

The Fifth-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 series of articles elucidates the practical significance of these seven stanzas. The present article, which is the seventh and last in the series, clarifies the fifth-ray stanza by assembling related quotations from the writings of Bailey and others. As this article shows, the cleavage-making characteristic of fifth-ray energy is disadvantageous during a person’s early stage of development, because of its limiting and hindering effects; but the same characteristic becomes advantageous during a later stage, because of its help in achieving higher states of consciousness.

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 writer in the theosophical tradition, 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. She 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 who are before His throne,” as rendered in Revelation 1:4,⁷ 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 Lords of the Seven Rays must be imperfect Gods, so the seven rays, which are their emanations, must also be imperfect:

It will be apparent to you that these streams of force, emanating from the Lords of the

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Seven Rays, are coloured, therefore, and “tainted”—if I may use such a word—by 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), a 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.

According to these statements from Bailey and Blavatsky, the Lords of the Seven Rays are imperfect Gods, and every human being shares in their imperfection by being on some one of the seven rays. Nevertheless, these stated relationships between humans and Lords are not yet practical, because they are too abstract and too theoretical. Before we can apply such relationships in a practical way to transform our daily lives, we need to identify specific human imperfections that reflect the imperfection of each Lord of a Ray and then observe their occurrence within us. How can these imperfections be identified and observed?

The Seven Stanzas

Bailey’s book *Esoteric Healing* addresses the various ways that the topic of healing is related to the seven rays. In its chapter on karmic liabilities, 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 benefits of comprehending 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

The purpose of this series of articles is to explain these stanzas. 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, prior to this series of articles, to explain any of these stanzas. A 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 under-

standing.”¹⁵ The six preceding articles in this series provide explanations of the third-ray,¹⁶ sixth-ray,¹⁷ second-ray,¹⁸ fourth-ray,¹⁹ seventh-ray,²⁰ and first-ray stanzas.²¹

The present article is the final one in the series, and it considers the fifth-ray stanza, which consists of nine symbolic sentences:

The Great One arose in His wrath and separated Himself. He swept aside the great dualities and saw primarily the field of multiplicity. He produced cleavage on every hand. He wrought with potent thought for separative action. He established barriers with joy. He brooked no understanding; He knew no unity, for He was cold, austere, ascetic and forever cruel. He stood between the tender, loving centre of all lives and the outer court of writhing, living men. Yet He stood not at the midway point, and naught He did sufficed to heal the breach. He widened all cleavages, erected barriers, and sought to make still wider gaps.²²

Bailey’s entire commentary on the fifth-ray stanza is as follows:

It has been most difficult to describe the nature of the imperfection of the energy of the Lord of the fifth ray. In the activity of this energy which demonstrates primarily upon the fifth or mental plane will be found eventually the source of many psychological disorders and mental trouble. Cleavage is the outstanding characteristic—cleavage within the individual or between the individual and his group, rendering him anti-social. I have dealt with this in an earlier part of this treatise and need not further enlarge upon the difficulties here. Other results are certain forms of insanities, brain lesions and those gaps in the relation of the physical body to the subtle bodies which show as imbecilities and psychological troubles. Another form of disease, emerging as a result of this fifth ray force is migraine, which is caused by a lack of relationship between the energy around the pineal gland and that around the pituitary body.²³

Let us note that Bailey’s commentary appears as brief and enigmatic as the stanza that it purports to explain, so there is a need for a more clarifying explanation.

The Fifth-Ray Stanza

The purpose of this article is to clarify the practical significance of the fifth-ray stanza by assembling related quotations from the writings of Bailey and others. Each sentence in the stanza is considered separately and is repeated in bold print.

1. The Great One arose in His wrath and separated Himself.

In the fifth-ray stanza’s first sentence, what does “the Great One” denote? The Lords of the Seven Rays are sometimes called “the seven great Lords,”²⁴ so the straightforward meaning of “the Great One” is that it denotes the Lord of the Fifth Ray. With this meaning, however, the first sentence would depict events in the macrocosmic world that seem to have little practical significance for the mundane world of human beings. Bailey relates these two worlds by regarding the Lords of the Seven Rays as “the Prototypes of man.”²⁵ Accordingly, the alternative meaning of “the Great One” is that it denotes the people who are on the fifth ray, because such people reflect their prototype, namely, the great Lord of that ray.

This alternative meaning may seem unusual, but it is consistent with two biblical themes: one’s name indicates one’s nature;²⁶ and one is influenced by one’s line of descent.²⁷ For example, in Genesis 32:28, the change in the patriarch’s name from Jacob to Israel indicates the change in his nature: “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.” Israel is also the name of Jacob’s descendants (Joshua 3:17, 7:25). James Hastings, in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, is impressed by the remarkable way in which Jacob is the prototype of his descendants:

The patriarchs are ... idealized in another direction, in common with many of the other patriarchal figures in Genesis, by being

invested with the characteristics which afterwards marked the tribes descended, or reputed to be descended, from them ... But, however that may be, it is impossible not to be impressed by the remarkable manner in which Jacob, both in the brighter and in the darker aspects of his character, is the prototype of his descendants.²⁸

Consequently, as narrated in the Bible, Israel denotes the people who descend from and thereby reflect the patriarch known as Israel. Similarly, with the alternative meaning, “the Great One” denotes the people who are on the fifth ray and thereby reflect the Great One known as the Lord of the Fifth Ray. In either case, the progenitor is the prototype of the ensuing people, and a designation used for the progenitor is also used for the people themselves. Thus, even though the alternative meaning of “the Great One” may seem unusual, it resembles what can be found in biblical accounts. In what follows, we employ this alternative meaning, because our commentary shows that it yields practical significances that are consistent across all sentences of the stanza.

Who are the people on the fifth ray? Bailey gives this explanation:

This is the ray of science and of research. The man on this ray will possess keen intellect, great accuracy in detail, and will make unwearied efforts to trace the smallest fact to its source, and to verify every theory. He will generally be extremely truthful, full of lucid explanation of facts, though sometimes pedantic and wearisome from his insistence on trivial and unnecessary verbal minutiae. He will be orderly, punctual, business-like, disliking to receive favours or flattery.²⁹

The stanza’s first sentence, “The Great One arose in His wrath and separated Himself,” relates wrath, or fierce anger, to separation. In fact, wrath is related to two kinds of separation. The first kind is what psychology calls *projection*. Todd Feinberg, a clinical professor of psychiatry and neurology, defines it as follows:

In psychoanalytic terms, projection is an unconscious process wherein unacceptable thoughts, feelings, or motivations are *rejected* and *projected* outside of the self, typically onto other persons. In this fashion, one’s own thoughts and feelings do not become conscious self-attributes, but are experienced as aspects of the external world.³⁰

In other words, by rejecting and projecting unacceptable qualities, one mentally separates oneself from those qualities. Bailey indicates that projection is a problem faced by disciples: “An individual disciple ... knows too that at present they [other disciples] cannot help but see in him and even in their Master the very qualities which are dominating them. For, my brother, we see in others what is in us, even when it is not there at all or to the same extent.”³¹

What is the relationship between projection and anger? *A Course in Miracles (ACIM)*, a modern system of spiritual psychology that has gained wide acceptance in the esoteric community,³² gives this answer:

Projection and attack are inevitably related, because projection is always a means of justifying attack. Anger without projection is impossible. The ego uses projection only to destroy your perception of both yourself and your brothers. The process begins by excluding something that exists in you but which you do not want, and leads directly to excluding you from your brothers.³³

The second kind of separation is emotional isolation. David Wilson, in *Anger Management for Christians*, describes it in this way:

People will not like you when you are angry. Your anger does not lend itself to love and it does not cause people to respect you. If you use your anger and get your way then it is not out of respect that people give in. Instead, they submit to you to appease your anger. Therefore, such submission is not based on love, or even what is right or wrong. Instead, that submission is based on fear. If you look into the eyes of your

spouse, your children, your co-workers, your neighbors, and all of the other people you are having conflict with you will not see love or respect, you will see fear ... I want you to realize that your unmanaged anger will only serve to isolate you from the very people you love and care about.³⁴

A *vice* is “a failing or imperfection in character,” whereas a *virtue* is “the quality or practice of moral excellence or righteousness.”³⁵ Bailey lists “Unforgiving temper,” “Mental separation,” and “Intensification of the power to isolate” as characteristic fifth-ray vices.³⁶ In the first sentence, “wrath” illustrates “Unforgiving temper”; projection, which is the first kind of separation, illustrates “Mental separation”; and emotional isolation, which is the second kind of separation, illustrates “Intensification of the power to isolate.” Bailey also mentions “the transmutation of what you term vices, into virtues,”³⁷ so the first sentence’s three characteristic vices are transmuted eventually into virtues, indicating that this sentence corresponds to an early stage of development for fifth-ray people.

