



THE UPPER TRIAD

SET NUMBER 2

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THE UPPER TRIAD

The Upper Triad is a journal of metaphysical, theosophical, and esoteric philosophy. The journal is published monthly by the Upper Triad Association, a tax-exempt, non-profit, philosophical society. The Upper Triad is distributed free of charge to any interested persons. This work is financed almost entirely by voluntary contributions. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Commentaries and quotations printed in the journal are intended to stimulate constructive thinking and further study along spiritual lines. Each thought may be accepted, deferred, or rejected, in whole or in part, according to the perspective of the reader.

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SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

1. THE UNITY OF ALL LIFE. That there exists one God, both immanent and transcendent, within which are differentiated all lives and all forms.

2. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE. 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.

3. REINCARNATION AND 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 Great Teacher, the Law of Karma, which yields learning experiences and encourages evolution as a consequence of free will, through every thought, feeling, and action.

4. THE NATURE OF TRUTH. 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 there are many paths to God, embracing all religions and spiritual philosophy. That truth is relative and can be perceived in many ways and on many levels, according to consciousness.

5. THE PROBLEM OF LIFE. That the real problem of life in the lower worlds is the elimination of glamour and illusion. That 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. PERSONALITY AND SOUL. 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 essence of the divinity within.

7. THE SPIRITUAL PATH. That the spiritual path in its many aspects embraces the higher stages of human evolution, as the human soul takes its stand and 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.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 21 - INVOLUTION AND EVOLUTION

In the great cyclic panorama of manifestation, the law of evolution demonstrates as impelling evolutionary forces on all levels of existence. The sub-human, human, and super-human lives are all impelled onward along the spiral path of evolution. Each lifewave of a planet is created, in turn, to begin the descent into matter for further experience and expression. Creation and evolution are mutually quite consistent, for each lifewave is created (differentiated) within God (and by God) as a vast number of monads (sparks from the central flame). Each monad is created in the image of God (which is spirit, not matter). The forms that a monad might appropriate (through the intermediary of the soul) are normally quite different in appearance than the forms of the creator.

The created lives are at first quite unconscious. Consciousness and all of the characteristics and qualities of the Godhead are latent within the monad. The process of evolution is to cultivate and develop the latent powers within the monad (and its reflection) through experience, and to add to those qualities (and thus contribute further to the evolution of the greater life). The first half of the cycle of evolution is called involution (unconscious evolution). Involution is the period of the descent into matter until the life becomes indwelling and self-conscious. During this period, involutory forces (and greater lives) work on the various lesser lives and forms from without (externally). Following the point of self-consciousness comes the second half of the cycle, the path of ascent or liberation (from matter)(which is the evolutionary path proper).

During the involutory period, the work of evolution is done entirely as a group. Each lifewave incarnates together (as a group)(soul). Each group soul incarnates through a multitude of forms that are a part of the lifewave (and kingdom) in nature. Presently there are a number of lifewaves and kingdoms within the planetary aura. There are several involutory kingdoms (elemental, mineral, plant, and animal) and several evolutionary kingdoms (human and super-human lifewaves). The involutory kingdoms are the sub-human kingdoms. In the sub-human realm there are no individual souls, only the overshadowing group souls. As a lifewave approaches the human kingdom, the group soul is differentiated into individual souls (in appearance) which are simultaneously appropriated by the various monads. This process is called individualization.

Each lifewave inhabits each kingdom, in turn. The lifewave which is presently human has passed through each of the sub-human kingdoms, but at such an earlier period that the forms and characteristics of the present sub-human kingdoms are vastly different in appearance than they were. Since the process of evolution is continuous and cyclic rather than discrete, the kingdoms and lifewaves sometimes overlap at certain points (some monads choose to develop more rapidly or more slowly than the average). It is also possible for two different lifewaves to inhabit the same kingdom (but with different forms). In fact, each kingdom (and each lifewave) may span several levels or planes of consciousness.

The totality of evolution includes the evolution of forms and the evolution of lives (consciousness)(as forms support the experience and expression of all lives). As old forms (bodies) wear out (individually or collectively) they are replaced with new and improved forms, based upon the experience (and karma) of the indwelling or overshadowing life. Each kingdom and each lifewave (on every level of consciousness) contributes its experience to the evolution of a still greater life. Thus does evolution proceed under law in a spiral (cyclic) progression. All lives evolve, from the sub-atomic lives to the great cosmic lives, ever-progressing and ever-expanding, onward and upward along the spiral circuit.

