

The Third-Ray Cause of Inharmony and Disease

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Abstract

The *seven rays* denote seven primary differentiations of energy, and doctrines on the seven rays have been expounded by various theosophical writers. Alice Bailey, in her book *Esoteric Healing*, presents seven symbolic stanzas that portray “The Seven Ray Causes of Inharmony and Disease,” but with very little explanation. She acknowledges that these stanzas are “abstruse and difficult,” but says that their comprehension leads to “the isolation of the seven psychological causes of disease, inherent in the substance of all forms in this world cycle.” This article elucidates the practical significance of the stanza that portrays the third-ray cause of inharmony and disease.

The Seven Rays

The *seven rays* are mentioned in both the ancient Hindu *Rig Veda* and modern Theosophy,¹ and the following definition is often used: “A ray is but a name for a particular force or type of energy, with the emphasis upon the quality which that force exhibits and not upon the form aspect which it creates.”² Alice Bailey (1880 – 1949), a member of the Theosophical Society before leaving it to pursue her own activities, says, “Every unit of the human race is on some one of the seven rays,”³ so the seven rays provide a way of characterizing human beings according to the qualities that they exhibit. Bailey also says, “We must bear in mind that the ... synthetic characteristic of each of the rays is denoted by the ray name,”⁴ and gives the following ray names:

Ray I—Will or Power

Ray II—Love-Wisdom

Ray III—Active Intelligence or Adaptability

Ray IV—Harmony, Beauty, Art

Ray V—Concrete Knowledge or Science

Ray VI—Devotion or Idealism

Ray VII—Ceremonial Order or Magic.⁵

Bailey provides this definition, “When we speak of ray energy we are in reality considering the quality and the will-purpose aspect of a certain great Life to Whom we give the name ‘Lord of a Ray.’”⁶ She considers the Lords of the Seven Rays to be “The seven Spirits which are before his throne,”⁷ as rendered in Revelation 1:4 (King James Version), and gives this analysis:

The seven Spirits, we are told in the Scriptures of the world, are “before the Throne of God”; this signifies that They are not yet in a position to mount the Throne, symbolically speaking, owing to the fact that They have not yet achieved complete divine expression.⁸

Bailey concludes that the seven rays, which are the emanations from the Lords of the Seven Rays, must be imperfect:

It will be apparent to you that these streams of force, emanating from the Lords of the Seven Rays, are coloured, therefore, and “tainted”—if I may use such a word—by

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the limitations of these same great Beings; They are Gods, from our point of view, but in reality, Gods in the making, even though much nearer solar divinity than the most advanced human being is near to planetary divinity. They are the “imperfect Gods” spoken of in *The Secret Doctrine* and are the planetary Logoi of the sacred and non-sacred planets.⁹

Helena Blavatsky (1831– 1891), founder of the Theosophical Society, expresses a similar notion:

The millions upon millions of imperfect works found in Nature testify loudly that they are the products of finite, conditioned beings—though the latter were and are Dhyani-Chohans, Archangels, or whatever else they may be named. In short, these imperfect works are the unfinished production of evolution, under the guidance of the imperfect Gods.¹⁰

Blavatsky also writes, “There are seven chief groups of such Dhyani Chohans, which groups will be found and recognised in every religion, for they are the primeval SEVEN Rays,”¹¹ so her preceding quotation has this implication: the millions of imperfect works found in nature testify loudly to the imperfection of the seven rays. Therefore, every human being also shares in that imperfection by being on some one of the seven rays.

The Seven Stanzas

Bailey’s book *Esoteric Healing*, which appears as the fourth volume in a five-volume series entitled *A Treatise on the Seven Rays*, addresses the various ways that the topic of healing is related to the seven rays. In particular, this book gives seven symbolic stanzas, one for each ray, that portray “The Seven Ray Causes of Inharmony and Disease.”¹² Bailey introduces these stanzas with the following comment:

If the great informing Lives of the planets within our solar system are imperfect, the effect of this imperfection must inevitably affect Their planetary creations, Their bodies of manifestation, and thus introduce a karmic condition over which the

individual human being has absolutely no control, but within which he moves and which he shares. It is obviously impossible for me to elucidate this theme. All I can do or am permitted to do is to give you seven stanzas from one of the most ancient volumes in the world; it deals with the seven ray causes of imperfections in our planetary manifestations.¹³

She also describes the comprehension that students might obtain from studying these stanzas:

The comprehension of the seven stanzas which I now propose to give you will lead eventually to the isolation of the seven psychological causes of disease, inherent in the substance of all forms in this world cycle, because all forms are infused with the life energy of the “imperfect Gods.”¹⁴

Even though *Esoteric Healing* was first published in 1953, and even though its seven stanzas are said to embody revelatory information, no publicized effort seems to have been made to explain any of these stanzas. The reason for this absence is that each stanza consists of very enigmatic sentences. Bailey herself acknowledges, “These are abstruse and difficult concepts, but they should be pondered upon, and deep reflection will lead to understanding.”¹⁵

The Third-Ray Stanza

This article attempts to explain only the third-ray stanza:

The Great One gathered here and there. He chose and He rejected. This power He refused and this power He accepted. He had no purpose linked to the six purposes of His six Brothers. He acquired a form and liked it not; threw it away and chose another. He had no settled point or plan but lived in glamour and liked it well. He smothered both the good and the bad, though using both. Excess in one direction could be seen and starvation in another. Both these extremes governed His choice of living substance, He threw together those that suited not each other, then saw the end was sorrow and deceit. Patterns He made,

but purpose suited not. He gave up in despair.¹⁶

Bailey's entire commentary on the third-ray stanza, in which "astral" is used as a synonym for emotional,¹⁷ is as follows:

The main effect of this imperfect "maneuvering" and manipulation, as it has been called, is largely astral in nature, producing consequent physical ill health and the undesirable effects which we have already studied in this treatise. It is because this third ray energy is the energy of substance itself that its imperfections demonstrate profusely in the human tendency to disease. Glamour results from the excessive use of this third ray energy for selfish and personal ends and manifests primarily upon the sixth or astral plane. As a result of this manipulation of desire, and the wild maneuvering for its satisfaction along material lines, you have such diseases as the gastric and intestinal disorders and the various stomach troubles which devastate civilised humanity—far more than the savage races. Certain brain disorders also are effects, and low vitality.¹⁸

The third-ray stanza consists of eleven symbolic sentences, and the purpose of this article is to elucidate their practical significance. Each sentence is considered separately and is repeated in bold print.

