nature.

Radiation is the outer effect produced by all forms in all kingdoms when their internal activity has reached such a stage of vibratory activity that the confining walls of the form no longer form a prison, but permit of the escape of the subjective essence. It marks a specific point of attainment in the evolutionary process and this is equally true of the atom of substance with which the chemist and physicist deal, when working with the elements, as it is of the forms in the vegetable kingdom, the forms of the animal kingdom, in the human, and likewise in the divine.²

The eucalyptus tree, he tells us, is esoterically regarded as radioactive.³ In the human kingdom the radiation of light produced from the regeneration and transmutation of the body is sometimes seen emanating from the auras of highly developed saints and sages. This bodily radiation is brought about by an increase in the vibratory activity of the etheric body through its response to an equal increase in the vibratory rate of an elevated consciousness. *Whatever takes place in the consciousness is directly reflected in kind within the etheric body.* As the consciousness expands, and is refined and

intensified, the energy-substance of the vehicles (physical-etheric, emotional, and mental) are thereby equally stimulated to the point where, as a part of the transmutation process, the liberated energy particles begin to radiate out from the body as a subtle light. The bodies become, in a very real sense, radioactive. The reverend Teacher, and author of *Agni Yoga Books*,⁴ said:

There is a state of development of psychic energy called luminous, and a being at this stage begins to emit light. . . . First we see the outer light, then that [light which is] within ourselves and only after kindling of the 'torch' [of the heart] can we radiate light.⁵

The radiation and eventual transmutation of the vehicles occur only after the fire of the heart has been kindled. All subtle energies within the etheric body must pass through and be purified by the fire of the heart. This is the basis of the spiritual path. *It is the energy of the heart that refines, expands, and eventually transforms the consciousness.* It also transmutes the subtle energies of the etheric body to a point where first radiation and then complete transfiguration of the body and spirit occurs. Djwhal Khul said:

Radiation is transmutation in process of accomplishment. Transmutation being the

About the Author

Dorje Jinpa is the author of *A Synthesis of Alchemy* (out of print), *Mysteries of the Heart*, *The Coming Avatar of Synthesis* (free pamphlet), and *Heart Essence*, a translation of two of the five treatises by Bodhisattva Maitreya and the recently published *Sensa: Thee Lost Language of the Ancient Mysteries*. He may be reached at DorjeJinpa@gmail.com.

liberation of the essence in order that it may seek a new centre.... Basically it is the result of the inner positive nucleus of force or life reaching such a terrific rate of vibration, that it eventually scatters the electrons or negative points that compose its sphere of influence and scatters them to such a distance that the Law of Repulsion dominates. The atomic sphere, if I might so express it, dissipates, the electrons come under the Law of Repulsion and the central essence escapes and seeks a new sphere, occultly understood.”⁶

The Law of Repulsion is the natural inclination of matter when separated from the second or consciousness principle, which through the Law of Attraction holds it together.

The dark light of the tiny atoms of which the physical vehicle is constructed is responsive to the stimulation passing down from the soul into its vehicle, and, when man is under the control of the soul, there eventuates the shining forth of the light throughout the body. This shows as the radiance emanating from the bodies of adepts and saints, giving the effect of a bright and shining light. When the light of the soul is blended with the magnetic light of the vital body, it stimulates the atoms of the physical body to such an extent that each atom becomes in turn a tiny radiant centre. This only becomes possible when the head, heart, and solar plexus and the centre at the base of the spine are connected in a peculiar fashion, which is one of the secrets of initiation.⁷

The alchemical wedding, which is often mentioned in alchemical texts as being necessary before transmutation can take place, pertains to the union of certain energies. In the human

kingdom this unification is between the three fundamental principles of life—spirit, soul, and body. The spirit or life thread is already fully connected. The soul or consciousness thread (*antahkarana*) is not. Therefore, the primary task of the alchemist on this level is to

The radiation and eventual transmutation of the vehicles occur only after the fire of the heart has been kindled. All subtle energies within the etheric body must pass through and be purified by the fire of the heart. This is the basis of the spiritual path. It is the energy of the heart that refines, expands, and eventually transforms the consciousness.

bridge the gap between the separated aspects of consciousness.⁸ *This is accomplished by refining and expanding the consciousness in the fire of the heart.* The complete unification of the consciousness, which in the East is called enlightenment, causes, as a kind of chain reaction, the unification of corresponding energies in each of his vehicles—the mind, feeling nature, and etheric body. Only a very few are invited to

Royal Wedding, which takes place in the august circle of the Greater Mysteries.