The probationary path is the first stage or phase of the spiritual path. It is a path of purification and preparation; it is the building of a foundation with which to support the intermediate and advanced work of discipleship. Purification of physical, emotional, and mental faculties is a prerequisite for understanding, awareness, integration, and alignment. Bodies of low vibration cannot be spiritually integrated; a body of low (coarse) vibration cannot respond to the spiritual energies (guidance and enlightenment) which are of higher (fine) vibration. The three instruments (the physical body, the emotions, and the mind) must be purified and integrated into a single coherent and spiritually responsive mechanism before the personality can be properly aligned with the soul.

Physical purification suggests pure food (in moderate amounts): the incorporation of a sensible, nutritional, and balanced diet, and the gradual phasing out of animal (flesh) foods. Internal and external cleanliness is also required for the physical body, as well as sufficient exercise, sufficient (restful) sleep, fresh air, and a reasonable amount of sunshine (excessive exposure to sunlight can be quite dangerous). The physical discipline (and all spiritual discipline) should be a reasonable, common-sense approach to purification. The physical concerns should then pass below the threshold of the waking-consciousness, that the spiritual student can concentrate on the higher work.

Emotional (astral) purification involves the calming and balancing of the astral (desire) body. The aura (and the astral body) must be purified and uplifted in vibration (quality) until it is a clear, calm, quiet, unruffled, stable, and controlled instrument for the highest emotions. A wildly fluctuating or passive aura that responds to the glammers, desires, and coarse emotions must be tamed and brought into harmony with the spiritual self if the student is to demonstrate the unselfish and impersonal love of the God within. Meditation is a strong aid to emotional and mental discipline (and bringing the emotions under the firm control of the mind). The power of observation coupled with the exercise of retrospection leads to the discernment of weaknesses and limitations, and to the appropriate methods of purification and discipline.

Mental purification especially calls for meditation, retrospection, and the study of self. Mental refinement implies clear, unbiased thinking on all matters and the elimination of critical, negative, and unpleasant thinking. Through observation, study, concentration, meditation, and visualization, the mind is trained and prepared for abstract thinking and enlightenment. This purification should not be a drastic discipline, but it should be a gradual and progressive reorientation to succeeding higher levels. Through mental purification the mind can be trained as a useful instrument of the soul, free from habits and personality-centered limitations and distractions.

As the process of purification proceeds, the probationer (probationary student)(aspirant) begins to integrate the personality and align the personality with the overshadowing (indwelling) soul, depending always upon the true teacher, the God within, for encouragement. Throughout the paths of probation and discipleship there is an accelerated working off of karma, resulting in greater strength, freedom, and preparation (in the form of virtues, qualities, talents, and abilities). Though the path is often difficult (challenging), there should be courage, confidence, perseverance, and a measure of happiness in spite of whatever circumstances (opportunities) may come. With the increased freedom from karma and limitation comes the opportunity to the spiritual student to place himself in service to a greater cause than his own.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 23 - THE ESOTERIC

In the classical sense, the esoteric teachings are those which simply cannot be revealed to the human mind, those which can be neither spoken nor written. Those teachings are esoteric because humanity has not yet evolved sufficient intelligence, awareness, understanding, experience, and responsibility; and because human language and mental capability (and maturity) are not sufficiently developed. The esoteric, arcane, or secret teachings are only available on causal (soul) levels and cannot be brought down into the concrete mind without serious misunderstanding or misrepresentation. The higher teachings bring greater and greater responsibilities, including power that would be misused if the recipient were not properly prepared.

As man evolves, the esoteric teachings are gradually revealed (and thereby become exoteric), first to individuals who have prepared themselves, and then gradually there is a dissemination of the teachings to the masses, as humanity evolves. This occurs as a person (spiritual student)(and humanity) develops the capacity to understand and the responsibility to use the higher knowledge properly (selflessly and wisely). This is true in all branches of knowledge: philosophy, religion, and science. Always there is a wide range (diversity) of capacities among humanity. The knowledge and enlightenment that a man can comprehend is always available to him (through karma, one way or another). As a person is prepared, he will be magnetically drawn into the highest teachings that he can responsibly and wisely accept, the teachings that have been earned as a consequence of his life and activity.

In contrast to the classical definition, the word 'esoteric' is widely used to mean 'metaphysical' or that which is (supposedly) above and beyond the orthodox teachings (and readily available). In this sense, the esoteric teachings are (by degrees) that which was once truly esoteric (though the quality of translation and understanding varies). The truly esoteric teachings remain beyond the ken of mortal minds. The highest teachings come in the form of symbols, and are simultaneously quite simple and exceedingly intricate. The abstract energy exists first, and then the abstract thought. The abstract is gradually constrained to the concrete thinking and finally is clumsily revealed through language. In such teachings the student is encouraged to value first the energy behind the thought (and symbol), then the thought behind the words. The orthodox metaphysical teachings do not fall into the esoteric category, since they are distorted by the personalities through which they are revealed.