Thus, the first sentence is given this meaning: *During an early stage in their development, fifth-ray people arise in their wrath and separate themselves in two ways: first, they project their negative qualities onto other people, thereby justifying their attack on them; and second, they attack them, thereby emotionally isolating themselves from them.*

2. He swept aside the great dualities and saw primarily the field of multiplicity.

Before considering this sentence, it is helpful to introduce some additional terminology. According to Theosophy, the planetary life consists of seven worlds that are often called “planes” and have the following names: 1) lo-gic; 2) monadic; 3) spiritual; 4) intuitional; 5) mental; 6) emotional; and 7) physical.³⁸ These planes are regarded as being arranged metaphorically in a higher and lower manner, so that the physical plane is the lowest plane.

Pairs of opposites can be classified by whether they are vertical or horizontal.³⁹ A *great duality*, which is mentioned in the stanza’s second sentence, is a vertical pair of opposites, be-

cause its contrasting poles are on different planes. Bailey gives these examples: “spirit and matter, life and form, the self and the not-self.”⁴⁰ The Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5:4, gives another example:

For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

In this case, the vertical duality is between “life” and “what is mortal,” the latter being a dying material form.

A *lesser duality*, which is used in later sentences, is a horizontal pair of opposites, because its contrasting poles are on the same plane. For example, a mental duality is between ignorance and knowledge; and an emotional duality is between asceticism and self-indulgence.

The second sentence’s initial phrase says, “He swept aside the great dualities,” but how is that done? By living on the physical plane, human beings are aware of the lower poles of the great dualities, such as matter, multiplicity, and form. They need the higher illumination, however, to be aware of the higher poles, such as spirit, unity, and life. Bailey describes a related feature of the mental body, or concrete mind:

By its intense activity and stimulated action it [the concrete mind] hinders the downflow of inspiration from on high. It acts as a dark curtain that shuts out the higher illumination. Only through steadiness and a stable restfulness can that illumination percolate, via the higher bodies, to the physical brain and so be available for practical service.⁴¹

Accordingly, the concrete mind’s intense activity and stimulated action, which are depicted in the first sentence, act as “a dark curtain that shuts out the higher illumination.” Blavatsky, in *The Voice of the Silence*, expresses the same idea: “The Mind is the great slayer of the real.”⁴² Thus, by shutting out the higher illumination, fifth-ray people sweep aside any awareness of the great vertical dualities.

What does this lack of awareness imply? Bailey writes:

Man has to learn through experience and pain the fact of the duality of all existence. Having thus learnt, he chooses that which concerns the fully conscious spirit aspect of divinity, and learns to centre himself in that aspect.⁴³

Thus, the second sentence's initial phrase has this meaning: By shutting out the higher illumination through their intense mental activity, they sweep aside any awareness of the great vertical dualities, and are unable to choose that which concerns the higher poles of these dualities.

Bailey describes a related fifth-ray vice: "Intense materialism and temporarily the negation of Deity."⁴⁴ But what is "intense materialism"? *Random House Webster's Dictionary* provides two definitions of materialism:

1. Preoccupation with or emphasis on material objects, comforts, and considerations, as opposed to spiritual or intellectual values.
2. The philosophical theory that regards matter as constituting the universe, and all phenomena, including those of mind, as due to material agencies.⁴⁵

The first definition is for what is called "consumer materialism"; the second definition is for what is called "philosophical materialism." Paul Moser and John Trout, in *Contemporary Materialism*, report that contemporary philosophers and scientists typically adopt the theory of philosophical materialism:

Materialism, put broadly, affirms that all phenomena are physical. Questions about materialism, or "physicalism," currently guide work in various areas of philosophy: for example, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, and theory of value. Materialism is now the dominant systematic ontology among philosophers and scientists, and there are currently no established alternative ontological views competing with it. As a result, typical theoretical work in philosophy and the sciences is constrained, implicitly or explicitly, by various conceptions of what materialism entails.⁴⁶

Given Bailey's earlier explanation that the fifth ray is "the ray of science and of research," we infer that "intense materialism"—as a fifth-ray characteristic—is philosophical materialism.

The second sentence's final phrase states: "and saw primarily the field of multiplicity." Put differently, the portrayed people are primarily occupied with the lower poles of the great dualities, so that they are primarily, in Bailey's words, "occupied with the matter aspect in its multiplicity of forms."⁴⁷ Moreover, given that the portrayed people are on the fifth ray, they characteristically adopt the theory of philosophical materialism.

In summary, the second sentence has this overall meaning: *By shutting out the higher illumination through their intense mental activity, they sweep aside any awareness of the great vertical dualities—such as between spirit and matter, unity and multiplicity, or life and form—and are unable to choose that which concerns the higher poles of these dualities. Instead, they are primarily occupied with the matter aspect in its multiplicity of forms, and adopt the theory of philosophical materialism, which regards all reality as material or physical.*

3. He produced cleavage on every hand.

Before considering this sentence, it is helpful to introduce additional terminology. Every human being has both a *lower self* and a *higher self*. The lower self is the *personality*, and it consists of the mental, emotional, and physical bodies. The higher self is the *soul*, and its characteristics are described later.⁴⁸

In the stanza's third sentence, *on every hand* means "on all sides; in all directions,"⁴⁹ so the sentence indicates that fifth-ray people produce many kinds of cleavage. Why do they do so? Bailey writes, "It is the mind which separates and divides,"⁵⁰ and "this mental body must be guided into being an instrument of illumination."⁵¹ Accordingly, by utilizing their mental body—with its discriminating and analyzing faculty—without the higher illumination, they separate themselves from many factors. Let us identify those factors by considering seven

qualities that Bailey lists as additional vices characterizing fifth-ray people:

- a. The implications of wrong emphasis.
- b. Mental devotion to form and form activity.
- c. The power to rationalise and destroy.
- d. Criticism.
- e. Distorted views of truth.
- f. Theology.
- g. The energy of ignorance.⁵²

a. “The implications of wrong emphasis.” Bailey illustrates this vice by giving related instruction:

It is not the evil rampant in the world today which is hindering the revelation and hindering the unfoldment of the spiritual life. That evil is the result of the misapprehension and the wrong orientation of the human mind, of the emphasis upon material things which ages of competitive activity have brought about.⁵³

Thus, the wrong emphasis of the human mind is “the emphasis upon material things,” so this vice is the direct result of the stanza’s second sentence. Moreover, the implications of the wrong emphasis include “hindering the revelation and hindering the unfoldment of the spiritual life.” Thus, through their wrong emphasis, the portrayed people separate themselves from the revelation of divine truth and the unfoldment of their spiritual life.

b. “Mental devotion to form and form activity.” This vice is another direct result of the stanza’s second sentence. Bailey writes,

We are so apt always to think in terms of form and form activity, that it seems necessary again and again to reiterate the necessity for thinking in terms of consciousness and awareness, leading to an eventual realization.⁵⁴

Thus, through their mental devotion to form and form activity, the portrayed people separate themselves from thinking in terms of consciousness and awareness.

c. “The power to rationalise and destroy.” Bailey illustrates this vice by giving related instruction to a fifth-ray student:

First, your ... soul ray focusses itself in and through your fifth ray mental body. This ... has given you your defined mental focus, your critical attitude and your isolation, relatively speaking. It is this combination which has always enabled you to rationalise yourself into a confidence in the rightness of your decisions and into a surety that your particular life choices and your preferred circumstances are correct and justified.⁵⁵

The *Collins English Dictionary* provides this definition: “*Self-deception* involves allowing yourself to believe something about yourself that is not true, because the truth is more unpleasant.”⁵⁶ Accordingly, “the power to rationalise and destroy” is the power to deceive oneself and destroy truth. Through their use of this power, the portrayed people separate themselves from their own truthful thinking about themselves.

d. “Criticism.” Bailey illustrates this vice by giving related instruction to a fifth-ray student:

What, therefore, constitutes your major difficulty, for you are not satisfied yourself with your progress, and rightly so? The main reason lies in your fifth ray personality, wherein the emphasis is laid upon the critical, analytical mind. This leads you to watch and criticise and to argue with yourself and with circumstances ... It is yourself, however, whom you mainly criticise, but this can be as wrong and as unnecessary as criticising others.⁵⁷

