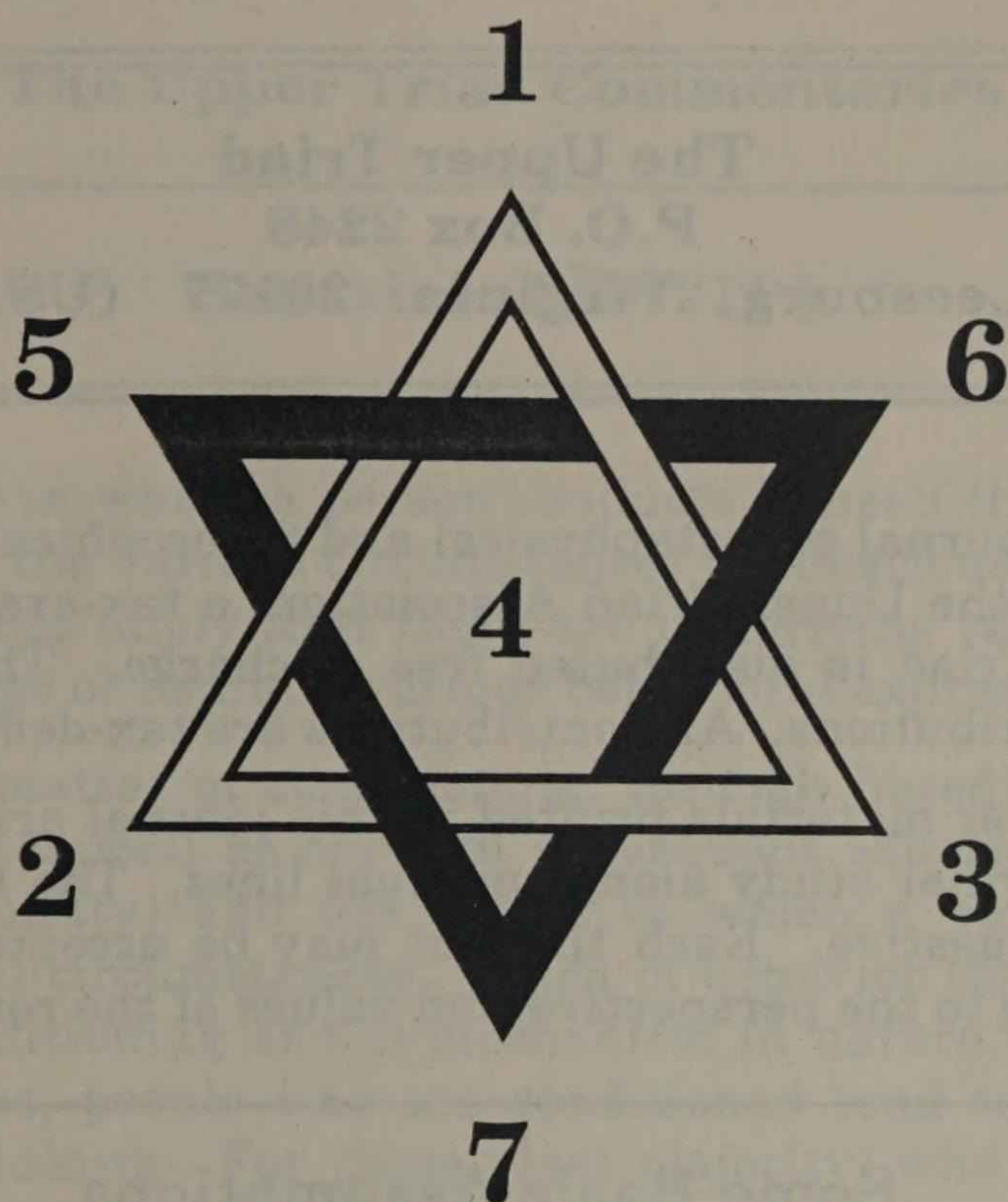


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The Upper Triad



A Journal of Metaphysics and Theosophy

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Commentaries

- No. 1211 - Behavior
- No. 1212 - Esoteric Astrology
- No. 1213 - The Cultivation of Bias
- No. 1214 - Thinking Clearly
- No. 1215 - Non-Conscious Factors in Perception
- No. 1216 - Human Relationship
- No. 1217 - Assimilation of Experience
- No. 1218 - Assimilation of Knowledge
- No. 1219 - Interpretation
- No. 1220 - Assimilation of Understanding

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Commentaries and other materials printed in this journal are intended to stimulate constructive thinking and further study along spiritual lines. The Upper Triad material is not prescriptive, but it is suggestive. Each thought may be accepted, deferred, or rejected, in whole or in part, according to the perspective and values of the reader.

Some Basic Assumptions

1. **PURPOSE.** That the purpose of life is the evolution of consciousness through experience and expression. That all life is conditioned by purpose within a grand scheme of progressive cyclic evolution.

2. **CONSCIOUSNESS.** That the spiritual path in its many aspects embraces the higher stages of human evolution in consciousness, as the human soul commits itself to conscious and selfless development. That this process encompasses the development of the inner, latent spirituality and the application of one's faculties in service to God and to humanity.

3. **TRUTH AND REALITY.** That truth can be found in philosophy, religion, and science, which are but aspects of one coherent and inclusive truth having no inherent conflict or contradiction. That truth is relative and can be perceived in many ways and on many levels, according to consciousness.