1. The Great One gathered here and there.

Bailey comments, "the stanzas ... indicate the quality of the descending energies and the taints which these energies carry and convey to all forms which are vitalised by the life of our planetary Logos."¹⁹ Although this comment suggests that the stanzas are applicable to "all forms" on the planet, our commentary is concerned only with the application to human beings. Accordingly, our commentary construes the "The Great One," in the first sentence of the third-ray stanza, to be *people on the third ray*.

Who are the people on the third ray? Bailey writes, "The mass of intelligent humanity are found on this [third] ray,"²⁰ and also, "Humanity is predominantly governed by the

third Ray of Active Intelligence."²¹ As an example of a specific person, Epictetus (55 – 135), a Greek sage and Stoic philosopher, appears to be on the third ray, because his philosophical teachings are similar to Bailey's Technique of Integration for the Third Ray.²² As another example, Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895 – 1986), an Indian speaker and writer on philosophical and spiritual subjects, also appears to be on the third ray, because his philosophical teachings are similar to Bailey's Third-Ray Method of Building the Antahkarana.²³

If "gathered" in the first sentence meant *collected* or *appropriated*, it could be referring to the third-ray method of appropriation, of which Bailey gives this description:

Just as the grasping and attracting are terms applicable to the methods of the two first rays, so a process of "selective manipulation" is characteristic of this third ray ... Just as souls in the first case seem to *grasp* indiscriminately what they need, and force the substance thus grasped into the form or appearance required, enduing it with the quality needed in a dynamic and forceful way, and just as souls on the second ray set up a motion which gathers material out of the immediately surrounding environment, and imposes on it, through *magnetic attraction*, the desired quality, so in the case of souls on the third ray the required material is chosen here and there, but that chosen already has the needed quality (note this difference) and nothing whatever is imposed.²⁴

The above quotation says, "in the case of souls on the third ray the required material is chosen here and there," but this phrase incorporates the same wording, "here and there," found in the first sentence. Let us accept the common wording as a clue having this implication: the first sentence is a symbol or sign for the third-ray method of appropriation. Accordingly, the first sentence has the following meaning: *Third-ray people use a process of selective manipulation to gather materials that already have the needed quality.*

2. He chose and He rejected.

Bailey says that “the names of the Lord of the third ray indicate His use of force and His real nature,” and that one of these names is, “The Discriminating Essential Life.”²⁵ Here, *discrimination* is defined as “the recognition and understanding of the difference between one thing and another,” rather than “the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things.”²⁶

The verb *chose*, which is part of the second sentence, characterizes discriminating capacity, because Bailey mentions, “Discriminating capacity, or the power to choose and thereby gain experience.”²⁷ The verb *rejected*, which is also part of the second sentence, also characterizes discriminating capacity, because Bailey also says, “Learn to reject and thus discriminate the best.”²⁸ Thus the second sentence has this meaning:

They have discriminating capacity that enables them to choose and reject from what they have gathered.

3. This power He refused and this power He accepted.

Bailey writes, “Under the occult method, we must begin with the universal and the whole; in time the individual and the particular will stand revealed, but in relation to the whole.”²⁹

The third-ray stanza is composed according to the occult method, because the first and second sentences depict two general characteristics of third-ray people, whereas the third sentence portrays how these general characteristics are applied in a specific case.

What is the meaning of “power” in the third sentence? Bailey speaks of “the power of some mental thoughtform, of some ideal, and some concept—sensed, grasped and interpreted in mental form—to dominate the mental processes of the individual.”³⁰ *A Course in Miracles* (*ACIM*), a modern system of spiritual psychol-

ogy, explains how every belief, which is an accepted concept, has power:

No belief is neutral. Every one has the power to dictate each decision you make. For a decision is a conclusion based on everything that you believe. It is the outcome of belief, and follows it as surely as does suffering follow guilt and freedom sinlessness.³¹

Thus “power” could be inferred as signifying a concept, because both Bailey and *ACIM* use the word *power* to characterize the ability of a concept to dominate or dictate mental processes. Bailey corroborates this inference through her frequent use of the verbs *refuse* and *accept*, which are also part of the third sentence, in relation to

a concept or statement, such as in these two passages:

Aspirants lose much by refusing to let go of that which the lower mind cherishes. When they do succeed in being entirely open minded and are ready to accept the new theories and hypotheses, they discover that the old and dearly held truth is not really lost, but only relegated to its rightful place in a larger scheme.³²

Must all that a Master says be accepted as true and infallibly correct? Is the disciple wrong when he refuses (if he does) to recognise the Master’s point of view and the statements He may make?³³

What is the meaning of the verbs *refuse* and *accept* in the third sentence? As illustrated by the above passages, each person has the responsibility to choose the concepts that he or she believes: refusing some concepts and accepting others. *ACIM* has a similar perspective by saying, “you *are* responsible for what you believe.”³⁴

It might be thought, however, that many beliefs are imposed upon children by their parents, but *ACIM (Urtext Manuscripts)* indicates that even children choose the concepts that they accept as beliefs:

No one has adopted ALL of his parents' attitudes as his own. In every case, there has been a long process of choice, in which the individual has escaped from those he himself vetoed, while retaining those he voted FOR.³⁵

The third sentence uses the phrase, "this power," twice. The adjective "this" refers to something that is nearby or present, and "power" signifies a concept, as discussed previously, so "this power" denotes the concept being evaluated. Consequently, the repeated use of the phrase depicts people who approach their concepts in a serial way: they make a judgment about one concept, which is either refusal or acceptance, and then they make a judgment about another concept. Their serial approach does not allow them to postpone making a judgment about a concept that they have begun to evaluate, or to conclude that they do not know its validity. Moreover, the sentence does not depict a process of extended evaluation but simply shows the movement from the judgment of one concept to that of another.