Accordingly, this student is mainly involved with self-criticism, for which Wikipedia gives this description:

Self-criticism involves how an individual evaluates oneself. Self-criticism in psychology is typically studied and discussed as a negative personality trait in which a person has a disrupted self-identity. The opposite of self-criticism would be someone who has a coherent, comprehensive, and generally positive self-identity.⁵⁸

Thus, through their criticism of themselves, the portrayed people separate themselves from a generally positive self-identity.

e. “Distorted views of truth.” Bailey describes how a partial view distorts and misinterprets ideas:

The idea, a vital entity or a germ of living potency, is seen through the medium of a partial view, distorted through the inadequacy of the mental equipment, and frequently stepped down into futility. The mechanism for right understanding is lacking, and though the man may be giving his highest and his best, and though he may be able in some measure to hold his mind steady in the light, yet what he is offering to the idea is but a poor thing at the best. This leads to illusion through misinterpretation.⁵⁹

Thus, through their distorted mental views, the portrayed people separate themselves from right understanding of ideas.

f. “Theology.” Bailey considers that theology exemplifies dogmatic assertions,⁶⁰ and that being dogmatic leads to being separative:

The one point you should remember is that the fifth ray is a crystallising factor and ... could tend to make you dogmatic and consequently separative.⁶¹

Thus, through their theology, whether a religious creed or a systematic ontology, the portrayed people separate themselves from whomever disagrees with their dogmatic assertions.

g. “The energy of ignorance.” Blavatsky defines the Sanskrit word *avidya* as “Ignorance which proceeds from, and is produced by the illusion of the Senses.”⁶² Bailey similarly mentions, “*Ignorance* or *avidya*, the result of this wrong identification [with form] and at the same time the cause of it.”⁶³ The earlier cleavages entail wrong identification with form, so these cleavages produce ignorance and at the same time are the result of it. Bailey also says,

Every time, however, that “thoughts contrary to yoga” are knowingly entertained, the self submerges itself still more in the illusory world and adds to the veil of ignorance.⁶⁴

Making any of the earlier cleavages entails “thoughts contrary to yoga,” so a person making such an effort adds to his or her “veil of

ignorance,” which further obscures his or her perception of reality. Thus, the “veil of ignorance” is a kind of energy with which a person interacts, so it is taken as denoting the final listed vice: “The energy of ignorance.”

The notion of the “veil of ignorance” can be found in the Indian philosophy of Vedanta. For example, Swami Vivekananda (1863 – 1902), a key figure in the introduction of Vedanta to the Western world, writes:

Here [in a longing for spiritual freedom] we see the divine dimly shining through the veil of ignorance. The veil is very dense at first and the light may be almost obscured, but it is there, ever pure and undimmed—the radiant fire of freedom and perfection.⁶⁵

Thus, Vivekananda agrees that the “veil of ignorance” varies in density and obscures the ever-present divine light, which is sometimes denoted with the Sanskrit term *Atman*. Moreover, the Vedanta Society of Southern California states:

Like a diamond buried in mud, the *Atman* shines within us, yet its presence remains obscured, its shining purity masked by countless layers of ignorance: wrong identification, incorrect knowledge, misguided perceptions. It is important to emphasize that we are not trying to become something other than what we already are. We are not trying to become pure; we are pure. We are not trying to become perfect; we are perfect already. That is our real nature. Acting in accordance with our real nature—acting nobly, truthfully, kindly—tears away the veil of ignorance that hides the truth of reality.⁶⁶

Accordingly, the “veil of ignorance” hides the truth, or knowledge, of the divine reality and consists of these layers of ignorance: “wrong identification, incorrect knowledge, misguided perceptions.”

The notion of the “veil of ignorance” can also be found in the Bible. Paul envisions the unbelieving mind as having a veil over it (2 Corinthians 3:12-15), and says, “whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away” (2 Corinthians 3:16). He describes how this veil

keeps people ignorant of spiritual truth (2 Corinthians 4:3–4):

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Here, ignorance, or avidya, is “the god of this world”; the veil of ignorance is formed when “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving”; and the effect of this veil is “that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” In contrast, Paul describes what people see when this veil is removed (2 Corinthians 3:18):

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

In summary, the preceding analysis clarifies the meaning of seven characteristic fifth-ray vices. Based on this analysis, the stanza’s third sentence, “He produced cleavage on every hand,” is explained through accumulating the preceding meanings: *By utilizing their mental body—with its discriminating and analyzing faculty—without the higher illumination, they separate themselves from the following factors: the revelation of divine truth and the unfoldment of their spiritual life; thinking in terms of consciousness and awareness; their own truthful thinking about themselves; a generally positive self-identity; right understanding of ideas; and whomever disagrees with their dogmatic assertions. Their making any of these cleavages adds to their veil of ignorance and at the same time is the result of it.*

In her earlier commentary on the fifth-ray stanza, Bailey says in part:

In the activity of this energy which demonstrates primarily upon the fifth or mental plane will be found eventually the source of

It has been most difficult to describe the nature of the imperfection of the energy of the Lord of the fifth ray. In the activity of this energy which demonstrates primarily upon the fifth or mental plane will be found eventually the source of many psychological disorders and mental trouble. Cleavage is the outstanding characteristic...

many psychological disorders and mental trouble. Cleavage is the outstanding characteristic—cleavage within the individual or between the individual and his group, rendering him anti-social.

In the preceding analysis, “cleavage within the individual” is illustrated by these vices: The implications of wrong emphasis; Mental devotion to form and form activity; The power to rationalise and destroy; Criticism; and

Distorted views of truth. In addition, “cleavage ... between the individual and his group” is illustrated by this vice: Theology.

4. He wrought with potent thought for separative action.

Ignorance and knowledge constitute a pair of opposites on the mental plane. During the stage of the stanza’s third sentence, fifth-ray people are at the pole of ignorance, because they live behind the “veil of ignorance.” Bailey speaks of “the swing, consciously registered, between the pairs of opposites,”⁶⁷ so these people eventually acquire the fifth-ray characteristic that Bailey describes as “Desire for knowledge”⁶⁸ and thereby swing towards the opposite pole. The fourth sentence depicts such a swing.

Bailey writes, “For the fifth ray, the method of approaching the Path is by scientific research, pushed to ultimate conclusions, and by the acceptance of the inferences which follow these.”⁶⁹ The stanza’s fourth sentence is interpreted as depicting this fifth-ray method of approaching the spiritual path. This method implements in an orderly manner the fifth-ray

desire for knowledge. Moreover, the adjective *orderly* is also a fifth-ray characteristic.⁷⁰ Accordingly, “potent thought” in the fourth sentence denotes *scientific research*, but what is the meaning of “separative action”?

As shown in the earlier commentary for the stanza’s second sentence, the assumption of philosophical materialism underlies much of contemporary science. Let us consider two other key assumptions: *empiricism*, which is the “theory that all knowledge is based on experience derived from the senses”,⁷¹ and *reductionism*, which is the “theory that all complex systems can be completely understood in terms of their components.”⁷² As Wikipedia explains, these two assumptions also underlie much of contemporary science:

In science, empirical evidence is required for a hypothesis to gain acceptance in the scientific community. Normally, this validation is achieved by the scientific method of forming a hypothesis, experimental design, peer review, reproduction of results, conference presentation, and journal publication.⁷³

Reductionist thinking and methods form the basis for many of the well-developed topics of modern science, including much of physics, chemistry and cell biology. Classical mechanics in particular is seen as a reductionist framework, and statistical mechanics can be considered as a reconciliation of macroscopic thermodynamic laws with the reductionist method of explaining macroscopic properties in terms of microscopic components.⁷⁴

These three assumptions are interrelated. For example, David Armstrong, an Australian philosopher, notes, “Since contemporary if not past Materialism claims to spring out of scientific results and plausible speculations, it is committed to Empiricism.”⁷⁵ Jon Mills, a Canadian philosopher and clinical psychologist, also notes: “Materialists, on the other hand, are dogmatic in their insistence that all mental events are ultimately reducible to physical events or brain states in the organism. Thus, physical reductionism is the *sine qua non* of materialism.”⁷⁶

Philosophical materialism, however, is a separative assumption, because it separates a researcher from important areas of research. Mario Beauregard, Gary Schwartz, and Lisa Miller, in “Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science,” describe some of those areas:

Scientific methods based upon materialistic philosophy have been highly successful in not only increasing our understanding of nature but also in bringing greater control and freedom through advances in technology. However, the nearly absolute dominance of materialism in the academic world has seriously constricted the sciences and hampered the development of the scientific study of mind and spirituality. Faith in this ideology, as an exclusive explanatory framework for reality, has compelled scientists to neglect the subjective dimension of human experience. This has led to a severely distorted and impoverished understanding of ourselves and our place in nature.⁷⁷

Empiricism is also a separative assumption, because it separates a researcher from other sources of knowledge. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* describes two such sources: “The Intuition/Deduction thesis claims that we can know some propositions by intuition and still more by deduction.”⁷⁸ Reductionism is also a separative assumption, because it separates a researcher from other ways of acquiring understanding. Varadaraja Raman, an emeritus professor of physics and humanities at the Rochester Institute of Technology, describes another such way:

Holism is a philosophical view which states that by considering the whole picture one gets a deeper and more complete view of a situation than by analyzing it into its component parts. What this means is that a system consisting of several recognizable parts has properties which are not present in any of its component parts.