The lengthy unification process takes many lifetimes to accomplish. It begins with spiritual striving, which, depending upon its intensity and purity and through the agency of Law of Attraction, produces union with the object of the search. This in turn attracts the spiritual Light from above, producing an illumination of the consciousness and as a reflex an illumination of the etheric body as well, until eventually, the seeker is literally radiant with ethereal light.

St. Seraphim, the Russian Orthodox saint, called this accumulation of the spiritual light, “the acquisition of the Holy Spirit,” which he says “is the true aim of the Christian life.” He demonstrated this acquisition to his disciple Motovilov, who described what he saw in some detail:

After these words I glanced at his face and there came over me an even greater reverent awe. Imagine in the center of the sun, in the dazzling light of its midday rays, the face of the man talking to you. You see the

movement of his lips and the changing expression of his eyes, you hear his voice, you feel someone holding your shoulders; yet, you do not see his hands, you do not even see yourself or his figure, but only a blinding light spreading far around for several yards and illuminating with its sheen both the snow blanket which covered the forest glade and the snow-flakes which besprinkled me and the great Elder. You can imagine the state I was in!⁹

St. Seraphim listed some of the signs that accompany the acquisition of the Holy Spirit:

1. A calmness and peace of the soul. "This is the peace of which the Lord said, 'my peace I give to you which is not the peace which the world gives.'"
2. An extraordinary joy in the heart. "When the Spirit comes down to man and overshadows him with the fullness of His descent, then the human soul overflows with unspeakable joy, for the Spirit of God fills with joy whatever it touches."
3. An extraordinary warmth. "By it the hermits of both sexes were kept warm and did not fear the winter frost, being clad, as in fur coats, in the grace-giving clothing woven by the Holy Spirit."

In the Agni Yoga Teachings some of the signs accompanying the descent of the spiritual Light include:

Someone heard far off voices; someone envisioning it, participated in the Subtle World; someone became luminous; someone levitated, someone walked on water; someone could read thoughts; someone could read with closed eyes a closed book; someone swallowed poison without harm; someone did not feel pain; someone in the snow generated the heat of the heart; someone did not feel fatigue; someone could help by healing; someone could manifest knowledge of the future. Thus, one can enumerate all the manifested phenomena and a multitude of instructive examples from life. But for an instant gather all these

qualities into one body and you will have the new human transmutation indicated in many Teachings.¹⁰

An ancient fragment from the *Old Commentary*, translated by Djwhal Khul, states:

The Solar Orb shines forth in radiant splendor.

The illuminated mind reflects the solar glory.

The lunar orb rises from the centre to the summit,

When the three suns are one, Brahma breaks forth.

And a lighted world is born.

Djwhal Khul gave an interesting commentary on this ancient fragment.

This literally means, that when the soul (symbolized by the Solar Orb) the mind and the light in the head form a single unit, the creative power of the Solar Angel can express itself in the three worlds, and can construct a form through which its energy can actively express itself.¹¹

The "three suns" represent the three fires of the etheric body, which are direct reflections of the creative fire of the mind, the wisdom fire of the heart, and the dynamic fire of the will. Through their unification (the alchemical wedding) Brahma, the third or mother aspect of the Hindu Trinity, "breaks forth" (is released) as intense radiation.

The evolution of the "absorption and radiation of the light," whether of a sun, an atom, or the human organism, is a great mystery. Djwhal Khul gives this hint:

Initiation veils a secret and the revelation of the secret is imminent. Just what this secret is, I may not reveal, but it is concerned with a peculiar type of energy, which can be induced at a moment of supreme tension. The only possible hint I can give you in connection with this mysterious matter is that it is closely related to the "Blinding Light," which Saul of Tarsus saw on the road to Damascus and the "blinding light," which

accompanied the discharge of energy from the atomic bomb The “principle of absorption” of the light emerges as one of the subjects to be studied, understood and mastered between initiations, for each initiation carries the subject another step forward.¹²

Note: This paper has been excerpted from Dorje Jinpa’s forthcoming book: *A Synthesis of Alchemy*.

¹ Lucis Trust Lending Library. For information on the lending library in New York and London visit: http://www.lucistrust.org/en/arcane_school/library.

² Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (1979; reprint; New York: Lucis Trust, 1951), 1060.

³ Ibid., 1060.

⁴ The Agni Yoga books are published by the Agni Yoga Society, which was founded in

1920 by Nicholas and Helena Roerich. Visit: <http://www.agniyoga.org/>.