Let us make the following inference from the foregoing depiction: Third-ray people tend to make their judgments cursorily, which means with careless speed, and thereby misjudge what is true or false. Bailey corroborates this inference by saying, "Third ray people are ... susceptible to ... the rapidity with which they can deceive themselves,"³⁶ and, "Third ray people ... hardly know where truth begins and delusion ends."³⁷

Thus, in the third sentence, third-ray people apply their general characteristics, which were portrayed in the first and second sentences, to the following specific case: *They gather concepts that have the potential of meeting their need, and then use their discriminating capacity on them, refusing some and accepting others as their beliefs. They tend to make their judgments cursorily and thereby misjudge what is true or false.*

4. He had no purpose linked to the six purposes of His six Brothers.

Bailey describes the evolution of will from individual purpose to group purpose:

The little will of the little lives must be merged in the larger will of the whole. Individual purpose must be identified with group purpose, which is as much of the purpose of the Whole or the One Life as the little life can grasp at any given point in time and space.³⁸

She also describes how individual purpose entails a sense of separation:

As long as your state of awareness lays emphasis upon the fact of your individuality, the group *idea* cannot take form as a group *ideal*. The sense of separateness is still present. It is a sense which has been laboriously developed—under evolutionary law—from the moment when your soul decided to experiment, to experience, and to express divinity. Separative effort, separative emotional reactions and separative materialistic endeavour have been (if I may so unfortunately express it) the spiritual essentials which must perforce precede group effort and conscious group relations.³⁹

Many third-ray people, such as Epictetus and Krishnamurti, have certainly identified with the purpose of a larger group, but what about the third-ray people being portrayed in the third-ray stanza? Bailey writes, "The seven brothers are all the children of the same Father,"⁴⁰ so *seven* brothers signify an entire group of members. The fourth sentence assumes that a portrayed person is participating in a group, so "His six Brothers" signify all other members of that group. Accordingly, the entire sentence, "He had no purpose linked to the six purposes of His six Brothers," means that a portrayed person does not share an interest in common with any other group member. Thus the following inference can be made: Each portrayed person has individual purpose even when participating in a group.

The foregoing inference can be corroborated in the following way. The *personality* is defined as the threefold lower self that consists of the physical body, emotional body, and mental body.⁴¹ Bailey mentions, “the third ray faculties and capacities of your personality—critical, analytical, separative, prideful and full of self-interest,”⁴² which shows that these third-ray faculties and capacities have characteristics that foster individual purpose.

Consequently, the fourth sentence has this meaning: *They are motivated by individual purpose even when participating in their various groups.*

5. He acquired a form and liked it not; threw it away and chose another.

A *form* could signify “the shape of a thing or person,”⁴³ and *shape* could denote the “outward appearance,”⁴⁴ so the first phrase, “He acquired a form,” could indicate the acquisition of a thing or person for the outward appearance. Such a goal would be selfish and personal, and it would be consistent with the individual purpose that was depicted in the fourth sentence. In her earlier commentary on the third-ray stanza, Bailey mentions the “use of this third ray energy for selfish and personal ends,” so let us render the meaning of the first phrase in a corresponding way: The portrayed people acquire some thing or person for their selfish and personal ends.

The second phrase, “and liked it not,” indicates that the portrayed people are dissatisfied with their acquisition. Epictetus, however, teaches that such dissatisfaction is an effect of their earlier selection of beliefs, or opinions, which occurred in the stage represented by the third sentence:

Men are disturbed not by the things which happen, but by the opinions about the things: for example, death is nothing terrible, for if it were, it would have seemed so to Socrates; for the opinion about death, that it is terrible, is the terrible thing. When then we are impeded or disturbed or grieved, let us never blame others, but ourselves, that is, our opinions.⁴⁵

When you see a person weeping in sorrow either when a child goes abroad or when he is dead, or when the man has lost his property, take care that the appearance do not hurry you away with it, as if he were suffering in external things. But straightway make a distinction in your own mind, and be in readiness to say, it is not that which has happened that afflicts this man, for it does not afflict another, but it is the opinion about this thing which afflicts the man.⁴⁶

To *throw away* could mean to “waste or use in a foolish way.”⁴⁷ For example, one might say: He threw away his inheritance. Accordingly, the third phrase, “threw it away,” is interpreted as follows: The portrayed people use their acquisition in a foolish way, because they blame it, rather than their own beliefs, for being the cause of their dissatisfaction.

Epictetus teaches his students to resist such foolishness:

The foolish person thinks that those things that initially strike the mind as dreadful and horrifying really are what they first appear, and, as if they were properly to be feared, he approves them by his assent “and confirms them by his judgment” (the word that the Stoics use when they discuss this topic). But the wise person, although affected superficially and briefly in colour and expression “does not assent,” but keeps the consistency and firmness of judgment which he has always had about things that look like this to the mind, namely that they are not proper objects of fear at all, but that they frighten with a false face and empty terror.⁴⁸

The above quotation is consistent with the initial part of the third sentence’s meaning: namely, one can refuse or accept a given concept. In particular, with respect to the concept that things appearing “as dreadful and horrifying” are “proper objects of fear,” the “foolish person” accepts it when “he approves them by his assent,” whereas the “wise person” refuses it when he “does not assent.”

Since the portrayed people accept the concept that their acquisition is the cause of their

dissatisfaction, they must also believe that another thing or person can be the cause of their satisfaction. To *choose* could mean to “think of—choose in one’s mind.”⁴⁹ Accordingly, the fourth phrase, “and chose another,” is interpreted in this way: The portrayed people think of a replacement that would satisfy them.