4. **KARMA.** That human evolution proceeds through many progressive incarnations according to a cosmic law of periodicity, ever onward and upward. That life is conditioned by the Law of Karma, which yields learning experiences and encourages evolution as a consequence of free will, through every thought, feeling, and action.

5. **KNOWLEDGE.** That the real problem of life in the lower worlds is the elimination of glamour and illusion. That perception clouded by glamour and illusion can be fully overcome, as the student achieves the alignment of a purified and integrated personality with the soul, through intelligent meditation.

6. **RELIGION.** That there exists one God, both immanent and transcendent, within which are differentiated all lives and all forms. That there are many paths to God, embracing all religions and spiritual philosophy.

7. **MANIFESTATION.** That God manifests through all lives and all forms. That the true individuality is the soul which inhabits the personality. That the personality is composed of three interrelated instruments: the physical body, the emotional or astral body, and the lower mind. That the soul is the true Self, the essence of divinity within. That the personality is the not-self that must ultimately be transcended in union with the higher Self.

The Upper Triad Commentaries

Behavior [C-1211]

Behavior is the manner in which a person conducts himself (herself), how a person acts, functions, responds, etc. to the various circumstances of consciousness and experience in the world. Behavior and conduct imply that there are underlying reasons or underlying forces (motivation) which encourage or demand various behavioral expressions.

Much of behavior is a matter of conditioning, through heredity and upbringing (family and cultural environment) as well as through subsequent experience, but there is also the factor of consciousness (quality) and the extent to which a person is actually conscious (awake) to his or her actual circumstances. Much of behavior (for most people) is based on widespread (collective) conditioning and is mechanical in nature. For a given confluence of external and internal forces, people who are conditioned tend to behave consistently (mechanically) and without thinking. For those (vast majority) who are almost entirely conditioned, even thinking is mechanical and the thoughts embraced are not really one's own.

The astral plane is filled with emotional energies and forces (emotions and feelings) that impinge upon the aura and most people simply react to those energies and forces without being aware of them, and without being aware that they are reacting based upon conditioning and external forcing. Similarly, the concrete mental plane is filled with various energies and forces (thought-forms) that (conditioned) people appropriate without really thinking, i.e., through appropriation one thinks that one is thinking when actually one is simply being reactive and mechanical. This is the basis for the (widespread) manipulation of people's behavior (feelings) (thinking) by those who would influence others for their own ends (sincerely or otherwise) (e.g., some merchants, sales people, politicians, religious leaders, etc.). Of course those who manipulate others are also asleep and proceeding according to their conditioning. Thus for most people, behavior is a matter of mechanicalness and conformity, even while there is or appears to be behavioral diversity. But as people evolve, there is gradually developed more autonomy, more freedom from conditioning, less reactivity (mechanicalness) and more intelligent responsiveness.

Much of conditioning is circumstantial in the sense that the circumstances of one's heredity, and upbringing, the culture in which one is developed as a personality, etc., and so, much of behavior is consequential. One's family, culture, etc., exhibit expectations and one tends to accommodate those expectations non-consciously. Conditioned behavior is essentially passive, even though one may "think" otherwise. But as one emerges from the conditioned state, gradually, one begins to realize the extent of one's own conditioning, the extent to which behavior (and feelings) (and thinking) is conditioned and mechanical (and based in the ego), and then, and only then, one can actually begin to deal with it. This does not mean that one's behavior necessarily changes, only that the basis for behavior changes. Instead of behaving mechanically, one behaves more consciously, more deliberately, taking more conscious responsibility for one's actions on various levels.

And yet, as one passes beyond this stage (conscious and deliberate behavior), one becomes more and more non-active. One does not go back to passive (conditioned) behavior, but one learns to transcend the acquired tendency for active behavior. One then learns to flow with something higher than oneself, rather than flowing unconsciously with mass consciousness (mundane absorption).

The Upper Triad Commentaries

Esoteric Astrology [C-1212]

Exoteric astrology refers to that part of astrology which is generally known or understood, that which is readily available and generally accepted as true, though it may be frequently misunderstood or misinterpreted. Exoteric astrology deals primarily with the astrology of personality and personality-centeredness, without recourse to the soul or the influence of the soul. Esoteric astrology refers that part of astrology which is occult or hidden, that which deals with the soul and the influence of the soul upon a responsive personality. That which is esoteric becomes exoteric as humanity evolves, growing both in consciousness and in spirit, as people are able to incorporate and apply the new level of understanding.

This is so in regard to all truths. This is so in regard to astrology, that ancient science based on the interaction of cyclic energies within the cosmos. In the solar system, the planets act as focalizing agents for these energies, and it is the reaction or response to this process which astrologers attempt to analyze. As people move upward and onward along the spiral path, it becomes both necessary and possible in the very natural order of the evolution of the soul, for the mind and personality to rise above mundane (personality) astrological aspects in a process referred to by Jesus as "overcoming" and by others, in this age, as "living above it."

While exoteric astrology is the astrology of the (energies and forces that apply to the) personality (and subject to the abuses of the interpreting mind and emotions), esoteric astrology is the astrology of the soul (i.e., the energies and forces of soul qualification). Esoteric astrology might be said to be exoteric astrology in evolution, or the astrology of those upon the path (but not for the respective personality influences). Just as there are many perspectives on the better-known (exoteric, mundane, widely-abused, greatly misunderstood) astrology, there are also different perspectives or levels of understanding of the more occult or esoteric astrology. Each can provide much material which assists in the understanding of an individual.