⁵ Heart, (1982: reprint; New York: Agni Yoga Society, 1944), # 38.

⁶ Alice Bailey. *A Treatise on White Magic* (1934: reprint: New York: Lucis Trust, 1979), 478.

⁷ Ibid., 105-106.

⁸ See Alice Bailey’s *The Rays and the Initiations* on building the Antahkarana. (1960: reprint; New York: Lucis Trust, 1972), 441-530.

⁹ N.A. Motovilov. *The Aquisition of the Holy Spirit*, quoted in Archimandrite Moore’s *St. Seraphim of Sarov*, (New Sarov, TX: New Sarov Press, 1994), Chapter VIII.

¹⁰ *Heart*, # 99

¹¹ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 98

¹² Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. II* (1955; reprint; New York: Lucis Trust, 1983), 327.

Great Esotericists

Katherine Westcott Tingley



Katherine Tingley (1847-1929)¹

During the latter half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries—when men dominated society at almost every level—women played a disproportionate role in the formation and operation of esoteric movements and the dissemination of esoteric teachings. Mary Baker Eddy, Helena Blavatsky, Anna Kingsford, Annie Besant, Moina Mathers, Helena Roerich, Alice Bailey, and Dion Fortune were notable examples. Earning a worthy place on that same list was Katherine Augusta Westcott Tingley (1847–1929).

Katherine Westcott was born to well-to-do parents in Newbury, Massachusetts. Her birth date is given as July 6, 1847, when the Sun and Jupiter were in Cancer; and the Moon, Mars, Uranus and Pluto in Taurus. She had no planets in the arc Libra through Aquarius. One source gave her time of birth as 10:00 a.m., which would indicate a Virgo ascendant and Gemini on the midheaven, but the accuracy of that information is unknown.² Published rayological tabulations do not list our subject, but her life's work suggests that she had a Ray 2 soul and a Ray 3 personality.

Katherine's early education emphasized music, but her intuitive faculties were evident by age four or five. After spending time in the woods, she would tell her mother that she heard the trees singing. Fearing mental illness her parents dispatched her for several years to a boarding school run by nuns. In her early teens, the family moved to Virginia, where her father served as an officer in the American Civil War (1861–1865). There Katherine saw the terrible plight of wounded soldiers, and humanitarian instincts were awakened that would remain in her for the rest of her life.

In due course, Katherine Westcott moved to New York City, and founded The Emergency Society, which operated a shelter and soup kitchen for the poorest of the poor, and the Ladies Society of Mercy, whose members visited hospitals and prisons. In an interview many years later, she reflected on her service mission:

Day after day I went about in the homes of these people. I saw the pathetic woman with the drunken husband, and sometimes I

understood why the husband drank. Then, too, I saw the industrious husband with the worthless, slovenly wife. I saw hardship as the result of vice, and vice as the outcome of hardship. I realized that all our systems of helpfulness were totally backhanded. We dealt then, and most people deal now, with effects rather than causes. After the damage is done we attempt to repair. I saw a vision of getting to fundamental causes, starting the child right and fitting him to meet the exigencies of life with some possibility of keeping the upper hand and retaining originality, purity, and ideals.³

In 1888, following two failed marriages, Katherine married Philo B. Tingley, an employee of a steamship company. While involved in her humanitarian work, she met William Q. Judge, head of the New York Lodge of the Theosophical Society. The two immediately recognized each other's qualities; Katherine joined the Society on October 13, 1894, and two weeks later Judge accepted her into the Esoteric Section.

Judge was a charter member of the Theosophical Society, founded in 1875. When Helena Blavatsky and Henry Olcott moved to India in 1879, to establish the international headquarters in Adyar, they left Judge in charge of the American Section. Blavatsky's declining health forced her to leave India in 1885, and she made her transition in 1891.

Charles W. Leadbeater arrived in Adyar in 1884, and Annie W. Besant followed in 1893. Although Olcott continued to serve as president until his death in 1907, Besant quickly became its most influential member. She and Leadbeater embarked on an ambitious program

of clairvoyant research, which, in Judge's view was a departure from Theosophy's core principles. A dispute erupted, and charges and counter-charges were exchanged between Judge and Besant. Judge was expelled, and in April 1895 a majority of members of the American Section voted to secede from the parent Society.