Let us suppose that Epictetus’ teaching is correct: when the portrayed people accept the concept that their acquisition is the cause of their dissatisfaction, they accept an *illusion*, which is an erroneous concept. After accepting this concept as their belief, they have difficulty in recognizing it as an illusion. Krishnamurti describes this difficulty:

Ignorance of the ways of the self leads to illusion; and once caught in the net of illusion, it is extremely hard to break through it. It is difficult to recognize an illusion, for, having created it, the mind cannot be aware of it.⁵⁰

To recognize that their concept is an illusion, the portrayed people need to, in Bailey’s words, “stand aside and observe with dispassion”;⁵¹ but they do not do so, because the fourth phrase depicts them as mentally turning toward a future replacement and thereby avoiding dispassionate observation of their present circumstance. Krishnamurti describes how such avoidance blocks understanding:

If one can understand what to do with “what is”, then one will not escape to “what should be”. Because one does not know what to do with “what is”, one hopes that by inventing an ideal that one can somehow through the ideal change “what is”. Or, because one is incapable and does not know what to do, one’s brain becomes conditioned to living always in the future—the “what one hopes to be”. One is essentially living in the past but one hopes by living for an ideal in the future to alter the present. If one were to see what to do with “what is” then the future does not matter. It is not a question of accepting “what is”, but remaining with “what is”. One can only understand something if one looks at “what is” and does not run away from it—not try to change it into something else. Can one

remain with, observe, see, “what is”—nothing else?⁵²

Thus the fifth sentence is consistent with the final part of the third sentence’s meaning: namely, third-ray people tend to reach their conclusions cursorily and thereby misjudge what is true or false.

In summary, the fifth sentence has this meaning: *They acquire some thing or person for their selfish and personal ends, and are dissatisfied with it; they foolishly blame it, rather than their own beliefs, for being the cause of their dissatisfaction, and think of a replacement that would satisfy them. In this manner they accept an illusion, or erroneous concept, but avoid the means for recognizing it as an illusion.*

6. He had no settled point or plan but lived in glamour and liked it well.

The first phrase is: “He had no settled point or plan.” Here, “settled point” refers to a clear-cut, positive goal set in advance, and “settled ... plan” refers to the means to make that goal happen. As *ACIM* explains, a settled goal motivates the implementation of the corresponding plan:

The value of deciding in advance what you want to happen is simply that you will perceive the situation as a means to *make* it happen. You will therefore make every effort to overlook what interferes with the accomplishment of your objective, and concentrate on everything that helps you meet it.⁵³

Let us consider some examples. Bailey says to “add virtue to virtue in the building of the form of the ideal self until all the virtues have been attempted,”⁵⁴ so a settled goal might be to build the form of the ideal self, and the corresponding plan would be to add virtue to virtue. Bailey also mentions people who “identify themselves discriminately with group purpose, and submerge their separative identities in organised group activity and synthesis,”⁵⁵ so another goal might be to identify with group purpose, and the corresponding plan would be to submerge one’s separative identity in organized group activity. A third goal might be to express what Marshall Rosenberg, an Ameri-

can psychologist and peacemaker, calls “Non-violent Communication,” and the corresponding plan would be to practice the language and communication skills that he espouses.⁵⁶

The word *ego* has various meanings. *ACIM*, which often uses this word, gives it the following meaning: “Everyone makes an ego or a self for himself, which is subject to enormous variation because of its instability”;⁵⁷ “The ego’s ... purpose is to be separate, sufficient unto itself and independent of any power except its own.”⁵⁸ When people do not have a settled goal or settled plan, *ACIM* describes how their ego determines their emotional response in any situation:

Without a clear-cut, positive goal, set at the outset, the situation just seems to happen, and makes no sense until it has already happened. Then you look back at it, and try to piece together what it must have meant. And you will be wrong. Not only is your judgment in the past, but you have no idea what should happen. No goal was set with which to bring the means in line. And now the only judgment left to make is whether or not the ego likes it; is it acceptable, or does it call for vengeance? The absence of a criterion for outcome, set in advance, makes understanding doubtful and evaluation impossible.⁵⁹

According to the fourth sentence, the portrayed people are motivated by what Bailey calls “individual purpose,” which is equivalent to what *ACIM* calls “the ego’s purpose.” According to the first phrase of the sixth sentence, these people do not have a settled goal or settled plan, so the foregoing quotation implies that their individual purpose determines their emotional response in any situation.

The second phrase is: “but lived in glamour.” Bailey gives this definition, “*Glamour*, in its turn, veils and hides the truth behind the fogs and mists of feeling and emotional reaction,”⁶⁰ and explains how glamour is created from illusion: “*The Problem of Glamour* is found when the mental illusion is intensified by desire.”⁶¹ In the stage represented by the fifth sentence, the portrayed people accept the illusion that things or people have the power to satisfy or

dissatisfy them. In the stage represented by the second phrase of the sixth sentence, they find glamour by intensifying their illusion with desire, but how do they do that?

Bailey says, “the use of the creative imagination is the outstanding characteristic” of “third ray results,”⁶² and “the use of the imagination ... brings in the realm of desire.”⁶³ Krishna-murti describes how the imagination gives rise to desire:

We are asking: what is the source of desire? We must be very truthful in this, very honest, for desire is very, very deceptive, very subtle, unless we understand the root of it ... When you see something, the seeing brings about a response. You see a green shirt, or a green dress, the seeing awakens the response. Then contact takes place. Then from contact thought creates the image of you in that shirt or dress, then the desire arises. Or you see a car in the road, it has nice lines, it is highly polished and there is plenty of power behind it. Then you go around it, examine the engine. Then thought creates the image of you getting into the car and starting the engine, putting your foot down and driving it. So does desire begin and the source of desire is thought creating the image, up to that point there is no desire. There are the sensory responses, which are normal, but then thought creates the image and from that moment desire begins.⁶⁴

Consequently, the portrayed people create images of themselves as being involved with their illusions and thereby attach desires to their illusions. In her earlier commentary on the stanza, Bailey describes the outcome: “Glamour results from the excessive use of this third ray energy for selfish and personal ends and manifests primarily upon the sixth or astral plane.”