It takes time, effort, and careful analysis and search to find out the details of the components, that is to say, to establish the reductionist basis of a system. There is hardly a system without holistic properties. More often than not, what we experi-

ence is the holistic aspect of a system. From this perspective, the process of analysis may lead us to the reductionist components, but on the way some aspect of the whole is lost.⁷⁹

Thus, in the stanza's fourth sentence, "separative action" is construed as activity based on philosophical materialism, empiricism, and reductionism, because these three assumptions are separative and underlie much of contemporary science.

The fourth sentence states: "He wrought with potent thought for separative action." Given that "potent thought" denotes scientific research, and "separative action" denotes activity based on the three preceding assumptions, the sentence has this meaning: *As their method of approaching the spiritual path, they engage in scientific research based on three separative assumptions: philosophical materialism, empiricism, and reductionism.*

5. He established barriers with joy.

The fifth sentence mentions "joy," but what is it? Bailey writes,

The life of Christ is a life to be lived today, eventually by all. It is a life of joy and happiness, of test and of problems, but its essence is love and its method is love.⁸⁰

Thus, "a life of joy" can be lived today, and "its essence is love," which suggests that joy is an attribute of love. *ACIM* makes this relationship explicit:

Happiness is an attribute of love. It cannot be apart from it. Nor can it be experienced where love is not. Love has no limits, being everywhere. And therefore joy is everywhere as well. Yet can the mind deny that this is so, believing there are gaps in love where sin can enter, bringing pain instead of joy. This strange belief would limit happiness by redefining love as limited, and introducing opposition in what has no limit and no opposite.⁸¹

The above quotation considers that "Happiness is an attribute of love," and it uses the words "happiness" and "joy" synonymously, implying that joy is an attribute of love. The above

quotation also indicates that a belief can act as a barrier that limits love and thereby joy. As *ACIM* also explains, such a belief is the notion that one's reality is bounded by one's physical body:

While you believe that your reality or your brother's is bounded by a body, you will believe in sin ... For the belief that bodies limit mind leads to a perception of the world in which the proof of separation seems to be everywhere. And God and His creation seem to be split apart and overthrown.⁸²

Bailey mentions "love, based on realised unity,"⁸³ and "the realisation of the unity of all beings,"⁸⁴ thereby indicating that love is based on the realization of the unity of all beings. The belief that one's reality is bounded by one's physical body, however, denies the unity of all beings, so holding this belief is a barrier to the experience of love.

Vitalism is "a doctrine that attributes the viability of a living organism to a vital principle distinct from the physical and chemical processes of life."⁸⁵ Philosophical materialism, according to its earlier definition, denies vitalism. Empiricism does not support vitalism, because empirical testing and experiment have not established the existence of a vital principle. The philosophers William Bechtel and Robert Richardson describe empiricism's view in this way:

Vitalism now has no credibility. This is sometimes credited to the view that vitalism posits an unknowable factor in explaining life; and further, vitalism is often viewed as unfalsifiable, and therefore a pernicious metaphysical doctrine.⁸⁶

Here, *unknowable* means "impossible to know, especially being beyond the range of human experience,"⁸⁷ and *unfalsifiable* means "unable to be shown as false, although possibly not true."⁸⁸

Bailey speaks of "the unity of all life,"⁸⁹ indicating that her notion of the vital principle is that it constitutes an indivisible whole. Marcel Weber and Michael Esfeld, in "Holism in the Sciences," make a corresponding observation:

most forms of vitalism are holistic because the vital force or entelechy is assumed to constitute an indivisible whole which, in contrast to mechanical systems, cannot be analyzed into parts.⁹⁰

If the vital principle existed and resembled Bailey's notion, its holistic nature could not be analyzed into parts, which means that it could not be understood through reductionism. Consequently, by accepting the assumptions of philosophical materialism, empiricism, and reductionism as part of the stanza's fourth sentence, fifth-ray people must deny vitalism and accept this implication: one's reality is bounded by one's physical body.

The stanza's fifth sentence states: "He established barriers with joy." Here, the preposition *with* has this common meaning: "in opposition to; against."⁹¹ The preceding remarks imply that the fifth sentence has the following explanation: *By accepting the belief that one's reality is bounded by one's physical body, they establish a barrier against their realization of the unity of all beings, which in turn is a barrier against their experience of love and its attribute, joy.*

6. He brooked no understanding; He knew no unity, for He was cold, austere, ascetic and forever cruel.

The sixth sentence's first clause states: "He brooked no understanding." To *brook* means to "put up with something or somebody unpleasant."⁹² In the fourth sentence, fifth-ray people use scientific research to learn why things happen in some area of the natural world; but in the sixth sentence's first clause, they put up with having "no understanding" about their research area and are displeased about it. Bailey gives this explanation:

Men everywhere are recognising the accuracy of ... material science, yet at the same time they feel innately that there is, underlying the proven objective manifestation, some vitalising force, and some coherent purpose which cannot be accounted for in terms of matter alone.⁹³

Thus, the first clause has this meaning: They put up with having no understanding about

their area of scientific research and are displeased about it, because they feel innately that a purely materialistic account of nature is inadequate.

Why is there this lack of understanding? As shown by previous articles in this series on the seven stanzas, each stanza is a carefully crafted message from beginning to end, with later parts continually building on earlier parts. The stanza's fifth sentence indicates that fifth-ray people lack love, so the adjacency of the fifth and sixth sentences suggests a relationship between love and understanding. Indeed, Bailey describes such a relationship: "True knowledge is intelligent love, for it is the blending of the intellect and the devotion."⁹⁴ Lucille Cedercrans (1921 – 1984), who presented a teaching called the "New Thought-form Presentation of the Wisdom," similarly states:

The energy of Love in the Mind produces right understanding or Wisdom."⁹⁵

Love, then produces comprehension. It is the energy which relates many experiences in such a way as to produce a pattern, an evolution, and, finally, intelligent productive thought.⁹⁶

According to these quotations, the lack of love in the fifth sentence brings about the lack of "true knowledge," "right understanding," or "comprehension" in the sixth sentence's first clause.

The second clause states: "He knew no unity, for He was cold, austere, ascetic and forever cruel." Let us begin by considering the listed series of adjectives. *Cold* is the first adjective and, in the present context, has this psychological meaning: "unfriendly or unresponsive or showing dislike."⁹⁷ Bailey illustrates this meaning's use:

The coldness of that light [of the personality] refers to the light of substance, which cannot be warmed into a glow by desire or by the heat of passion, but is now and at last only responsive to the light of the soul. It is therefore cold to all that limits and hinders, and this state of personality consciousness has to be realised at the very centre of man's being.⁹⁸

Here, the “light of the soul” is a channel for the intuition.⁹⁹ The stanza’s first through fifth sentences depict fifth-ray people as accumulating many cleavages that may limit and hinder their research. According to the above quotation, “this state of personality consciousness” is “cold to all that limits and hinders,” but is “responsive to the light of the soul.” Thus, psychological coldness in this context has two significances: the portrayed people are cold in that they show their dislike for the cleavages that they perceive as limiting and hindering, which means that they question the beliefs that underlie those cleavages; and they are also cold in that they lack the “light of the soul,” because they would have been responsive to that light if it were present.