Upon its incorporation in the United States, the breakaway faction registered the name "The Theosophical Society." To avoid confusion, however, it soon became known as the Theosophical Society in America. It appointed Judge President-for-Life; but, already in ill health, he passed away within one year. In March

1896 Katherine Westcott Tingley, a member for less than eighteen months, was elected president.

The new Society continued most of the activities of the New York Lodge. But the year of Judge's presidency and first few years of Tingley's saw the formation of several institutions. One was Universal Brotherhood, giving voice to the fundamental Theosophical principle of global brotherhood "without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color." Another was the School for the Revival of the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity (SRLMA). A third was a publishing enterprise to disseminate Theosophical books and tracts.

Katherine Tingley also made a ten-month, round-the-world tour, probably making good use of her husband's connections with the ocean liner industry. She and her party met many individuals and Theosophical organizations; they also organized meals and other events for disadvantaged people en route.

While Besant and Leadbeater focused on the advancement of esoteric knowledge, Tingley focused on world peace, service and education. All distinguished themselves in their respective niche areas. Katherine Tingley provided us with a role model of selfless service, dedication to her vision of Theosophy, and building an effective esoteric organization. She and the people her organization nurtured continue to inspire us.

While in India in 1896 Tingley had an encounter with a man she identified as “Helena Blavatsky’s Teacher.” She described him thus:

Now, even in H. P. Blavatsky's time he was considered to be quite old in years, but he looked very young when I saw him. I would have said that he was then not more than thirty-two or thirty-three years of age. He appeared to be Tibetan, dark of skin. His face was unlike any other that I had ever seen before. His whole life was lighted up with an inner light that had toned his features, had brightened his eyes, and had brought to him the glow of youthfulness and splendor of character.⁴

Among much else the man offered this advice:

If you had to go from here to America you would not sit still and dream about the place you wanted to go to, and think that was enough. The trouble with some theosophical aspirants is that they waste the strength of their lives looking at the goal ahead, rather than at the immediate moments and seconds of which the Path is

composed. . . . They should let the beaming thought pour itself into each arriving moment and be indifferent to the morrow. One can find in every instant of time, if one has the desire, the door into worlds of golden opportunity, the gateway to a glorious path stretching out into the limitless eternal.⁵

On her return, Tingley stopped in California and decided that Point Loma, near San Diego, should be the permanent headquarters of the Theosophical Society in America. In February 1900, the Society officially moved from New York City to “Lomaland.” An impressive complex of buildings was under construction, including the Temple of Peace, the Raja Yoga Academy, and an outdoor amphitheater. Regarding the choice of “Raja Yoga” as the name of the school, she explained that it meant “the kingly union of mental, spiritual, and physical development, aimed to return to the pure ideal of Greek simplicity.”⁶ Initially, the school was for the children of families living at Point Loma, but it grew to absorb the SRLMA and offered instruction from the primary grades through advanced graduate studies.



Raja-Yoga Academy, International Theosophical Headquarters, Point Loma⁷

In an interview she gave after moving to San Diego, Tingley reflected on the vision she had had since childhood:

When I was a little girl in Newburyport I saw in my childish imagination the schools

I was later to erect at Point Loma. When I was little more than five years of age I used to build with my blocks the plans of the buildings now part of the theosophical establishment in California. Every building was octagonal in shape. Every one con-

tained a piano. Every one was presided over by a mother and a teacher included in one person. Thus in later years at Point Loma, I built octagonal buildings with a piano in each one and a housemother at the head. . . . I realize that the power and value of music in the daily life had never been sufficiently appreciated or properly utilized.⁸

The amphitheater, overlooking the ocean, was the first open-air theater in the United States. An article in a local history journal describes its impact on the region:

Katherine Tingley was an admirer of the dramatic arts, and she viewed drama, music, and the dance as providing a means of depicting man's nobler side before the general public. The people of the larger community of San Diego were thus treated to Greek drama, and to Shakespeare, and as the musical training of Raja Yoga students took shape, an increasingly professional concert series augmented the dramatic presentations.⁹

Katherine Tingley oversaw the many facets of Lomaland's operations. She also worked tirelessly for universal brotherhood, world peace, and the alleviation of suffering among the poor, prisoners, and the victims of war. She lectured throughout the world and organized many conferences to further those ends. Tingley wrote four books: *The Gods Await*, *Theosophy: The Path of the Mystic*, *The Wine of Life*, and *The Splendor of the Soul*. In 1919, Lomaland was chartered in the state of California as the Theosophical University. And the Society's publishing arm became the Theosophical University Press.