The third phrase, “and liked it well,” depicts the stage in which the portrayed people are lost in glamour about their own glamour. Bailey also describes this stage: “Many good people today ... deify their glammers and regard their illusions as their prized and hard won possessions.”⁶⁵ These people have a *second-order*

desire, which is a desire about a desire. A *first-order desire* is a desire for something other than a desire.⁶⁶

For example, an unwilling addict has a first-order desire for heroin, but wishes that this desire were otherwise, which is a second-order desire. In the context of the third phrase, if the portrayed people took pride in having a refined, cultivated, or sophisticated taste in such things as food, art, wine, music, literature, antiques, or clothes, then their pride would reflect a second-order desire, and their taste would be a first-order desire.

In summary, the sixth sentence has this overall meaning: *They do not have a settled goal or settled plan, which implies that their individual purpose determines their emotional response in any situation; but live in glamour, which means that their creative imagination attaches desires to the things or people that they believe can satisfy them; and like their glamour, which means that they attach second-order desires to their first-order desires.*

7. He smothered both the good and the bad, though using both.

The first phrase is: “He smothered both the good and the bad.” To *smother* could mean, “to lavish a surfeit of a given emotion on (someone).”⁶⁷ For example, one might say: The parents smothered the child with affection. Bailey uses smother in this sense when she characterizes some people by writing, “They were smothered by desire.”⁶⁸ In her earlier commentary on the third-ray stanza, Bailey mentions “this manipulation of desire,” so “He smothered,” in the first phrase, is construed to mean: They lavish a surfeit of desire. Bailey mentions “all human tendencies, good and bad,”⁶⁹ so “the good and the bad” could denote good and bad tendencies. *Good tendencies* are inclinations, or predispositions, to proceed toward the betterment of humanity, and *bad tendencies* are inclinations to proceed toward personal gain. Thus the first phrase could have this meaning: They lavish a surfeit of desire on both their good and bad tendencies. But what is the meaning of this meaning?

Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, provides this definition:

For our purposes, we will define a habit as the intersection of *knowledge*, *skill*, and *desire*. Knowledge is the theoretical paradigm, the *what to do* and the *why*. Skill is the *how to do*. And desire is the motivation, the *want to do*. In order to make something a habit in our lives, we have to have all three.⁷⁰

Desire is needed for developing habits, because it motivates one to find the appropriate knowledge and to figure out the appropriate skill. Consequently, a surfeit of desire implies that there is enough desire to develop a tendency into a habit, so the first phrase is given this meaning: They lavish desire on both their good and bad tendencies so as to develop them into habits.

For example, Bailey describes the development of a good tendency into a habit:

You can note too, if you will, a growing tendency towards soul control. I say tendency, my brother, for it is when tendency is transformed into habit and dynamic daily rhythm that the gates of initiation open before the disciple.⁷¹

Although the word *soul* has various meanings, it is used in here to denote the inner divine voice in a human being.⁷² Bailey also describes the development of a bad tendency into a habit:

There are also those tendencies which constitute a form of dangerous appetite, which lead to undesirable habits, a letting down of the morale, and are dangerous to the will of the person, rendering him futile to fight these predispositions. He succumbs to them and pays the price of such habits, which is disease and death.⁷³

The second phrase, “though using both,” indicates that the portrayed people use both good and bad habits. As an example, Bailey provides the following instruction to a student:

You have functioned in a glamorous world of your own idea of service and of what

should be done, but there has been no true cooperation with what is *being done*—only an interest in what your own over-active third ray tendency has sought to produce has engaged your deepest attention. Superficially you cooperate, basically you do not.⁷⁴

This particular student is described as having an “over-active third ray tendency” that yields opposing good and bad habits: “Superficially you cooperate, basically you do not.”

Lucille Cedercrans (1921 – 1984), who presented a teaching called the “New Thought-form Presentation of the Wisdom,” describes the development of habit patterns:

People who place their feet upon the path of mental development move either to the right, toward white magic, or to the left, toward black magic. They are confronted with the forked path of decision as they make those many small choices having to do with the routine of daily living. They are learning the creative process and establishing those patterns in mental substance which direct the weight of their creativity, toward the forces of light for the betterment of humanity or toward the forces of darkness for what they think is personal gain.⁷⁵

In Cedercrans’ account, people direct the “weight of their creativity” toward either good habit patterns or bad ones, which suggests that they are emphasizing one kind though using both kinds. Correspondingly, the seventh sentence seems to be saying: *They lavish desire on both their good and bad tendencies so as to develop them into habits, emphasizing one kind though using both kinds.*

8. Excess in one direction could be seen and starvation in another.

Let us introduce some additional terminology before considering the eighth sentence. The physical body of a human being has both dense and subtle portions. The *dense physical body* contains the muscles, bones, and glands. The *subtle physical body* is called the etheric or vital body in theosophy;⁷⁶ “golden bowl” in the Bible (Ecclesiastes 12:6);⁷⁷ and *prana mayakosha*, a Sanskrit name, in Hinduism.⁷⁸

The Sanskrit word *chakra* literally means wheel. The Hindu tradition describes seven wheels of energy, called chakras, which belong to the etheric body and have the following locations and Sanskrit names:

1. Head centre—sahasrara chakra
2. Centre between eyebrows—ajna chakra
3. Throat centre—vishuddha chakra
4. Heart or cardiac centre—anahata chakra
5. Solar plexus centre—manipura chakra
6. Sacral or sexual centre—svadhisthana chakra
7. Centre at base of spine—muladhara chakra.⁷⁹

Bailey describes the kind of diseases that can be traced to the condition of the chakras, or centers:

All diseases—except those due to accidents, wounds resulting in infections, and epidemics—can in the last analysis be traced to some condition of the centres, and therefore to energy running wild, to energy overactive and misdirected or insufficient and lacking altogether, or retained instead of used and transmuted into a higher corresponding centre of energy.⁸⁰

Bailey also describes the fundamental cause of disease:

I have attempted to make clear to you that the fundamental cause is related to energy, to its presence in excess as it pours through the centres, or to its deficiency. Here lie the two main factors in the production of disease. It is essential that those of you who are interested in the study of disease and its healing should admit this and permit it to form the basis of your approach.⁸¹

The above quotation mentions both “excess” of energy and its “deficiency,” just as the eighth sentence mentions both “excess” and “starvation,” so the above quotation suggests the following explanation of the eighth sentence: An excess of energy is in one chakra, and a deficiency of energy in another.