In a mundane chart, correctly done, a person (personality) (or more properly, the forces that qualify or influence a personality) can be read in several layers, depending very much upon the intuition of the delineator. In an esoteric chart or reading, this delineation is stepped up and it is possible to recognize the influence of a soul from a rather deep (high) level. It is a better key to understanding the purpose of a present incarnation and holds the secrets of the previous life on earth, plus the accumulated talents that the soul has acquired. It pinpoints much of the karma and also the many relationships which might otherwise remain a mystery within the framework of the usual astrological chart.

On one hand, the exoteric chart applies to the personality of one who is not on the path and who is reactive or responsive to the personality qualifying energies and forces and which is relatively meaningless for one who is on the path and responsive to higher (soul) qualification. On the other hand, the esoteric chart has no meaning for one who is not on the path and pertains primarily to the fully-integrated, spiritually responsive individual who is in some measure in touch with the soul and the energies and forces of the soul. For the properly trained astrologer this distinction is crucial. Applying exoteric interpretations to someone who is living above the personality-centeredness of ordinary humanity is pointless. Likewise, applying esoteric techniques to someone who is living at the personality level.

The Cultivation of Bias [C-1213]

Bias is ultimately a factor that the spiritual student must transcend in order to realistically embrace truth. Because bias is a distortion of perception that leads to limitation in understanding. But as that factor is gradually overcome, one must first overcome the negative bias, and one method that is particularly effective in qualifying the mass consciousness is the cultivation of a more positive bias. Then, eventually, one must overcome positive bias.

The atmosphere is substantially influenced by the character and quality of behavior, feeling, and thinking. And lives are as affected by the atmosphere created through thinking and feeling as much as by behavior. The student is encouraged to consciously cultivate positive-but-realistic thinking. Many of the events taking place in the world influence individual and group thinking. People and the media tend to focus on the unusual and particularly on the negative side of reported experience. This negative focus fosters additional negative focus and compounds the process of restoration of balance. Focusing on positive experiences, instead, encourages more positive experience. The various negative and positive thought-forms that linger on subtle levels are all stimulated and sustained by mass thinking and feeling. People who are passive (conditioned) (as most people are) are generally affected by these thought-forms. Thus considerable motive exists for cultivation and expression of generally positive (but honest and realistic) bias.

Despite the attention being given to some of the more negative aspects of current events, there is some growing publicity for the more positive side. Economic interdependence among groups and nations is leading toward world goodwill and brotherhood. Cultural activities are flourishing, being available to more and larger segments of the world population. Organizations for the alleviation of human suffering abound. Governments are showing concern for their disadvantaged populations and in some instances for those of other nations. Organizations that provide assistance in times of trouble, from the personal to the international level, are plentiful. At all levels it is apparent that man's humanity to man exceeds man's inhumanity to man. Many heads of state and general populations are becoming more sensitive to the enormity of war. In many cases, nationalism is gradually being transformed into humanitarianism and world brotherhood.

Many metaphysical groups encourage the realization that thoughts are really quite significant factors in human behavior. Even though thoughts eventually disseminate and dissolve, they can have appreciable lifetimes. One's mental outlook upon the events in one's life has a great deal to do with one's health, peace, and happiness. It would seem just as easy to be biased towards a we've-never-had-it-so-good frame of mind as it is towards a civilization-is-going-to-pieces bias. The habit of positive thinking is a most simple deed that one can do for oneself and for the world with very little effort. As one looks for the good in everyone one meets and in the events of this life, one finds that good; and as one finds the good one is also strengthening that quality and reinforcing the positive side of life.

Thus one is encouraged to cultivate a positive bias. And eventually, that bias results in considerable and constructive (progressive) (evolutionary) changes in civilization (culture) (human attitudes and behavior). Eventually, in order to embrace truth and reality, one must transcend bias altogether, and in so doing, one contributes even more, albeit more subjectively.

The Upper Triad Commentaries

Thinking Clearly [C-1214]

There are three fundamental objectives in concrete mental development, the first being the ability to think clearly, the second being the ability to discern truth, and the third being the ability to respond intelligently to higher impression (intuition). Unfortunately most people, and most spiritual students, (unconsciously and incorrectly) presume that they are thinking clearly, when in practice, virtually all thinking is substantially biased in some way or another.

There is emotional bias (kama manas) where the thought processes are unduly and largely unconsciously distorted or biased by emotional feelings (including desire). Most people think in accordance with their desires, they think what they want to think, without realizing that this compromises the clarity of thinking that might otherwise be possible. Wherever there is personal interest in something, the thinking in that regard is necessarily distorted by that personal interest. There is also a concrete mental bias based in logic and/or personal interest. Logical thinking is generally merely the illusion of logical thinking, as a person's logic is often (generally) distorted by personal interest. Wanting to believe something necessarily biases the way the mind processes information, so that information that supports the intended belief is more acceptable than information that does not support the belief. And there are more subtle biases in thinking due to the presence of ego.

Thus virtually all thinking is conditioned (mechanical), biased in some way, and filtered by the ego. So. The question then is how to think clearly. The answer is the elimination of bias, the elimination of conditioning factors, and the elimination of the ego in thinking. The process begins with self-observation and honesty. One must strive to be as honest as possible in every regard, else one will not be able to see the bias and conditioning and filtering that affects thinking. The process includes being as objective as one can be, actually cultivating objectivity (which is really just an extension of being honest). Logic has value only to the extent that one is honest and objective and to the extent that one understands the limitations of logic (the existence of assumptions, the tentative nature of all conclusions).