Rupert Sheldrake, who has worked as a scientist in biochemistry and cell biology, observes that most scientists do not think critically about the beliefs that govern their scientific thinking:

Contemporary science is based on the claim that all reality is material or physical. There is no reality but material reality. Consciousness is a by-product of the physical activity of the brain. Matter is unconscious. Evolution is purposeless. God exists only as an idea in human minds, and hence in human heads. These beliefs are powerful not because most scientists think about them critically, but because they do not. The facts of science are real enough, and so are the techniques that scientists use, and so are the technologies based on them. But the belief system that governs conventional scientific thinking is an act of faith, grounded in a 19th-century ideology.¹⁰⁰

Thus, the second clause signifies a change of direction for fifth-ray people, because it depicts them as beginning to question their underlying beliefs.

Austere, which is the second adjective in the series, means “Severe or stern in disposition or appearance.”¹⁰¹ Bailey writes, “As still further progress is made, the joy of the soul begins to pour through the worn and weary vehicles, and gradually the positive nature of the soul takes hold.”¹⁰² Thus, being austere indicates that the portrayed people lack the “joy of the soul.”

Ascetic means “Characterized by severe self-discipline and abstention from all forms of indulgence,”¹⁰³ so ascetic and self-indulgent constitute a pair of opposites on the emotional plane. Bailey speaks of “the balancing between the pairs of opposites,”¹⁰⁴ so being ascetic indicates an unbalanced, inharmonious emotional nature. Bailey writes, “in place of the restless self-centered emotional nature and the activity of the solar plexus centre (carrying the powerful forces of the astral plane) there should be imposed the steady detached and harmonising rhythm of the soul, the higher self.”¹⁰⁵ Here, “astral” is a synonym for emotional.¹⁰⁶ Accordingly, being ascetic indicates that the portrayed people lack the “harmonising rhythm of the soul.”

Forever cruel is the final modifier in the series. Bailey writes, “devotion can be fanatical and cruel,”¹⁰⁷ and “the releasing power of love is essential but it must be the love of the soul, and not personality love, which must be demonstrated.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, being forever cruel indicates that the portrayed people have devotion, which could be regarded as personality love, but lack the “love of the soul.”

Consequently, in the second clause, the series of adjectives has this meaning: they lack the light, joy, harmonizing rhythm, and love of the soul. This series discloses the meaning of the preceding phrase, “He knew no unity,” because in this context “unity” must signify alignment with the soul.

Thus, the entire sixth sentence is given this explanation: *They put up with having no understanding about their area of scientific research and are displeased about it, because they feel innately that a purely materialistic account of nature is inadequate. Afterwards, they question the beliefs underlying the cleavages that they perceive as limiting and hindering, but without having established alignment with the soul, or higher self, for they lack the light, joy, harmonizing rhythm, and love of the soul.*

The sixth sentence alludes to two kinds of reasoning: first, there is reasoning that lacks the light of the soul, which means that it lacks the channel for the intuition; and second, there is

intuitional understanding. Bailey explains the difference:

Intuitional understanding is always spontaneous. Where the reasoning *to* an understanding enters, it is not the activity of the intuition.¹⁰⁹

At the stage represented by the sixth sentence, fifth-ray people have not learned how to achieve alignment with the soul and thereby gain access to the intuition. As a result, they lack understanding when they question whether their underlying beliefs are false concepts, or illusions, because, in Bailey's words, "It is the soul itself which dispels illusion, through the use of the faculty of the intuition."¹¹⁰

7. He stood between the tender, loving centre of all lives and the outer court of writhing, living men.

The seventh sentence has four layers of meaning, the first of which is explained as follows. In the initial phrase, the adjective *loving* means "showing love or great care,"¹¹¹ so the "loving centre" has love as the dynamic factor. Bailey writes, "*spiritual love* ... is the paramount soul characteristic, for only the soul has it as the dynamic factor."¹¹² Accordingly, the "loving centre" signifies the soul.

In the final phrase, to *writhe* means "to make twisting movements with the body, especially because you are feeling strong emotion."¹¹³ Thus, fifth-ray people "stood" at a midway spot between the soul ("loving centre") and the emotional plight of other people ("writhing, living men"). What is that midway spot? Bailey gives this answer:

You ask for a clearer definition of the "midway" spot ... For the *disciple* it is the mental plane where form and soul make contact.¹¹⁴

To *stand* means "to rise or straighten up,"¹¹⁵ but this verb sometimes has a symbolic meaning, such as in Romans 5:2, "this grace in which we stand." Bailey speaks of "humanity as a whole, polarised as it is in the emotional nature,"¹¹⁶ and the phrase "forever cruel" in the stanza's sixth sentence indicates that the portrayed people were emotionally polarized during that stage. Given that the midway spot

signifies the mental plane, to stand at this spot has this symbolic meaning: to raise the polarization from the emotional to the mental body. Given that the portrayed people "stood" at this spot, the seventh sentence's first layer of meaning is as follows: fifth-ray people raise their polarization of consciousness from their emotional body to their mental body.

Bailey describes how this standing is achieved:

In meditation the emotional body should be controlled from the mental plane, and when the polarisation has been transferred into the mental body through forms of meditation and intensity of purpose and of will, then the emotional becomes quiescent and receptive.¹¹⁷

One's initial effort to achieve mental polarization is successful only intermittently, however, as shown by Bailey's instructions to a fifth-ray student:

Figuratively speaking, there is a lack of steady contact between the mind and the astral body. Here is the weak place in your alignment. When you are mentally alert, which is quite often, a temporary coordination is set up and there is what one might call a momentary alignment. But the moment your mental activity ceases there is a complete break. You then function as a sentient, emotionally vital and active person, with the mental nature remaining outside the lower alignment.¹¹⁸

Consequently, Bailey says that one must work towards the goal of sustained mental polarization:

Increasingly must your inner life be lived upon the mental plane. Steadily and without descent must the attitude of meditation be held—not for a few minutes each morning or at specific moments throughout the day, but constantly, all day long.¹¹⁹

Let us consider the seventh sentence's second layer of meaning: fifth-ray people stand between "the tender, loving centre," which depicts the soul as conveying love, and "writhing, living men," which depicts other people as receiving this love. Moreover, the adjective

tender indicates that the soul's love is meeting the need of writhing, or distressed, recipients, so the portrayed people must be working as the intermediary between the soul's love and those recipients.

Bailey says, "The work therefore falls into two categories: that of invoking divine aid (to use Christian phraseology) and then—through faith and acceptance—directing the energies of light and love (which have been invoked) to all men everywhere."¹²⁰ These two categories are needed, because the portrayed people cannot give what they do not have: they must first receive the divine aid from a level that is higher than their own, before they can convey it to others.

Bailey provides the following instruction to a student for such an effort:

I would suggest that you concentrate upon "holding the mind steady in the light." This will involve renewed work in alignment, and in the conscious refocussing of the mind towards reality. It is the activity of the inner, conscious man which ceaselessly turns its attention to the soul, seeking identification with that soul.

The bringing about of a better alignment would also release more fully the love of your soul into your personality life and render you more radiant and attractive in the spiritual sense. This would increase your usefulness in service and supply a need. It is more a need in expression than a need in fact. This release of love will come through alignment, decentralisation from the things of the personality and a more loving attentiveness to the service of others.¹²¹

Thus, as the sentence's second layer of meaning, fifth-ray people become aligned with the soul, invoke the love of the soul, and then convey this tender love outwardly to meet the need of distressed people.

Let us consider the third layer of meaning. The seventh sentence's final phrase speaks of "the outer court of writhing, living men," which alludes to a temple that has both an inner and outer court, like Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:12). Bailey mentions a related phrase, "So

humanity enters into the outer Court of God's love,"¹²² which alludes to several verses in the Bible. The notion that humanity can enter the outer court is found in Revelation 11:2: "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations." The notion that people in the outer court receive God's love is found in Ezekiel 10:5:

Moreover, the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks.

Here, the cherubim are angels sent as ministering spirits (Hebrews 1:14), so they are expressions of God's love.

In addition, Ezekiel 10:3 states, "the cloud filled the inner court," which refers to the cloud of God's presence (Exodus 13:21-22). Accordingly, fifth-ray people enter the inner court when they become aligned with the soul, which is called "the inner divinity,"¹²³ and invoke the love of the soul, which is symbolized by the cloud of God's presence. Afterwards, they work as the soul's intermediary by conveying this love to the people in the outer court. Thus, the second and third layers of meaning are really the same, except that the third layer is expressed with the theological symbols of inner and outer courts.