Katherine Tingley made her transition July 11, 1929, at the age of 82, while on a lecture tour in Sweden. She had served as president of the Theosophical Society in America for thirty-three years. Gottfried de Purucker, a long-time colleague, succeeded her as president. In 1942, the United States Navy requisitioned Lomaland for military purposes, and the Society moved to the Los Angeles area, finally settling in Pasadena, where it remains today. The Society is now generally known as the Theosophical Society—Pasadena.

The original Theosophical Society, founded in 1875, included strong personalities who did not always share one another's vision. While Helena Blavatsky was alive, her dominant position as spiritual leader maintained a fair measure of unity.¹⁰ But upon her passing, the internal tensions led to a number of schisms. In addition to Judge's departure, another notable one occurred in 1912 when Rudolf Steiner, head of the German Section, left to form the Anthroposophical Society. The Theosophical Society in America was not immune. Immediately after Tingley's election, a group led by Ernest T. Hargrove, who had been Judge's secretary, broke off to form yet another competing Theosophical Society. It survived until 1943.

The early Theosophists all agreed on the broad principles of discipleship. Their differences were mostly over matters of emphasis. While Besant and Leadbeater focused on the advancement of esoteric knowledge, Tingley focused on world peace, service and education. All distinguished themselves in their respective niche areas. Katherine Tingley provided us with a role model of selfless service, dedication to her vision of Theosophy, and building an effective esoteric organization. She and the people her organization nurtured continue to inspire us. To her great credit, Tingley lived up to her ideal of brother-/sisterhood; she never engaged in the harsh rhetoric toward other individuals and groups that plagued the esoteric community throughout much of the twentieth century.

Contributed by John F. Nash

¹ The photo of Katherine Wescott Tingley is in the Public Domain.

² Source:
http://www.astrotheme.com/astrology/Katherine_Tingley. Last accessed Sept. 13, 2015.

³ Gertrude Stevenson, "Katherine Tingley Explains Her Work and Aims: An Interview," *Sunrise: Theosophic Perspectives*, (April/May 1998).
Online:
<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/sunrise/47-97-8/th-ktgs.htm>. Last accessed Sept. 13, 2015.

⁴ Katherine Tingley, "My First Meeting with H. P. Blavatsky's Teacher," *Sunrise: Theosophic Perspectives*, (April/May 1998). Online: <http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/sunrise/47-97-8/th-ktkt2.htm>. Last accessed Sept. 13, 2015. Blavatsky's two principal teachers were the Masters Morya and Koot Hoomi, but she also met the Master Djwhal Khul. The description of the man as being Tibetan in appearance suggests that he may have been Djwhal Khul.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Gertrude Stevenson, "Katherine Tingley Explains Her Work and Aims: An Interview."

⁷ Academy Building, International Theosophical Headquarters, Point Loma, California. Online:

<http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/theos/s8amgfk2.jpg>.

⁸ Gertrude Stevenson, "Katherine Tingley Explains Her Work and Aims: An Interview."

⁹ Iverson L. Harris, "Reminiscences of Loma land," *Journal of San Diego History* (Summer 1974, Volume 20, Number 3).

¹⁰ Unity was never complete. For example, Anna Kingsford, head of the London Lodge, left the Society in a dispute with Blavatsky and A. P. Sinnett.

Book Review

***Mystery and Language of Color*, by Kurt Abraham.** White City, Oregon: Lampus Press, 2015. Paperback 129 pages, Publisher's price US\$24.00. Available at: www.amazon.com and lampus@wizzards.net.

In one of his many revelatory passages on color, the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul informs us that color is the result of logic meditation. He goes on to say that the universe was conceived and built through the use of color, and that we too can acquire the capacity to build or create through the wise comprehension and use of color.

In this learned book, which draws upon the writings of Alice A. Bailey, Helena Blavatsky, Charles Leadbeater and Rudolf Steiner, as well as his own intuitive insights, Kurt Abraham provides us with the information and guidance to understand the deep esoteric significance of color as well as the means to apply it.