But the real key to thinking clearly lies in overcoming the propensity for having beliefs and opinions. What a person believes constitutes a formidable barrier to the truth of something. When beliefs become opinions (attachments) the problem gets substantially worse. The whole objective of thinking clearly is apprehension of truth and reality. When one has beliefs (opinions) (attachments) (biases) (conditioning) they form barriers to further discernment of truth. There are many beliefs that most people consider self-evident (and therefore do not question) which in fact, while more or less true and valid, nonetheless inhibit, impede, or preclude further realization.

Obviously if a belief is false then that belief is a barrier, but even if a belief is (generally) true, it inhibits the person from seeing (perceiving) (realizing) what else might also be true about something. The problem is that the mind tends to be exclusive in its thinking rather than inclusive. If a person believes that an object has certain attributes or characteristics, then the person (mind) is inhibited from realizing that the same object might appear otherwise to someone else. People tend to see some truth without seeing the whole truth. There are many (valid) perspectives. The spiritual student needs to understand this and begin to practice inclusiveness in thinking. Being open-minded and inclusive in thinking is a major step forward.

Non-Conscious Factors in Perception [C-1215]

One of the problems with perception is that there are so many non-conscious factors, so much of which a person is generally unaware. Most people are not aware that they are biased and conditioned, that their desires and beliefs and opinions directly affect their manner (process) of perceiving and the content of perception. Most people are not aware that they are conditioned and mechanical in their thinking, by all of their experience, by all of what they already believe, by all of what they want to believe.

Most people are completely unaware of the true nature of the physical world and the true nature (object) of the human presence in this world. Most people take for granted whatever it is that appears to them through the senses. Most people see whatever is convenient for them to see. The world appears to be so, therefore (unconsciously) it is presumed to be so. People (groups) (countries) (races) appear to be separate from one another, and therefore people act accordingly. Most people unconsciously embrace only the apparent physical reality, without appreciating the underlying energies and forces, without appreciating the cause and effect relationships that govern experience in this world. And those people who are able to perceive things differently (correctly or otherwise) (with or without understanding) are often shunned, because they threaten the artificial stability (status quo) of things (ego).

The key to overcoming these limitations is for the spiritual student to become conscious, to become consciously aware of limitations, of actuality in thinking and feeling and perceiving, to awaken to the extent and nature of maya (glamour) (illusion). To achieve clarity in thinking is not easy. To become consciously aware of the actuality of things is very difficult, because virtually every force in the external world is inertial and encourages a person to remain asleep. And much of the personality nature (motivation) (conditioning) contributes directly to creating and sustaining these delusions. Overcoming these non-conscious factors requires consciousness, awareness, realization, based in determination and intelligent preparation.

Much of a person's basis for experience and expression in the lower worlds is based on unconscious and assumptive beliefs. This is fine for ordinary experience and expression, which after all requires that a person be asleep. But for the spiritual student who is nearing the end of experience in the lower sense, it becomes increasingly necessary to wrestle with those unconscious factors, to realize their existence, to recognize their nature, and to overcome their influence through replacing them with more realistic, more qualified factors (i.e., going to sleep at a higher level). Eventually, however, the self-realized spiritual student is able to be directly aware of all of these things, without being compromised by them.

In order to become aware of otherwise non-conscious factors in perception a person must learn to be observant in a wholly detached manner, without judging, without analyzing, without drawing conclusions. Just observing things as they appear to be, without judging, leads eventually to being able to perceive things as they are (what is is necessarily substantially different than what appears to be). Being honest in every sense is absolutely essential. Being open-minded and non-judging likewise. To consider the possibility of things rather than believing things. To act and proceed in accordance with one's values without being attached to those values. To consciously realize that one is growing and deepening and that in this process of growing and deepening one's values necessarily grow and deepen as well.

Human Relationship [C-1216]

Human relationship includes the personality domain and the soul domain. At the personality level, human relationship begins at conception and relates the human being to his or her parents and immediate family and continues through all of the various life circumstances, through family, community, employment, etc. At this level, human relationship encompasses in varying degrees everyone who a person comes in contact with, but with emphasis on those with whom there are karmic or dharmic bonds. And in the broader sense there is relationship with the race as a whole.

Consideration of human relationship at the personality level includes the way people relate to each other, through the head or the heart, with sincere intent, or through ego, etc. Egoistic people tend to be more competitive and only superficially collaborative, being inherently separative. Non-egoistic people tend to be more collaborative and cooperative, being inherently non-separative. Egoistic people tend to look out for themselves at the expense of others (or superficially noble), while non-egoistic people tend to look out for others and live through the reality of goodwill rather than the facade of goodwill. Most people are asleep and relate superficially, mechanically. Others are partially awake and relate more intelligently, more meaningfully. Most people think of themselves as separate people, even if there is intellectual appreciation of unity, while some actually embrace and feel the unity of consciousness and transcend the sense of individuality, of separateness, and become part of everyone (and everyone becomes part of them).

One of the most important factors in human relationship is the extent to which a genuine rapport can be established between people. This depends a great deal on the relative consciousness, i.e., on the level at which the relationship is based. And it depends a great deal on the relative quality of the consciousness, i.e., through character, temperament, and values. There is a matter of being complementary and also a matter of being supplementary. Most relationships are superficial, even marriages and professional partnerships. But as the consciousness grows and deepens, the spiritual student becomes less and less satisfied with superficial relationship, and seeks more depth in relationship.