What is the significance of the third layer of meaning? Bailey makes a related comment:

Truth must also be given in a wider form, and with a more general connotation to those who are beginning to live consciously as souls, and who can therefore be trusted to see the meaning behind the symbol and the significance behind the outer appearance of theology.¹²⁴

At the stage of the stanza's third sentence, fifth-ray people display their characteristic vice called "Theology," which means that they use theology to separate themselves from other people. At the stage of the seventh sentence, however, they can see the meaning behind the theological symbols, and can then apply their understanding of these symbols to serve other people. Thus, the third layer of meaning signi-

fies the transmutation of the vice, “Theology,” into a virtue.

As the fourth and final layer of meaning, let us note that all lacks mentioned in the stanza’s sixth sentence are resolved in the seventh sentence:

In the sixth sentence, the portrayed people lack understanding because they lack love, and they lack love because they lack alignment with the soul. In the seventh sentence, however, they become aligned with the soul and invoke the love of the soul.

In the sixth sentence, they lack the light of the soul. Bailey mentions “The golden light of love,”¹²⁵ so in the seventh sentence they obtain this light as an attribute of love.

In the sixth sentence, the portrayed people lack the joy of the soul. The fifth sentence, however, indicates that joy is an attribute of love, so in the seventh sentence they obtain joy as that attribute.

In the sixth sentence, they lack the harmonizing rhythm of the soul. Bailey mentions “the balancing factor of love,”¹²⁶ so in the seventh sentence they obtain this harmonizing rhythm as an attribute of love, because *harmonize* is a synonym for the verb *balance*.¹²⁷

Consequently, at the stage represented by the seventh sentence, the portrayed people acquire the characteristic fifth-ray virtue that Bailey calls, “The realisation of the soul and its potentialities.”¹²⁸

In summary, the seventh sentence has this overall meaning: *They raise their polarization of consciousness from their emotional body to their mental body, become aligned with the soul, invoke the love of the soul, convey this tender love outwardly to meet the need of distressed people, and thereby also obtain the light, joy, and harmonizing rhythm of the soul.*

8. Yet He stood not at the midway point, and naught He did sufficed to heal the breach.

The seventh sentence depicts fifth-ray people as standing at a midway point, but the eighth sentence’s initial phrase states, “Yet He stood not at the midway point.” The explanation for

this apparent contradiction is that the midway point for the seventh sentence is the mental body, but the midway point for the eighth sentence is a higher spot. Before the latter spot can be identified, it is necessary to introduce some additional terminology.

The mental body, or concrete mind, is the highest part of the personality and is that which is usually regarded as the mind, because it is the instrument of discrimination and analysis. Esoteric traditions, however, have the notion of a higher mind that is sometimes called the “causal body.” The Bible refers to this higher mind as the “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1),¹²⁹ and Hinduism calls it by its Sanskrit name, *karana sarira*. Here, *karana* means “cause” and *sarira* means “body.”¹³⁰

Theosophy divides the mental plane into seven levels, or subplanes: four concrete, or lower, levels; and three abstract, or higher, levels.¹³¹ The mental body is said to reside on the concrete levels of the mental plane, and the causal body on the abstract levels of the mental plane, namely, on the second and third highest mental subplanes.¹³² I. K. Taimni, a theosophical writer, refers to the mental body as “the vehicle of concrete thoughts,” and says, “The first function of the Causal body is that it serves as the organ of abstract thought.”¹³³

Using the foregoing terminology, Bailey identifies the higher midway spot:

For the advanced disciple and the initiate, the midway spot is the causal body, the *karana sarira*, the spiritual body of the soul, standing as the intermediary between Spirit and matter, Life and form, the monad and the personality.¹³⁴

Accordingly, the causal body is the intermediary between what the stanza’s second sentence calls “the great dualities.” Bailey also describes the goal of becoming polarized in the causal body:

The true student seeks to draw his consciousness away from his physical body, and away from the emotional body into the realms of thought, or into the lower mind body. Having achieved that much, he seeks

then to transcend that lower mind and to become polarised in the causal body.¹³⁵

Consequently, in the eighth sentence, to stand at the midway point has this symbolic meaning: to raise the polarization of consciousness from the mental to the causal body. By achieving this higher polarization, fifth-ray people become the intermediary between the great dualities, so they acquire the characteristic fifth-ray virtue that Bailey calls, “Sensitivity to Deity, to light and to wisdom.”¹³⁶

The term *causal consciousness* signifies that the polarization of consciousness is in the causal body. How is causal consciousness achieved? Bailey writes, “It is by meditation, or the reaching from the concrete to the abstract, that the causal consciousness is entered, and man—during this final period—becomes the Higher self and not the Personality.”¹³⁷ Nevertheless, causal consciousness is difficult to prolong, as Bailey also explains:

Seldom is the three-fold Personality yet to be found lined up, if so I may put it, with the causal consciousness. Temporary moments occur when this is the case and when (in moments of highest aspiration and for purposes of unselfish endeavor) the higher and the lower form a line direct. Usually the emotional body, through violent emotion and vibration, or a fluctuating restlessness, is continuously out of alignment. Where the emotional body may be momentarily aligned, then the mental body acts as an obstruction, preventing the percolation down from the higher to the lower, and so to the physical brain.¹³⁸

Consequently, the eighth sentence’s initial phrase, “Yet He stood not at the midway point,” signifies that the portrayed people are unable to widen the duration of each occurrence of causal consciousness; and the final phrase, “and naught He did sufficed to heal the breach,” signifies that nothing that they try suffices to stabilize it.

In summary, the eighth sentence is given this meaning: *Through meditation, or the reaching from the concrete to the abstract, they temporarily raise their polarization of consciousness from their mental body to their causal body;*

yet they are unable to widen the duration of each occurrence of causal consciousness, and nothing that they try suffices to stabilize it.

9. He widened all cleavages, erected barriers, and sought to make still wider gaps.

Given that the eighth sentence’s first phrase signifies an inability to widen the duration of each occurrence of causal consciousness, the ninth sentence’s first phrase, “He widened all cleavages,” is taken as widening all such durations, because each duration is a cleavage, or break, in the occurrence of a lower polarization. Given that the eighth sentence’s second phrase signifies an inability to stabilize causal consciousness, the ninth sentence’s second phrase, “erected barriers,” is taken as such stabilization, because these barriers are self-initiated habits that prevent falling back into mental or emotional polarization.

How can the duration of causal consciousness be prolonged and stabilized? Bailey uses the term *esoteric sense* to denote “a constant inner contact with the soul”:

You ask me to define more clearly what I mean by the words “esoteric sense”. I mean essentially the power to live and to function subjectively, to possess a constant inner contact with the soul and the world in which it is found, and this must work out subjectively through love, actively shown; through wisdom, steadily outpoured; and through that capacity to include and to identify oneself with all that breathes and feels which is the outstanding characteristic of all truly functioning sons of God.¹³⁹

Accordingly, we take “esoteric sense” as being equivalent to stabilized causal consciousness. Bailey writes, “The first stage in this development and culture of the esoteric sense consists in the holding of the attitude of constant detached observation,”¹⁴⁰ so we conclude that developing “the attitude of constant detached observation” helps to stabilize causal consciousness. Why is developing this attitude helpful?

Through constant detached self-observation, we can observe the differences between the various states of consciousness and observe the

specific thoughts and emotions that pull us out of higher states into lower ones. We can then free ourselves from those thoughts and emotions, perhaps by recognizing that they are generally about the past and that the past is gone. We can also observe the following phenomenon: when we fall from a higher state to a lower state, we often throw knowledge of that higher state away and then act as though we never had it. Bailey gives this explanation:

Separation negates comprehension, or knowledge of that which is to be found outside the separated consciousness, for separative knowledge entails identification with that which is expressing itself through the medium of a form.¹⁴¹

For example, when we fall into emotional polarization, our consciousness becomes more separated by identifying with separating emotions, such as fear and hatred, so we may forget the better option of rising out of that condition into a higher polarization, and may forget what we had learned in a higher polarization, such as the potentialities of the soul.

How can constant detached self-observation be developed? Rather than prescribing a definite practice, Bailey presents her students with a series of questions that encourage them to devise their own practice:

I am the redeemer of the lower nature. In what way does observation aid in this redemption?

Does redeeming force, released through observation, pour through me?

In what fashion will the observation of the Observer bring changes in my life, my habits, and my attitudes?