Bailey, however, provides clues as to the particular chakras that are involved. First, she describes a general principle that relates the chakras to physical organs:

It is essential that spiritual healers should get clearly in their minds the picture of the areas in the body which are governed by the head centres and the other centres, because within those areas are the various organs which react to disease. The health of these organs is largely dependent upon the centres, as they condition the glands and as the energy is distributed throughout the body.⁸²

In her earlier commentary on the third-ray stanza, Bailey writes, “As a result of this manipulation of desire, and the wild maneuvering for its satisfaction along material lines, you have such diseases as the gastric and intestinal disorders and the various stomach troubles which devastate civilized humanity.” She characterizes the solar plexus chakra as “the organ of self-conscious personal desire,”⁸³ and specifically associates its over-activity with gastric, intestinal, and stomach disorders:

The solar plexus centre is, at this time, highly active among men and women everywhere. In every country millions of people are over-sensitised, emotional frequently to the point of hysteria, full of dreams, visions and fears, and highly nervous. This produces widespread gastric difficulties, indigestion, stomachic and liver ills and diseases, and intestinal disorders.⁸⁴

Consequently, the portrayed third-ray people can be inferred as having an excess of energy in their solar plexus chakra.

Bailey says that an integrated personality is controlled by a mental plan rather than instinct or desire:

The developed man, with an integrated personality, gradually brings the etheric body under the control of mental energy and his physical plane activity is not then so much implemented by instinct or desire as by thought energy, dedicated to and expressing the nature of the man’s plan.⁸⁵

The sixth sentence’s first phrase, “He had no settled point or plan,” shows that the people portrayed in the third-ray stanza have not yet begun the effort to integrate their personality. Bailey characterizes the ajna

chakra as “the centre of personality force and integration,”⁸⁶ so it is activated through the effort of integrating the personality. Accordingly, the portrayed people can be inferred as having a deficiency of energy in their ajna chakra.

Bailey corroborates the foregoing inference in two ways. First, she tells a third-ray student,

The ajna centre is, in your case, very little awakened. It is quiescent and revolving slowly ... You see, therefore, that for the present the ajna centre is the one which should receive immediate attention.⁸⁷

Second, Bailey writes in her earlier commentary on the third-ray stanza, “Certain brain disorders also are effects, and low vitality.” Low vitality is a symptom of the lack of personality integration. Moreover, Bailey says, “The ajna centre between the eyebrows [becomes the controlling factor during the stage of mental development], corresponding to the period of integration and of personality control, wherein certain areas of the brain

become sensitised and used.”⁸⁸ Consequently, activity in the ajna chakra is associated with both use of the brain and personality integration, which indicates that a deficiency of energy in the ajna chakra could be associated with brain disorders and low vitality.

To “see” sometimes means to see mentally or to discern,⁸⁹ so the eighth sentence is given this significance: *An excess of energy could be discerned in their solar plexus chakra, which is the center of self-conscious personal desire, and a deficiency of energy in their ajna chakra, which is the center of personality integration.*

9. Both these extremes governed His choice of living substance, He threw together those that suited not each other, then saw the end was sorrow and deceit.

In the ninth sentence, “both these extremes” refers to the extreme imbalance of the solar plexus and ajna chakras that was depicted in the eighth sentence. Also, “living substance” denotes the hormones from the endocrine system, because Bailey mentions “The blood stream, the recipient of streams of living energy from the endocrine system, via what are called the hormones,”⁹⁰ and says, “And energy is substance and nothing else.”⁹¹

Consequently, the ninth sentence is concerned with the relationship between the chakras and endocrine system, which Bailey describes as follows:

Much is said today in modern medical investigation anent the “imbalance” of the endocrine glands, and many physical difficulties are ascribed to this frequent imbalance. But behind this condition of the glandular system lies the basic imbalance of the centres themselves. Only when there is a right understanding of force and its reception and consequent use, will right balance be achieved and the human endocrine system control the physical man in the manner that is intended.⁹²

Bailey lists the seven chakras and allied glands:

1. The head centre—The pineal gland

2. The ajna centre—The pituitary gland

3. The throat centre—The thyroid gland

4. The heart centre—The thymus gland

5. The solar plexus centre—The pancreas

6. The sacral centre—The gonads

7. The centre at base of spine—The adrenal glands.⁹³

Thus the first phrase, “Both these extremes governed His choice of living substance,” has this meaning: the imbalance of the solar plexus chakra and ajna chakra causes an imbalance in the hormones secreted by the pancreas and pituitary gland.

The second phrase, “He threw together those that suited not each other,” implies that the portrayed people are responsible for transmitting hormones into their blood system that do not suit each other. Bailey expresses this responsibility in the form of the following law:

Disease is an effect of the basic centralisation of a man’s life energy. From the Plane whereon those energies are focussed proceed those determining conditions which produce ill health. These, therefore, work out as disease or as freedom from disease.⁹⁴

According to Bailey, the imbalance in the endocrine system produces a self-engendered disease:

We might consequently lay down the premise (one which the medical profession will later accept in its entirety) that diseases which are self-engendered (if I may use so curious and inadequate a phrase), and which are not the result of contagion or infection or of accidents, are caused by the failure, the limitation, the deficiency or the excess, and by the overdevelopment or the underdevelopment, of the endocrine system. This ductless glandular system, via the hormones, affects every part of the physical organism—via the blood stream—and it may therefore be truly posited that when the ductless glands are perfectly balanced and functioning correctly, there will be no diseased areas in the body.⁹⁵

The third phrase is: “then saw the end was sorrow and deceit.” The word “sorrow” is interpreted as sorrow for the self-engendered disease. The word “deceit” indicates betrayal of trust. Bailey says, “the third Ray of Intelligence ... is apt to bring with it the sense of pride of intellect,”⁹⁶ and “A deep distrust of one’s reactions to life and circumstance, when such reactions awaken and call forth *criticism, separateness* or *pride*, is of value.”⁹⁷ Accordingly, the word “deceit” could indicate that the self-engendered disease causes one to distrust one’s reactions to life and circumstance, because those reactions betrayed one’s trust by bringing on the disease.