There is companionship. There is loneliness. There is friendship. There is otherworldliness. There is relationship in the sense of romantic relationship. There is relationship in the sense of inner connections. And there is partnership, both in the worldly sense and in the deeper sense of committed (romantic) relationship. And there is a matter of bonding, of going beyond the superficial rapport to something much more personally and spiritually meaningful. This requires a considerable sense and expression of gentleness, kindness, openness, of honesty and considerateness and faithfulness. And, ultimately, it requires a deeper, spiritual context (service and soul relationship).

At the soul level, human relationship encompasses the soul group, i.e., that particular group of souls to which a soul is intimately connected, as a flame is part of the fire. These relationships, of souls within a soul group, tend to dominate at the personality level only when the personality is well established on the spiritual path and thereby able to respond to the inner relationship. People tend to be attracted to one another, either due to karmic relationship at the personality level, or to dharmic relationship at the soul level. Thus the more meaningful relationships are either karmic or dharmic.

The Upper Triad Commentaries

Assimilation of Experience [C-1217]

To assimilate something is to take in and appropriate and absorb something, as in nourishment. The assimilation of experience produces knowledge at some level or another, often on unconscious levels. The assimilation of experience is absolutely essential to progress in consciousness.

Experience in the world of human endeavor, in the world of the human personality of physical, emotional, and mental experience and expression, leads to the development of abilities, acquisition of knowledge, and the assimilation of experience, all of which occurs at the personality level (not at the soul level), all of which lead eventually to understanding and ultimately to wisdom. Much of experience is unconsciously assimilated, incidentally in the course of living in the world. What a person learns through experience is assimilated in the form of knowledge or superficial understanding. If a person is more conscious of experience, if a person is consciously attempting to learn the intended lessons, and if a person is conscious thereby of the process of assimilation of experience, then that process is facilitated and progress occurs more quickly than would otherwise be the case.

The practical purpose of life in this world is experience leading to growth (evolution) in consciousness. Experience is not something that conveys from one lifetime to another, from one incarnation to the next. Even knowledge, the product of assimilation of experience, is not something that conveys. Even understanding, the assimilation of knowledge, is not something that conveys. It is only wisdom, through character and conscience, that actually conveys, and wisdom is produced only through the assimilation of understanding. Thus experience in the world has no real value unless it is assimilated. Knowledge likewise. Understanding as well. What matters is wisdom (conscience), which is something that can be conveyed beyond death, something that can be incorporated in the causal body (of the soul on its level). At death, anything that remains at the personality level is lost. But that which is assimilated, that which the soul can grasp at its level, has considerable value as it contributes to progress in consciousness. The conscience (character) (capacity for understanding) is what matters. It is that assimilated understanding that provides a basis for further experience and expression, through successive lifetimes (incarnations).

So. How does a person assimilate experience? In part, unconsciously, as consciousness absorbs the impressions of experience. In part, consciously, as the person thinks and feels in response to experience. In part, through retrospection, through conscious retrospective consideration of daily experience. In part, through transition (the afterlife), as the experience of the lifetime is reviewed in consciousness. Experience is assimilated at the personality level, consciously and/or unconsciously, deliberately and/or indeliberately, effectively and/or ineffectively, quickly and/or slowly.

Experience leads to the assimilation of experience. The assimilation of experience produces knowledge and leads to understanding. Thus effective assimilation of experience is that which is more conscious, more deliberate, more productive in terms of producing knowledge, and more productive in terms of leading to understanding, all of which implies responsiveness to experience. If experience is valued as an end in itself, i.e., through indulging the senses, then it really has little (real) value. But if experience is valued as a means to something more, if knowledge (understanding) (wisdom) is truly and consciously appreciated, then assimilation of experience is more effective.

Assimilation of Knowledge [C-1218]

Assimilation of experience is more fundamental than assimilation of knowledge, yet both are necessary to produce understanding. Most people go about their lives semi-consciously, mechanically, learning and growing almost incidentally. Experience that is repeated often enough and intensely enough leaves some impression. Knowledge that seems to have some value is generally retained.

But effective assimilation requires a more conscious consideration. The spiritual student is urged to more deliberately consider every experience through daily retrospection. The spiritual student is urged to more deliberately consider the value of whatever knowledge is acquired. And the spiritual student is urged to consciously seek to understand both experience and knowledge, in the broader context of evolution in consciousness. Yet the spiritual student is also urged not to be attached to experience or knowledge. The assimilation of experience and the assimilation of knowledge produce understanding, but assimilation occurs only to the extent that the student is not absorbed or entangled in the experience or attached to the knowledge. Otherwise, experience and knowledge serve to hinder assimilation and therefore tend to preclude understanding.

The student needs to discern the difference between superficial experience, superficial knowledge, and superficial understanding, on the one hand, and real assimilation of experience, knowledge, and understanding on the other. In this sense, understanding is a product. Understanding is produced as a consequence of assimilation of experience and (more properly) as a consequence of assimilation of knowledge. Being entangled in experience means that a person cannot really comprehend the significance or nature of the experience. Being attached to knowledge, having beliefs and opinions, means that a person cannot really see a broader context, cannot really understand what is known (and more importantly, what is not known). Assimilation occurs when the essence of something is incorporated. Thus, superficial experience and superficial knowledge lead to superficial understanding.