Great care must be taken in translating from the abstract to the concrete, for the emotional and intellectual approaches most often result in misunderstanding and the misrepresentation of truth, often in a glamorous and personality-centered atmosphere. The devotional, meditative, impersonal, and intuitive atmosphere is the safest in which to discern and disseminate truth. The serious student accepts a truth only when the inner authority recognizes the truth. The spiritual student should concentrate on living the spiritual life, through the study of the highest teachings available, through meditation and the alignment of personality and soul, through purification and preparation, and through the unselfish application of the life in the service of God and humanity. The esoteric teachings point constantly to an understanding of God, of life and living properly in the lower worlds; to the understanding of the spiritual self and relationships, and to the evolution of consciousness. May humanity prepare itself for the responsibilities which come with the esoteric teachings as they are gradually transformed into the exoteric (metaphysical) domain.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 24 - THE SECOND RAY

The Second Ray is called the ray of love-wisdom. On the primary level (that of the divine triplicity), the Second Ray functions as the second aspect of the Trinity, the Son (Vishnu), the Second Logos, the cosmic Christ, the love and wisdom of God. The Son (consciousness) is the result or product of the interaction of spirit (the Father) and matter (the Mother). It is the immediate object of manifestation. The Second Ray is (as consciousness) the purpose or objective of evolution, experience, and the work of manifestation (as experience and expression contribute to the evolution of consciousness). In the solar sphere the Second Ray is the ray of God (the Solar Logos) and, therefore, everything within the solar ring-pass-not is qualified by this ray which is especially potent.

On the secondary level of manifestation (the septenate)(the Seven Rays), the Second Ray manifests as the monadic plane and reflects itself into matter as the astral plane and the plant kingdom. On human levels it is the ray of teaching and healing, the ray of love and wisdom, the ray of union, and the ray of compassion, cooperation, and consciousness. The Second Ray is also the ray of magnetism, attraction, cohesion, mysticism, discipleship, and brotherhood. Upon the Second Ray, humanity learns to transmute desire into love, knowledge into wisdom, and personality into soul. The Second Ray is a ray of duality and the resolution of the various pairs of opposites. Being the ray of consciousness, the Second Ray is the field of activity and influence of the Bodhisvatta, the World Teacher (the Christ). The Bodhisvatta is the leader of the spiritual hierarchy of the planet, and is responsible for guiding the development and expansion of consciousness.

The Second Ray aspect in man is the human soul (the upper triad)(atma-buddhi-manas). It is the soul that is God immanent, the Christ within. The soul is the (relatively) immortal essence which reincarnates for expression and experience. It is the soul that is the basis for brotherhood and unity (group consciousness). Within man, evolution is primarily the evolution of the soul (as consciousness), the assimilation (by the soul) and application of experience and quality. As a person evolves, the lessons and experiences of each of the Seven Rays are incorporated into the causal-self (the soul). The Second Ray influence is more important during the later stages of human evolution, when man is learning to function on successively higher levels of consciousness, transforming the personal into the ever-expanding impersonal.

The lower aspects of the ray of love-wisdom are personal love (desire, and selfish, possessive, exclusive love) and knowledge. The higher aspects of the ray of love-wisdom are impersonal love (unselfish and all-inclusive) and consciousness (wisdom). The lower aspects are emotional and intellectual; the higher aspects are intuitive. The lower aspects are somewhat separative; the higher aspects are more inclusive. God is love; love is wisdom; wisdom is consciousness; consciousness is unity; and unity is God.

The Second Ray is a ray of sensitivity leading to intuition. It is the opening of the lower self (the personality) to the higher self (the soul), and therefore to a loving understanding of humanity and of God. Wisdom and intuition are the results of the assimilation of the spiritual teachings. Love is the result of understanding (and aspiration). The teachings must become so much a part of the consciousness that the emotional and intellectual response is superceded by the faculty of buddhi (the spiritual intuition). Many are the lessons in consciousness to be learned (earned) by the spiritual student with a Second Ray soul or personality.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 25 - CHEERFULNESS

One of the simplest of virtues, cheerfulness is a quality that significantly enhances the development and the effectiveness of the spiritual student. The attitude of cheerfulness results in a greater flow of spiritual energy from the inner self (and therefore from higher sources) to the outer self and the external objective world. The spiritual student who has properly cultivated a quiet but cheerful disposition interacts much more positively and creatively (constructively) with his environment.