... the cleavage-making characteristic of fifth-ray energy is disadvantageous during a person's early stage of development, because of its limiting and hindering effects; but the same characteristic becomes advantageous during a later stage, because of its help in achieving higher states of consciousness.

Through which body do I most easily express myself? Which of my bodies requires the most observation and control?

Have I demonstrated the powers of observation today? Have I been in conscious contact at any moment with the Observer?

What activities and qualities of my lower nature (good as well as undesirable) need to be observed if I desire to serve more intelligently?

What is the major hindrance to my constant practice of observation? How can I offset this difficulty?¹⁴²

Nevertheless, *ACIM* does prescribe a definite practice:

“Who walks with me?” This question should be asked a thousand times a day, till certainty has ended doubting and established peace. Today let doubting cease. God speaks for you in answering your question with these words:

*I walk with God in perfect holiness. I light the world, I light my mind and all the minds which God created one with me.*¹⁴³

The question “Who walks with me?” is intended to evoke our observation of the energies and qualities that function within us. If we were polarized in the emotional body, the question “Who walks with me?” might yield these answers: desire, guilt, fear, or hatred. If we were polarized in the mental body, the question might yield these answers: pride, prejudice, criticism, or mental control of the emotional nature. If we were polarized in the causal body, we would have become the intermediary between the great dualities, so each of us could genuinely answer the question in the following way: “*I walk with God in perfect holiness.*”

In the above quotation, *ACIM* advises, “This question should be asked a thousand times a day,” but how often is that? The advised frequency roughly corresponds to asking the question during every minute of a seventeen-hour day. If we were to build such a habit, then we would develop, in Bailey’s previous words, “the attitude of constant detached observation.” By building such a habit, we would acquire the characteristic fifth-ray virtue that Bailey calls, “Spiritual and mental devotion,”¹⁴⁴ because *devotion* signifies “the act of binding yourself (intellectually or emotionally) to a course of action.”¹⁴⁵

In summary, the ninth sentence’s first and second phrases are given this meaning: By developing the attitude of constant detached self-observation, they prolong causal consciousness and stabilize it.

Before considering the third phrase, it is helpful to introduce some additional terminology. Bailey provides the following summary of the multidimensional nature of a human being:

Man, in essential essence, is the higher triad demonstrating through a gradually evolving form, the egoic or causal body, and utilising the lower threefold personality as a means to contact the lower three planes. All this has for purpose the development of perfect self-consciousness. Above the triad stands the Monad or the Father in Heaven—a point of abstraction to man as he views the subject from the physical plane.¹⁴⁶

Here, “the higher triad” comprises, in Bailey’s words, “these three aspects of the Spiritual Triad—the spiritual will, the intuition or pure reason, and the abstract mind.”¹⁴⁷ Bailey states that “The Triad” is synonymous with both the soul and higher self, which are terms used earlier.¹⁴⁸ Regarding the Theosophical planes listed earlier, the Spiritual Triad spans the spiritual plane, intuitional plane, and highest mental subplane; and “the Monad or the Father in Heaven,” which is also mentioned in the above quotation, is on the monadic plane.¹⁴⁹

Bailey describes the sequential achievement of three polarizations:

The mental body becomes the centre of consciousness and then later—through practice—it becomes the point of departure for the transference of the polarisation into a higher body, first the causal and later into the Triad.¹⁵⁰

Shifting the polarization of consciousness to the Spiritual Triad results in what is called “triadal consciousness.”¹⁵¹ The above quotation indicates that the achievement of mental polarization, as depicted in the seventh sentence, and the achievement of causal consciousness, as depicted in the eighth sentence, are prerequisites for the achievement of triadal consciousness.

The ninth sentence’s third phrase is: “and sought to make still wider gaps.” Given that the first and second phrases depict the prolongation and stabilization of causal consciousness, the third phrase is taken as seeking triadal consciousness, because this endeavor builds upon the earlier efforts and makes still wider gaps respect to causal consciousness.

Seeking triadal consciousness is equivalent to building the *antahkarana*, a Sanskrit term, for which Bailey gives this definition: “The technical antahkarana, bridging between the threefold personality and the Spiritual Triad.”¹⁵² She provides extensive descriptions of the steps for building the antahkarana,¹⁵³ and says,

The antahkarana must be completed and direct contact must be established with the Spiritual Triad by the time the third initiation has been taken.¹⁵⁴

Thus, seeking triadal consciousness acquires the characteristic fifth-ray virtue that Bailey calls, “The power to take initiation.”¹⁵⁵

What is the nature of triadal consciousness? Bailey speaks of people “who have triadal consciousness and can exercise the potency of the monadic life and will, via the Spiritual Triad.”¹⁵⁶ She also describes the effect of shifting from causal consciousness to triadal consciousness: “The centre of consciousness is now in the Will nature, when this point of attainment is reached, and is no longer in the

love nature. Activity and love are still present in full measure, but the focus of the initiate's attention is in the will aspect of divinity."¹⁵⁷

"Divinity" is sometimes called "the divine reality."¹⁵⁸ Thus, based on the preceding paragraph, triadal consciousness focuses the initiate's attention in the will aspect of the divine reality, thereby yielding the characteristic fifth-ray virtue that Bailey calls "A knowledge of reality."¹⁵⁹ The opposite of knowledge is ignorance. As discussed in the commentary for the third sentence, the "veil of ignorance" is a characteristic fifth-ray vice that hides knowledge of the divine reality. In the fifth-ray stanza, the fourth through ninth sentences depict the steps needed for removing that veil.

In summary, the ninth and final sentence is given this meaning: *By developing the attitude of constant detached self-observation, they prolong causal consciousness and stabilize it. Afterwards, by applying the steps for building the antahkarana, they seek triadal consciousness.*

Conclusions

Bailey's fifth-ray stanza, which we call the "Fifth-Ray Cause of Inharmony and Disease," can be clarified in the following manner:

1. During an early stage in their development, fifth-ray people arise in their wrath and separate themselves in two ways: first, they project their negative qualities onto other people, thereby justifying their attack on them; and second, they attack them, thereby emotionally isolating themselves from them.
2. By shutting out the higher illumination through their intense mental activity, they sweep aside any awareness of the great vertical dualities—such as between spirit and matter, unity and multiplicity, or life and form—and are unable to choose that which concerns the higher poles of these dualities. Instead, they are primarily occupied with the matter aspect in its multiplicity of forms, and adopt the theory of philosophical materialism, which regards all reality as material or physical.

3. By utilizing their mental body—with its discriminating and analyzing faculty—without the higher illumination, they separate themselves from the following factors: the revelation of divine truth and the unfoldment of their spiritual life; thinking in terms of consciousness and awareness; their own truthful thinking about themselves; a generally positive self-identity; right understanding of ideas; and whomever disagrees with their dogmatic assertions. Their making any of these cleavages adds to their veil of ignorance and at the same time is the result of it.

4. As their method of approaching the spiritual path, they engage in scientific research based on three separative assumptions: philosophical materialism, empiricism, and reductionism.

5. By accepting the belief that one's reality is bounded by one's physical body, they establish a barrier against their realization of the unity of all beings, which in turn is a barrier against their experience of love and its attribute, joy.

6. They put up with having no understanding about their area of scientific research and are displeased about it, because they feel innately that a purely materialistic account of nature is inadequate. Afterwards, they question the beliefs underlying the cleavages that they perceive as limiting and hindering, but without having established alignment with the soul, or higher self, for they lack the light, joy, harmonizing rhythm, and love of the soul.

7. They raise their polarization of consciousness from their emotional body to their mental body, become aligned with the soul, invoke the love of the soul, convey this tender love outwardly to meet the need of distressed people, and thereby also obtain the light, joy, and harmonizing rhythm of the soul.

8. Through meditation, or the reaching from the concrete to the abstract, they temporarily raise their polarization of consciousness from their mental body to their causal body;

yet they are unable to widen the duration of each occurrence of causal consciousness, and nothing that they try suffices to stabilize it.

9. By developing the attitude of constant detached self-observation, they prolong causal consciousness and stabilize it. Afterwards, by applying the steps for building the antahkarana, they seek triadal consciousness.