Most people live superficially. The spiritual student is expected to live less superficially and more substantially. Not through intensity of experience or through depth and breadth of knowledge, but through the quality of consciousness that is embraced, that enables the student to more effectively assimilate experience and more effectively assimilate whatever knowledge is acquired. The challenge is to acquire pertinent knowledge without being attached to it, so that the pieces of information can sort themselves into meaningful patterns that can then be assimilated. This means that knowledge is ever partial, ever tentative. The mind (and heart) that embraces knowledge, without being attached, can see how the pieces fit together, can see beyond the apparent contradictions, and can see how each piece and perspective contributes to the whole.

The assimilation of experience means that the essence or real value of the experience has been incorporated in consciousness. It does not mean that the experience is remembered or is even consciously appreciated. Similarly, the assimilation of knowledge means that the essence or real value of the knowledge (information) has been incorporated in consciousness. The details are not important. Remembering is not important. What is important is that the student retains the essence. One knows how to do certain things or how to be, without needing to know how one knows how to do them.

The Upper Triad Commentaries

Interpretation [C-1219]

Interpretation is defined as the process of consciously or unconsciously conceiving the meaning or significance of some experience or some information (knowledge). Correct interpretation is vital to understanding, but the process is also fraught with difficulties.

People naturally interpret every sense impression, every aspect of experience, every piece of knowledge or information that they encounter. Much of this is done unconsciously and indeliberately, mechanically subconsciously according to whatever conditioning, biases, prejudices, and values a person may have. Even when interpretation occurs more consciously, more deliberately, it tends to be a mechanical and biased (non-objective) process. Progression in interpretation occurs as a person develops over many lifetimes and matures in consciousness, from unconscious interpretation to more conscious but conditioned and biased (self-serving) interpretation, eventually to more objective (rational, intellectual) interpretation, and ultimately to more subjective (intuitive) interpretation.

Whether consciously or otherwise, people tend to interpret things according to what they know and understand (or according to what they think they know and what they think they understand). A major break-through occurs when a person realizes the extent of his or her conditioning and the extent to which interpretation is colored and the manner in which this happens. When people begin to interpret more objectively, then more (better) understanding is achieved. However, real understanding, based on the whole rather than the isolated experience and knowledge and limited understanding of the intellect (personality), occurs only when the intuition is properly developed and the mind is tempered sufficiently to allow the intuition to play its "understanding" through the mind.

There are also systems of interpretation. The default system (perspective) is based in the illusions of the world, of more or less independent human beings (individualities), of separation of things in the worldly planes of consciousness, i.e., ordinary perspective. As the student progresses he or she takes on a more holistic view and begins to interpret experience (knowledge) (insight) in accordance with that broader perspective. The value of symbols and patterns is eventually realized, through interpretive (real) (symbolic) systems (perspectives) such as psychology, the seven rays, astrology, the tarot, and the Qabalah. The esoteric philosophy in its various symbolic forms provides a very potent and meaningfully concise system for the interpretation of experience and afforded knowledge. Experience and knowledge (and understanding) are then interpreted more or less in the context of the (deeper, broader, esoteric) system (evolution of consciousness rather than merely worldly experience and expression).

Interpretive systems are both systems (contexts) within which things can be interpreted and systems that convey a considerable amount of knowledge and understanding of things, provided the student has the proper keys to unlock the system and embrace the contents (insight). While the depth and breadth of metaphysical and theosophical material may appear to be quite large, there is a not inconsiderable redundancy. All of the esoteric philosophy can be conveyed relatively simply (concisely and symbolically), through one or another of the interpretative systems. But one must first have an intellectual basis for understanding the system, and then one must transcend that intellectual basis in order to intuitively embrace its quality and content.

Assimilation of Understanding [C-1220]

Knowing and understanding that experience and knowledge and understanding cannot be conveyed (directly) from one lifetime to the next, the spiritual student is encouraged to facilitate the assimilation of experience into knowledge, the assimilation of knowledge into understanding, and the assimilation of understanding into wisdom. At the same time, the developed student is encouraged to embark upon a lifetime of service to others, forgoing his or her own further (conscious) development.

Experience requires that a person be in the world (and to some extent engaged with the world), but effective assimilation of experience properly requires non-engagement. Knowledge may be obtained within or without the world and worldly encounters, but the assimilation of knowledge requires the context of experience (psychology) and the field of manifestation. Thus while experience and knowledge can be embraced (superficially) without a context, their assimilation, and particularly the assimilation of understanding, requires a proper (broader, deeper) context. Thus what really matters is not the experience or knowledge or understanding, but the product of assimilation of understanding, which is wisdom.

Wisdom is that quality or essence that can be conveyed from lifetime to lifetime. It is part of the quality of consciousness at the soul level and is generally manifested (to the extent that it exists and the extent to which a personality is responsive) through conscience and intuition. At a lower level, where a person is not really well-developed, assimilated experience expresses through instinct. But in developed people, assimilated experience (knowledge) (understanding) expresses through inherent abilities and particularly (meaningfully) through the ability to apprehend. Many people err in unconsciously expecting others to perceive things the same way, but people perceive things differently, in part because experience (knowledge) (understanding) is different, but in part because inherent abilities (wisdom) are also different.

When a lesson is really and truly learned, it is a matter of having assimilated the attendant experience and knowledge and understanding. In which case the fruits of that assimilated understanding are readily available through conscience. But where the lesson has not been fully learned (and assimilated), the experience is necessarily repeated in various (and variously more intense) ways until such time as it is really learned. Of course the underlying (evolutionary) force is karma, which encourages assimilation on various levels (experience, knowledge, understanding, wisdom). The typical, self-absorbed but developed person (ego) will naturally attempt to undermine the processes of assimilation, in fear that through assimilation the ego will lose its hold (power) (influence) (domination) on the personality, not that the ego has any understanding of assimilation, but it does operate according to instinct (mainly self-interest and self-preservation).