This stream of energy (the precursor of cheerfulness) first irradiates the individual within himself. The inner irradiation encourages spiritual growth, self-healing, understanding, stability, serenity, strength, and the alignment of the personality and the soul. Cheerfulness therefore enhances the channel through which the soul begins to dominate the personality, allowing the birth of the Christ within. Cheerfulness raises the vibration of the personality and not only brings it closer to the inner self but protects the outer self from the damaging or discouraging external vibrations that might otherwise impair the inner harmony. A higher vibration in the personality will also strengthen the process of purification.

Having achieved the inner irradiation, the stream of energy from within then seeks to radiate outwardly into the immediate environment and the external world. It is in this process that the work of discipleship is fulfilled. The student who radiates this energy from within will consciously and/or unconsciously send forth healing energies and the energies of love and light, almost continuously. Cheerfulness tends to remove the resistance of the critical and separative mind, both in the individual himself and in those whom he meets. The energy of goodwill goes a long way toward improving right human relations and restoring (and maintaining) harmony in the daily life. This energy (cheerfulness and its companion, goodwill) is a great energy of encouragement for all concerned.

There are however, several stumbling blocks in the cultivation of the healthy, positive cheerfulness that is a virtue. Two of the stumbling blocks are the extremes of excitement and seriousness. Excitement (extreme enthusiasm) is not a virtue because it leads to a loss of self-control; seriousness (in the extreme) is not a virtue either, because it inhibits the inner irradiation and definitely impairs the outward flow of energy. The spiritual student can take life seriously, provided he has a healthy, complementary attitude of goodwill and cheerfulness. He must not take life (or himself) too seriously, if he is to be useful and effective in the spiritual work. The spiritual student can be somewhat enthusiastic in his work, provided he can overcome (or eliminate) disappointment and maintain the inner and outer harmony.

The key to cheerfulness is simply allowing the energies from the spiritual self to make their presence felt by removing the resistance of the personality toward the soul. When one is irradiated from within, the energy must be allowed to flow into the outer world. No good can result if these energies are imprisoned or hindered. A smile, a warm greeting, cheerful words and attitudes are all examples of the simple demonstration of love that mark the life of the well-rounded spiritual student. The slightest and most trivial of deeds may often have the most potent and far-reaching effects. Cheerfulness is a sharing of the happiness that should exist in the hearts of all who have found their source, the God within the form. With the resulting self-confidence there comes a peaceful happiness and quiet joy to be shared. May the God within each human form shine forth with cheerfulness and goodwill.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 26 - THE PATH OF DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is the second stage upon the spiritual path. The path of discipleship begins when the probationary student has sufficiently purified and prepared himself for service and when he is reasonably free from karmic limitations. Where probation is a path of preparation (primarily self-centered), discipleship is a path of conscious activity (fulfillment)(directed outward). The disciple is pledged to serve humanity, to cooperate with the plan of the planetary Hierarchy as he perceives it and as best he can, and to continue to develop the powers of the soul (following the guidance of the higher self) through study, meditation, and various service activities.

The disciple continues to build upon the foundation created as a result of the probationary work, but the primary activity is service to humanity according to the needs of the world around him, his particular talents and capacities, and the opportunities that he has earned. The disciple must know himself fairly well, including his strengths, weaknesses, and capacities. The disciple must be relatively free from the glamour and illusion of the outer world. He must be stable and strong, for many will be the tests, trials, and difficulties he must face to prove his fitness for greater tasks and responsibilities. Harmlessness, cheerfulness, humility, perseverance, and impersonality are but a few of the many virtues that must be present to a reasonable extent. The disciple must have an integrated and cooperative personality, aligned and responsive to the direction and the encouragement of the soul and its esoteric group. The disciple must have a pleasant, loving, and stable disposition.

The student upon the path of discipleship must be dependable and self-reliant yet ever aware of the inclusiveness of the world of souls and the purposes of objective and subjective manifestation. The disciple is a focal point of spiritual energy, transmitting and sharing the light, the love, and the power of the fifth kingdom (the kingdom of heaven)(the world of souls). The disciple is also an observer, an onlooker in the world of humanity, an agent and instrument of the world of God. The disciple must fulfil his responsibilities in both worlds, without ever interfering in the lives of others. The disciple is always available (without question or hesitation)(by commitment); there are no rests or vacations subjectively, yet the worker will rest (release unnecessary tension) objectively (in moderation) in order to maintain his health and capabilities.