In summary, the ninth sentence is given this meaning: *The imbalance of the solar plexus and ajna chakras causes an imbalance in the hormones secreted by the pancreas and pituitary gland; consequently, the portrayed people are responsible for transmitting hormones into their blood system that do not suit each other, then have sorrow for their self-engendered disease and distrust of their reactions to life and circumstance.*

10. Patterns He made, but purpose suited not.

Bailey describes the three major patterns associated with a ray:

Every ray produces three major patterns which are imposed upon the form nature, whether it be that of a man, a nation or a planet. These three patterns are: *the emotional pattern*, embodying the aspiration of a man, a nation or a race; it is the sum total of the desire tendency at any one time; *the mental pattern*, emerging later in time and governing the thought processes of a man, a nation or a race. The emotional and mental patterns are the negative and positive aspects of the personality of a man, a nation or a race. *The soul pattern* is the pre-disposing and spiritual goal, the ring-pass-not or destiny which the spiritual principle succeeds eventually in imposing upon the personality of a man, a nation or a race. This soul pattern eventually supersedes and obliterates the two earlier pattern-producing processes.⁹⁸

According to the above quotation, the emotional pattern is the first major pattern that is made. In the series of sentences that comprise the third-ray stanza, the emotional pattern is made in the sixth sentence. The subsequent sentences depict the imposition of the emotional pattern upon the form nature: the habit pattern is made in the seventh sentence, the etheric pattern in the eighth sentence, and the dense physical pattern in the ninth sentence.

Bailey says: “First, the mind controls the brain and the emotional nature. Then the soul controls the mind.”⁹⁹ When the mind controls the emotional nature, the mental pattern will have been made. When the soul controls the mind, the soul pattern will have been made. The sixth sentence’s first phrase, “He had no settled point or plan,” shows that the portrayed people have not yet made their mental pattern or soul pattern. Bailey says, “your soul-intended life pattern ... will be an expression of a life purpose.”¹⁰⁰ Thus the tenth sentence could have this meaning: the patterns made by the portrayed people are not suited for expressing their life purpose, because they have not yet made their soul pattern. This sentence, however, has a more esoteric, or hidden, meaning, as discussed next.

Bailey indicates that the third-ray quest for illumination is a philosophical one:

The method of approaching the great Quest, for this [third] ray type, is by deep thinking on philosophic or metaphysical lines till he is led to the realisation of the great Beyond and of the paramount importance of treading the Path that leads thither.¹⁰¹

Epictetus describes the beginning of philosophy, as it should be taken up:

The beginning of philosophy with those who take it up as they should, and enter in, as it were, by the gate, is a consciousness of a man’s own weakness and impotence with reference to the things of real consequence in life.¹⁰²

The portrayed people see what the above quotation calls their “own weakness and impotence,” because the ninth sentence says that

they “saw the end was sorrow and deceit,” so the above quotation implies that they take up philosophy as it should be taken up. How should philosophy be taken up? Epictetus begins one of his discourses with the imperative, “Examine who you are,”¹⁰³ and explains that only through self-examination can people determine the actions that are appropriate for them.

Consequently, in the stage represented by the tenth sentence, the portrayed people achieve a temporary *alignment* with their soul and then examine their personality in a dispassionate way. Bailey describes each one’s discoveries: “He then, having discovered the personality, discovers the quality of his own soul life, and the purpose for which he has ‘appeared.’”¹⁰⁴ Thus the tenth sentence does not simply characterize the patterns that the portrayed people have made, but it also depicts the self-knowledge that they discover via their alignment: *They see that the patterns that they have made in their personality are not suited for expressing their sensed life purpose.*

11. He gave up in despair.

Krishnamurti writes, “Self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom, and therefore the beginning of transformation or regeneration.”¹⁰⁵ After obtaining self-knowledge, how do third-ray people begin their process of transformation or regeneration? As part of her commentary on the Technique of Integration for the Third Ray, Bailey describes how a third-ray person is affected by the self-knowledge obtained via the preceding alignment:

This alignment naturally produces *a crisis* which is characterised by two qualities:

- a. The quality of deep distress. This is a period of difficulty and of real concern because it dawns upon his consciousness how useless, relatively, are his weaving and his manipulations, and how much of a problem he presents to the other Weavers.
- b. The quality which might be expressed as the determination to stand in spiritual being and to comprehend the significance of the ancient aphorism, given frequently to third ray aspirants: “Cease from thy doing. Walk

not on the Path until thou hast learnt the art of standing still. Study the spider, brother, entangled not in its own web, as thou art today entangled in thine own.”¹⁰⁶

Weaving is a method of fabric production in which two distinct sets of threads are interlaced at right angles to form a fabric. In the above quotation, “Weavers” is a metaphor for third-ray people, because weaving entails active intelligence, and active intelligence is the synthetic characteristic of the third ray.

“Despair,” in the eleventh sentence, corresponds to *part a* in the above quotation: “The quality of deep distress.” This distress occurs when third-ray people see the relative uselessness of their manipulations.