But for the developed person, there is a problem with knowledge and understanding, and that is the belief that one knows and/or understands. Real (assimilated) knowledge and real (assimilated) understanding conveys with it the sense that one does not really know or understand anything, but that whatever (insight) is needed will spring necessarily from within (from the deeper, higher, more noble Self). That conveyance is the beginning of wisdom and greatly facilitates and accelerates the overall process of evolution in consciousness.

List of Topical Issues - 7

The various special issues of the Upper Triad Journal have been replaced by a new series of topical issues which cover the entire depth and breadth of the Upper Triad Material. Some are in preliminary form and will be expanded in subsequent editions. Some, denoted by <> are not yet available. Those topical issues that have been produced are available, without charge. However, the cost of reproducing and mailing these topical issues averages \$ 3 per copy. Contributions to help defray these costs are always appreciated.

Following are descriptions of the topical issues of Volume 7.

7.1 MANIFESTATION

Reincarnation and Transition. Manifestation, the Field of Manifestation, Reincarnation, Birth, Death, and Transition. [52 pages]

7.2 OCCULTISM

The Science of the Seventh Ray. Occultism, Aspects of Occultism, Chakras, Creative Force, Qualification, and the Dark Side. [42 pages]

7.3 PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

Occult Phenomenology. Psychic Phenomena, Aspects of Psychic Phenomena, Dangers and Safeguards. [36 pages]

7.4 MAGIC

The Art of the Seventh Ray. Magic, Black Magic and White Magic, Ceremonial Magic, and Music. [24 pages]

7.5 ASTROLOGY <>

The Art and Science of External Influence.

7.6 THE TREE OF LIFE <>

The Mystical Bridge. The Qabalah and the Tarot.

7.71 COSMIC FIRE - I

The Key to Manifestation. Commentaries on Alice A. Bailey's Treatise on Cosmic Fire. Part 1 of 2. [48 pages]

7.72 COSMIC FIRE - 2

The Key to Manifestation. Commentaries on Alice A. Bailey's Treatise on Cosmic Fire. Part 2 of 2. [50 pages]

Lunar Table for 1998

The following table is provided for those who are involved in the monthly planetary work. For U.S. Central, Mountain, and Pacific Standard Time, subtract one hour, two hours, and three hours, respectively, from the time shown for Eastern Standard Time. For Daylight Savings Time add one hour to the appropriate Standard Time. Please refer to Topical Issue 2.71 for more general information.

Sun Sign	Lunar Event	Eastern Standard Time		Greenwich Mean Time	
		Date	New York	Date	London
Capricorn	Full Moon	12-Jan-98	12:25 PM	12-Jan-98	5:25 PM
Aquarius	New Moon	28-Jan-98	1:02 AM	28-Jan-98	6:02 AM
	Full Moon	11-Feb-98	5:24 AM	11-Feb-98	10:24 AM
Pisces	New Moon	26-Feb-98	12:27 PM	26-Feb-98	5:27 PM
	Full Moon	12-Mar-98	11:46 PM	13-Mar-98	4:35 AM
Aries	New Moon	27-Mar-98	10:15 PM	28-Mar-98	3:15 AM
	Full Moon	11-Apr-98	5:24 PM	11-Apr-98	10:24 PM
Taurus	New Moon	26-Apr-98	6:42 AM	26-Apr-98	11:42 AM
	Full Moon	11-May-98	9:30 AM	11-May-98	2:30 PM
Gemini	New Moon	25-May-98	2:33 PM	25-May-98	7:33 PM
	Full Moon	9-Jun-98	11:19 PM	10-Jun-98	4:19 AM
Cancer	New Moon	23-Jun-98	10:51 PM	24-Jun-98	3:51 AM
	Full Moon	9-Jul-98	11:02 AM	9-Jul-98	4:02 PM
Leo	New Moon	23-Jul-98	8:45 AM	23-Jul-98	1:45 PM
	Full Moon	7-Aug-98	9:11 PM	8-Aug-98	2:11 AM
	New Moon	21-Aug-98	9:04 PM	22-Aug-98	2:04 AM
Virgo	Full Moon	6-Sep-98	6:22 AM	6-Sep-98	11:22 AM
	New Moon	20-Sep-98	12:03 PM	20-Sep-98	5:03 PM
Libra	Full Moon	5-Oct-98	3:13 PM	5-Oct-98	8:13 PM
	New Moon	20-Oct-98	5:20 AM	20-Oct-98	10:10 AM
Scorpio	Full Moon	4-Nov-98	12:19 AM	4-Nov-98	5:19 AM
	New Moon	18-Nov-98	11:28 PM	19-Nov-98	4:28 AM
Sagittarius	Full Moon	3-Dec-98	10:20 AM	3-Dec-98	3:20 PM
	New Moon	18-Dec-98	5:43 PM	18-Dec-98	10:43 PM

Solar Table for 1998

The following table of major solar events is provided for those who are involved in the solar meditation work. Please refer to Topical Issue 2.71 for more general information.