The Mystery and Language of Color distinguishes itself from some of the more familiar books on color, such as those that deal with chromotherapy or color healing. This work is concerned with colors as vibrational frequencies and active creative powers, and the means by which the veil that separates the external world from the subjective, subtle realms can be dispersed. The mystery and language of color includes more than what appears to the ordinary eye or the physical senses, as Abraham reminds us in this quote from Blavatsky: "Our physical senses cannot take cognizance of vibrations above and below the septenary and limited gradations of the prismatic colors... unless we learn to paralyze our Quaternary [personality] and discern both the superior and inferior vibrations with our spiritual senses..." (*The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. 5. p. 457)

These finer, invisible colors and levels of perception, all of which have their own vibrational frequency, can be clairvoyantly perceived. Yet, it is possible to perceive *subjective* color by other means and techniques. Before examining the specifics, Abraham begins with a pre-

sentation on the fundamental postulates of esoteric philosophy needed to understand the language of color. Among these are the Law of Correspondences, the three great Cosmic Laws: the Law of Synthesis, the Law of Economy, and the Law of Attraction and one of its subsidiaries, the Law of Colour, behind which lies the mystery of the Seven, the Three and the One.

The primary source of color is also discussed as well as color's two-fold purpose. According to Bailey, in a *Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, color serves to cloak the Spirit aspect, and acts as a center of attraction for the central spark that lies behind the outer veil.

Chapter Two explores the seven visible colors of the spectrum in greater detail, beginning with the importance of indigo, the synthetic undertone for the present Second Solar System. The esoteric colors and qualities of systems One and Two are also discussed. This chapter concludes with comments from the author on the necessity for frequent brooding and meditation on color as a means of ascertaining both its esoteric significance and microcosmic functions. "This involves seeing the activity in the unseen, the cause behind the effects," and an effort to employ the knowledge that has been gleaned. He goes on to suggest that "one can, for example, substitute a rose response for a red sensation in the astral body."

Abraham follows this with a chapter containing a series of colorful images based on his work with a technique described in the Agni Yoga teachings. The *diamond consciousness* technique involves being conscious of the Mundane and Subtle Worlds simultaneously. The author explains that this technique "has to do with having a clear question in mind before going to sleep. "One thinks of a clear-cut, intelligent question and then forgets about it." In the morning, when one is in a hypnagogic state, i.e. half awake and half asleep, a clear thought or image can arise. No attempt at interpretation is to be made at this stage. But after

the impression or image fades, it is to be well-noted and carefully drawn.

The images in this first series depict feelings, moods, emotions and mental states, all of which are accompanied by clarifying notes. It is not clear if these images are intended to serve as prototypical images or symbols, or if they are more idiosyncratic or personal in nature. Nevertheless, the images presented here serve as an example of how it is possible to work with the aforementioned technique. These pictures also show how one can develop a growing sensitivity to the Soul and attune one's self to the inner significance of color.

Chapter Four explores the theme of "Color Dynamics." Here, Abraham takes as his starting point Bailey's "Sublimation of the Five Human Stages." This material, drawn from *Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol. 1, makes use of verbal imagery and reference to color to denote humanity's journey from the "red of selfish desire to the clear blue flame" wherein "the world of lighted forms is perceived." The author explains the meaning and symbolism of each stage and the journey we must all take from darkness and inadequacy to the burning light and life of service and peace—the life-condition of a Bodhisattva. Also touched upon are the colors that will be of most concern to the beginner. These are rose, green and orange, since they correspond to earlier stages on the spiritual path—Stages I through III.

Abraham's primary focus in Chapter Five is on color as it relates to Venus and the Higher and Lower Minds. The author writes in a clear and concise manner about the origin, structure and significant differences between the Higher and Lower Manas. Included are several multi-colored diagrams that will help the reader better understand the material being discussed.

A second set of images is introduced in Chapter Six. Twelve Images are included that explore such themes as the *Armor of Masculine Aggression* as it pertains to the planet Mars. Others deal with the Divine Feminine, the planet Jupiter, the Healing Power of Music and Hope.

The next section provides a lucid and accessible presentation on the Antahkarana in which all the complex facets of the building process as well as the results are examined. Also included is a meditation, given by Djwhal Khul, involving the use of color to facilitate soul-mind-brain communication. Meditation, as Bailey says, is the most effective tool for developing the ability to understand "personal vibration, to attune that vibration to the egoic one, and to synchronise it later with that of the Master."

A final series of images from the author is offered in the closing chapter of the book. This set of pictorial images depicts the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac. Here, as elsewhere, the author elucidates each image, its meaning, and the ideas that the various colors and forms suggest.

Kurt Abraham gives us much to ponder upon in this investigation on *Mystery and Language of Color*. The book contains a wealth of foundational information, along with several useful tools that can inspire readers to undertake their own research into color, vibration and light. Readers are offered a valuable treatment of the subject—one that can help them better appreciate the beauty of color, its psychological meaning, its effect on the outer and inner life and its practical application for advancement on the Path of Discipleship.

Donna M. Brown
Washington DC.