To *give up* can mean, “to cease to do or perform.”¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, “He gave up,” in the eleventh sentence, corresponds to *part b* in the above quotation: “The quality which might be expressed as the determination to stand in spiritual being and to comprehend the significance of the ancient aphorism, given frequently to third ray aspirants.” The aphorism’s first sentence, “Cease from thy doing,” tells the aspirants to bring stillness to their outer activities, as Bailey explains:

The aspirant upon the third ray is apt to waste much energy in perpetuating the glamorous forms with which he persistently surrounds himself. How can he achieve his goal when he is ceaselessly running hither and thither—weaving, manipulating, planning and arranging? He manages to get nowhere. Ever he is occupied with the distant objective, with that which may materialise in some dim and distant future, and he fails ever to achieve the immediate objective. He is often the expression and example of waste energy.¹⁰⁸

The aphorism’s second sentence, “Walk not on the Path until thou hast learnt the art of standing still,” tells the aspirants to bring stillness to their mind, as Bailey also explains:

Let him stand still at the centre, fixing his eyes on the soul and ceasing activity for a brief period of time until the light breaks in.¹⁰⁹

The aphorism's third sentence, "Study the spider, brother, entangled not in its own web, as thou art today entangled in thine own," tells the aspirants to bring stillness to their emotions, as Bailey indicates:

The spiritual man is enmeshed in the web of the emotions; desire, fear, ambition, passion.¹¹⁰

Thus the following meaning is given to the eleventh sentence: *They are deeply distressed by seeing the relative uselessness of their manipulations, so they are determined to stand in spiritual being and bring stillness to their outer activities, mind, and emotions.*

Conclusions

Bailey's third-ray stanza, which we call the "Third-Ray Cause of Inharmony and Disease," consists of eleven symbolic sentences that can be interpreted in the following manner:

1. Third-ray people use a process of selective manipulation to gather materials that already have the needed quality.
2. They have discriminating capacity that enables them to choose and reject from what they have gathered.
3. They gather concepts that have the potential of meeting their need, and then use their discriminating capacity on them, refusing some and accepting others as their beliefs. They tend to make their judgments cursorily and thereby misjudge what is true or false.
4. They are motivated by individual purpose even when participating in their various groups.
5. They acquire some thing or person for their selfish and personal ends, and are dissatisfied with it; they foolishly blame it, rather than their own beliefs, for being the cause of their dissatisfaction, and think of a replacement that would satisfy them. In this manner they accept an illusion, or erroneous concept, but avoid the means for recognizing it as an illusion.
6. They do not have a settled goal or settled plan, which implies that their individual purpose determines their emotional response in

any situation; but live in glamour, which means that their creative imagination attaches desires to the things or people that they believe can satisfy them; and like their glamour, which means that they attach second-order desires to their first-order desires.

7. They lavish desire on both their good and bad tendencies so as to develop them into habits, emphasizing one kind though using both kinds.

8. An excess of energy could be discerned in their solar plexus chakra, which is the center of self-conscious personal desire, and a deficiency of energy in their ajna chakra, which is the center of personality integration.

9. The imbalance of the solar plexus and ajna chakras causes an imbalance in the hormones secreted by the pancreas and pituitary gland; consequently, the portrayed people are responsible for transmitting hormones into their blood system that do not suit each other, then have sorrow for their self-engendered disease and distrust of their reactions to life and circumstance.

10. They see that the patterns that they have made in their personality are not suited for expressing their sensed life purpose.

11. They are deeply distressed by seeing the relative uselessness of their manipulations, so they are determined to stand in spiritual being and bring stillness to their outer activities, mind, and emotions.

These sentences embody a common theme. The first and second sentences portray the gathering of general materials and the selection among what has been gathered; and then the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth sentences portray the appropriation of these specific materials: concepts, individual purpose, illusions, emotional pattern, habit pattern, etheric pattern, dense physical pattern, and self-knowledge, respectively.

When third-ray people reach the stage represented by the eleventh sentence, they are "determined ... to bring stillness to their outer activities, mind, and emotions." On the other hand, Bailey says that the "first result" of using

the Technique of Integration for the Third Ray can be summed up in a single word: “Stillness.”¹¹¹ Thus Bailey’s two symbolic formulas for third-ray people—the Third-Ray Cause of Inharmony and Disease and the Technique of Integration for the Third Ray—fit together as progressive unified instruction.

The major premise of this article is the following: the third-ray stanza indicates the quality of the descending third-ray energy and the taints that this energy carries and conveys to third-ray people.¹¹² As indicated by the third sentence, we have the ability to refuse or accept this premise as our belief. What are some consequences of accepting this premise?

If we encountered people involved with what Bailey’s earlier commentary calls “this manipulation of desire, and the wild maneuvering for its satisfaction along material lines,” we might be critical of them for their lack of self-control, but the third-ray stanza would tell us that their uncontrolled behavior actually reflects the imperfection of the third ray. If we encountered people who have what Bailey’s earlier commentary calls “the gastric and intestinal disorders and the various stomach troubles which devastate civilised humanity,” we might feel sorry for their misfortune, but the third-ray stanza would tell us that their disease is a sign of their having reached an advanced stage in the stanza. Thus our acceptance of the major premise would enable us to have more understanding of third-ray people and their diseases.

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³ *Ibid.*, 126-127.
⁴ *Ibid.*, 69.
⁵ *Ibid.*, 63-83.
⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (1960; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 568.
⁷ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (1953; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1978), 298.
⁹ *Ibid.*, 292-293.
¹⁰ Helena P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Society in America, 2002), vol. XIV, 217.
¹¹ Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (1888; reprint; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1977), vol. I, 573.
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¹³ *Ibid.*, 293.
¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 297.
¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 304.
¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 300.
¹⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar* (1922; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1974), 31.
¹⁸ Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 300-301.
¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 298.
²⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I (1944; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), xiii.
²¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle* (1950; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1975), 135.
²² Zachary F. Lansdowne, “Epictetus’ Discourses compared to Bailey’s Technique of Integration for the Third Ray,” *The Esoteric Quarterly*, Winter 2013.
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²⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (1925; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 252.
²⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II (1955; reprint. New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1972), 516.
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