Solar Event	Eastern Standard Time		Greenwich Mean Time	
	Date	New York	Date	London
Vernal Equinox	20-Mar-98	2:56 PM	20-Mar-98	7:56 PM
Summer Solstice	21-Jun-98	9:04 AM	21-Jun-98	2:04 PM
Autumnal Equinox	23-Sep-98	12:39 AM	23-Sep-98	5:39 AM
Winter Solstice	21-Dec-98	8:58 PM	22-Dec-98	1:58 AM

Three Major Festivals

The following table of the three major full moon festivals is provided for those who are involved in the monthly planetary meditation work. Please refer to Topical Issue 2.71 for more general information.

Lunar Event	Eastern Standard Time		Greenwich Mean Time	
	Date	New York	Date	London
Easter - Aries	11-Apr-98	5:24 PM	11-Apr-98	10:24 PM
Wesak - Taurus	11-May-98	9:30 AM	11-May-98	2:30 PM
Goodwill - Gemini	9-Jun-98	11:19 PM	10-Jun-98	4:19 AM

Each of the major solar events and each of the full moon festivals covers a period of five days, with the actual point of the solar event or full moon having central significance.



Selected Quotations

The same instinctive actions that accompany wrath are inherited in chastened form by its evolute, determination.

Arthur Robson

I would rather know the truth, however terrible, than take refuge in some system of comforting delusions.

Robert S. de Ropp

God has made nonexistence appear solid and respectable; and He has made Existence appear in the guise of nonexistence.

Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi

Every good deed, however small, if it be directed to God by simplicity of intention, increases in us the divine likeness, and deepens in us the flow of eternal life.

John Ruysbroeck

Nature is non-existent, per se ... Nature is the infinite illusion of our senses.

Arthur Schopenhauer

Civilization consists in our giving ourselves, as human beings, to the effort to attain the perfecting of the human race and the actualization of progress of every sort in the circumstances of humanity and of the objective world. This mental attitude, however, involves a double predisposition: firstly, we must be prepared to act affirmatively toward the world and life; secondly, we must become ethical.

Albert Schweitzer

The mind of man is precarious. The mind of Tao is tenuous. Concentrate on the essence and on the One. Hold fast to the center.

Shun

In the truest sense, however, the technical and the ethical are one and inseparable.

W. Emmett Small

When the one is set against all the others, the one is seen as pervading them all and at the same time embracing them all in itself.

D.T. Suzuki



Selected Quotations

The poise and serenity of dharma is very liable to be mistaken for the weakness of tamas. But we must be careful to distinguish between them.

Arthur Robson

Genuine masters never try to attract disciples. On the contrary, they tend to discourage them, warning them that the Way is difficult, that it is better to remain comfortably asleep than to become half awake.

Robert S. de Ropp

Only he who is an enemy to his own existence possesses real existence.

Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi

Who is there more foolish than he who madly strives for his own benefit?

Sri Sankaracharya

The pilgrim's return, then, is not a return to his own past but stands for an inner discovery.

Edith B. Schnapper

Nothing of real value in the world is ever accomplished without enthusiasm and self-sacrifice.

Albert Schweitzer

A master is one who has attained a far higher stage of evolution than the ordinary individual ... As the result of long and sustained endeavor, a master has purified his character of those two most pain-bearing attributes of human nature, selfishness and vanity, with all their concomitants and consequences.

Cyril Scott

The dynamic polar relationship between (the poles of) consciousness and matter imparts to the universe its fundamental, ever-present motion, whose on-going character instills a rhythmic or periodicity, giving birth to time. This manifests itself throughout nature as the space-time processes of birth and death, the cycles of growth and decay. This, the basic life-action of the universe, is called the great breath.

Emily Sellon

Synthetic Triangles

Synthetic triangles are aids to meditation and philosophical study. The various keywords indicate relationships between the three points of the triangles, while the various numbers indicate relationships through correspondence with the seven rays. Further information is available in Special Issue No. 7 (Synthetic Triangles) and Topical Issue No. 1.5 (The Seven Rays).

<p style="text-align: center;">Evolution</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cosmogogenesis Anthropogenesis</p> <p style="text-align: left;">No. 649</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Power</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nature Process</p> <p style="text-align: left;">No. 650</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Inner Government</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ashrams Outer Government</p> <p style="text-align: left;">No. 651</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Inner Government</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Consciousness Outer Government</p> <p style="text-align: left;">No. 652</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ray Nature</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ray Relationships Ray Methods</p> <p style="text-align: left;">No. 653</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Nature</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Relationship Method</p> <p style="text-align: left;">No. 654</p>

Prayer of Abdul Baha

Oh God. Make me a teacher in thy cause.

Cause my mouth to utter the wisdom of thy ways.

Make me wise, kind, good, and understanding.

Give me the courage of thy martyrs, the patience of thy saints,
and the knowledge of thy chosen ones.

Make me a fire that will burn through the darkness of man's
ignorance, a flag that will sing and echo through his despair.

And beloved Father, all I can return for these many gifts is a
love so great it threatens to tear me in two.

I love thee from the innermost corners of my soul.

I beg for the priceless favor of being allowed to serve thee.

All that my heart is crying and my words cannot express, I
know thou, heavenly Father, understandeth.

I can say no more.

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Announcements

Contributions are always appreciated to help defray the cost of printing and mailing the Upper Triad Journal, and to help defray the cost of reprinting the various topical issues. The approximate cost of printing and mailing the bi-monthly Journal, for domestic subscribers, is \$ 12 per year. The approximate, average cost of reprinting and mailing the various topical issues is \$ 3 each.

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