As these nine sentences demonstrate, the spiritual path is a vertical journey with respect to the seven planes of Theosophy, because it entails shifting the polarization of consciousness from the emotional body, to the mental body, to the causal body, and then to the Spiritual Triad. In other words, one moves from emotional consciousness, to mental consciousness, to causal consciousness, and then to triadal consciousness. Bailey refers to this vertical journey as *the upward way* and tells one student, “Be not in any way discouraged, brother of old, if you find the upward way stiff and hard to climb”;¹⁶⁰ but tells another student, “You have trodden the upward Way with greater speed of late.”¹⁶¹

Bailey lists “a few succinct and terse phrases” that signify characteristic vices and virtues of fifth-ray people.¹⁶² These phrases are of no practical use, however, unless they convey some useful meaning. The stanza’s first, second, and third sentences clarify the meaning and use of eleven terse phrases that signify characteristic vices: Unforgiving temper; Mental separation; Intensification of the power to isolate; Intense materialism and temporarily the negation of Deity; The implications of wrong emphasis; Mental devotion to form and form activity; The power to rationalise and destroy; Criticism; Distorted views of truth; Theology; and The energy of ignorance.

In contrast, the stanza’s seventh, eighth, and ninth sentences clarify the meaning and use of five terse phrases that signify characteristic virtues: The realisation of the soul and its potentialities; Sensitivity to Deity, to light and to wisdom; Spiritual and mental devotion; The power to take initiation; and A knowledge of reality.

The imperfection of fifth-ray energy as cleavage making as its outstanding characteristic. The stanza’s first through fifth sentences depict the accumulation of many cleavages: projection, emotional isolation, shutting out the higher illumination, cleavage within an individual, cleavage between an individual and a group, separative scientific dogma, and barriers with love and joy. The sixth sentence signifies the beginning of a change of direction, because it depicts the questioning of beliefs upon which perceived cleavages are based. As *ACIM* explains, such questioning brings the “hope of freedom”:

Belief is powerful indeed. The thoughts you hold are mighty, and illusions are as strong in their effects as is the truth. A madman thinks the world he sees is real, and does not doubt it. Nor can he be swayed by questioning his thoughts’ effects. It is but when their source is raised to question that the hope of freedom comes to him at last.¹⁶³

Nevertheless, the sixth sentence depicts the wrong questioning of beliefs, because it looks for answers without accessing the light of the soul. In contrast, Bailey describes the right questioning, which looks for answers “through a search for that source of all knowledge”:

There is a questioning which is right and proper. It is that “asking of questions” spoken of by the Christ in the words “Ask and ye shall receive.” This faculty of enquiry is deliberately cultivated in their disciples by all true Masters in the Orient. They are taught to formulate questions about the inner realities and then to find the answer for themselves through a search for that source of all knowledge, latent at the heart of all beings. To ask intelligently and to find the answer, they must first free themselves from all outer imposed authority and from all tradition and from the imposition of every theological dogma, whether religious or scientific. Only thus can the reality be found and the truth be seen.¹⁶⁴

The stanza indicates that the wrong questioning of beliefs eventually shifts to the right questioning. Moreover, this shift is represented

as occurring between the sixth and seventh sentences, because the seventh, eighth, and ninth sentences depict the undoing of all preceding kinds of cleavage.

Nevertheless, Bailey says, “We are today governed by the Law of Cleavages,—a divine law and one of fruitful objective.”¹⁶⁵ How can making cleavages be *fruitful*?

The original statement of the ninth sentence is as follows: “He widened all cleavages, erected barriers, and sought to make still wider gaps.” Accordingly, this sentence depicts how fifth-ray people can use the cleavage-making characteristic of the fifth ray in a fruitful way: “He widened all cleavages” portrays widening the durations of causal consciousness, because each duration is a cleavage, or break, in the occurrence of a lower polarization; “erected barriers” portrays stabilizing causal consciousness, because these barriers are self-initiated habits that prevent falling back into a lower polarization; and “sought to make still wider gaps” portrays seeking triadal consciousness, because this effort makes still wider gaps respect to causal consciousness.

Consequently, the cleavage-making characteristic of fifth-ray energy is disadvantageous during a person’s early stage of development, because of its limiting and hindering effects; but the same characteristic becomes advantageous during a later stage, because of its help in achieving higher states of consciousness.

¹ Zachary F. Lansdowne, “Vedic Teachings on the Seven Rays,” *The Esoteric Quarterly*, Spring 2010.

² Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I (1936; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 316.

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 All biblical quotations in this article come from the New American Standard Bible. Philippe Le Moigne, Jean-Daniel Macchi,

Étienne Nodet, Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, and Christian Cannuyer, *The Bible: Its Languages and Its Translations* (New London, CT: Bayard, 2014), 64, write: “This New American Standard Bible is considered by nearly all evangelical Christian scholars and translators today to be the most accurate, word-for-word translation of the original Greek and Hebrew scriptures into modern English that has ever been produced. It remains the most popular version among theologians, professors, scholars, and seminary students.”

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.

¹² Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 298-304.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 293.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 297.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 304.

¹⁶ Zachary F. Lansdowne, “The Third-Ray Cause of Inharmony and Disease,” *The Esoteric Quarterly*, Spring 2017.

¹⁷ Zachary F. Lansdowne, “The Sixth-Ray Cause of Inharmony and Disease,” *The Esoteric Quarterly*, Summer 2017.

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²⁰ Zachary F. Lansdowne, “The Seventh-Ray Cause of Inharmony and Disease,” *The Esoteric Quarterly*, Spring 2019.

²¹ Zachary F. Lansdowne, “The First-Ray Cause of Inharmony and Disease,” *The Esoteric Quarterly*, Summer 2019.

²² Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 302.

²³ *Ibid.*

- ²⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *The Light of the Soul* (1927; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1978), 268.
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- ²⁶ John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (1965; reprint; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 603, writes, “It is a widespread cultural phenomenon that the name is considered to be more than an artificial tag which distinguishes one person from another ... but it is thought to tell something of the kind of person he is.” Timothy F. LaHaye, *Understanding Bible Prophecy for Yourself* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2009), 149, observes, “In the Bible, a name reveals the nature of the person.” For example, 1 Samuel 25:25 says: “for as his name is, so is he.” Roswell D. Hitchcock, *An Interpreting Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names* (New York: A. J. Johnson, 1871), gives meanings of nearly all the names of persons and places in the Bible.
- ²⁷ William W. “Bill” Gothard, “How do the sins of my forefathers affect my life?” *Institute in Basic Life Principles*, <https://iblp.org/questions/how-do-sins-my-forefathers-affect-my-life> (accessed January 26, 2019), states: “Looking back to our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents ... we can observe character traits and spiritual influences that span the generations. A Godly heritage offers a sturdy foundation of virtue and faithfulness, but deeds such as anger, lust, and bitterness set destructive patterns that need to be recognized and overcome. In the Biblical account of Abraham’s family, the iniquity of deception became a stronghold that affected the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s sons. (See Genesis 12:10–20, 20, 26:1–11, 27:1–40, 37:12–36.) On the other hand, the New Testament examples of Lois, Eunice, and Timothy demonstrate the richness of a heritage of faith. (See 2 Timothy 1:5.)”
- ²⁸ James Hastings, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. II, part II (1898; reprint; Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 2004), 535.
- ²⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 207–208.
- ³⁰ Todd E. Feinberg, *From Axons to Identity* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 74.
- ³¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I (1944; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 729.
- ³² *A Course in Miracles* has gained wide acceptance in the esoteric community. For example, Richard Smoley, “The Future of Esoteric Christianity,” *Quest Magazine* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Society in America), July-August 2008, 131–134, mentions, “*A Course in Miracles*, that great monument of contemporary esoteric Christianity.” Bradford C. Olsen, *Modern Esoteric: Beyond Our Senses* (second edition; San Francisco: CCC Publishing, 2017), 14, states, “the modern metaphysical thought system *A Course in Miracles* [is] among the best sources of esoteric personal growth material available.”
- ³³ *A Course in Miracles* (third edition; Mill Valley, CA: Foundation for Inner Peace, 2007), Text, 96.
- ³⁴ David M. Wilson, *Anger Management for Christians* (Morrisville, NC: Lulu Press, 2011), Introduction.
- ³⁵ *Collins English Dictionary* (seventh edition; New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2015).
- ³⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 207; Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II (1942; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1981), 42.
- ³⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation* (1922; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1974), 233.
- ³⁸ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 117.
- ³⁹ Kurt Abraham, *Balancing the Pairs of Opposites: The Seven Rays and Education; Other Essays in Esoteric Psychology* (White City, OR: Lampus Press, 1993), 5, also classifies pairs of opposites by whether they are vertical or horizontal.

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