The disciple is ever willing to give of himself and his resources without any thought of compensation. Thus the worker will find his resources and energies always replenished and equal to any and every worthy task that is set before him. Where mistakes are made, the disciple will learn from the effects, limitations, and experiences produced and make the necessary and appropriate adjustments within his life. There can be no discouragement and there can be no failure, for the only true failure is failure to learn the lessons of a mistake. So mistakes are recognized, the lessons are learned, and the worker pushes onward, never allowing failure to impair his continuing work.

The disciple differs markedly from the aspirant or probationary student, not only in terms of preparation and service, but also in terms of consciousness. Proper motives, understanding, a certain commitment (dedication)(obligation), and a certain level of consciousness are required for the path of discipleship. The way of the disciple (regardless of soul ray) is the way of love and wisdom, of goodwill that is love in action. The way of the disciple is to obey the inner impulses of the soul, to do the work that is before him to do, to live a life that is an example to others.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 27 - ASTROLOGY

Astrology is one of the most ancient of arts and sciences, and it is simultaneously one of the most misunderstood and misrepresented. Though quite ancient, astrology is still in its infancy as far as humanity is concerned. The basic concepts of exoteric astrology are somewhat clear, however. Throughout the heavens there are centers of energy of many kinds. Some centers are radiators; some are transformers; and others are absorbers of energy. The planets are actually focusing points for extra-planetary energies. Energy passing through such focal points is normally reduced in intensity and modified somewhat by the planetary aura. Exoteric astrology is partially aware of some of the zodiacal influences and some of the planetary effects and cycles, but is largely unaware of the esoteric effects, non-physical planets, and non-ecliptic sources.

The effects of astrological energies depend greatly upon the maturity of the soul and the accumulated karma. At the moment of birth, the first breath conditions the etheric body and aura with the influences of that chosen moment. These influences have a large conditioning effect on rather unevolved souls, and a correspondingly lesser effect on the more advanced souls. The precise moment of birth and the actual location are rather important factors if one is to perform any meaningful calculations. The computations of exoteric astrology are somewhat clear, though there are perturbations of which orthodox astrologers are quite unaware. An exoteric chart, with progressions, is sometimes helpful, but only for souls who are not already upon the spiritual path, and is only meaningful as far as personality is concerned. The esoteric calculations are considerably more abstract and require some measure of enlightenment for any meaningful interpretation. Astrological calculations may be reasonably clear, but interpretations are mostly inaccurate, especially for the more highly evolved souls.

The exoteric astrology deals with the unaligned personality; the esoteric astrology concerns the soul and therefore concerns the esoteric group. The unevolved are governed largely by instinct and emotion, and therefore by the impelling energies of the heavens. The evolving man, having accumulated karma, is sometimes influenced by these external energies; certainly much of his personality is conditioned, until the alignment of that personality with the soul. Prior to birth, a soul will choose (within certain limits) a portion of its karma to be fulfilled in the coming life, and the time and circumstances of the birth (including the parents). The influences thus chosen for birth will have an effect throughout the lifetime, though modified by progression and development. The evolving soul will plan certain key events in order to fulfill karma and to develop or experience in a particular direction. There still exists considerable free will (for the evolving man) in determining the path between those points and the reactions to those influences.

The unevolved have very little free will, while the evolving man has increasingly greater free will. The soul that commits itself to the spiritual path passes out of the exoteric domain and into the esoteric domain. For such souls, the exoteric astrological interpretations are even more confusing (invalid). The soul on the path of liberation is more and more the master of its own destiny, choosing the responses to the available energies, and more and more aligning the will (and therefore the destiny) to the good of the group. The astrological influences that are responded to are those which have been earned, whether they bring limitation or opportunity. The esoteric student rises into that esoteric domain where astrology is that of human and planetary destiny (purpose) and the relationships of souls to the greater groups.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 28 - THE THIRD RAY

The Third Ray is called the ray of active intelligence. On the primary level, the Third Ray is the third aspect of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, Brahma, the Third Logos, the manifestation of God. On that level the Third Ray is intelligence inherent in matter; it is the entire objective universe. On the secondary level of manifestation, the Third Ray demonstrates as the plane of divine mind (atma) and reflects itself into matter as the mental plane and the principle of manas (mind). It is the ray of the Planetary Logos, and therefore, all within the planetary aura is qualified by this ray. The Third Ray is closely connected with the animal kingdom, for it is the ray of evolution (adaptability) and activity.

The Third Ray (on its major level) is (in a certain sense) a synthetic ray for the (minor) four rays of attribute (the Fourth Ray, the Fifth Ray, the Sixth Ray, and the Seventh Ray) which may be considered as sub-rays of the Third Ray. As manifestation proceeds, it is the Third Ray of creativity that is differentiated into a multiplicity and diversity of levels and dimensions. And as manifestation draws to a close, each ray will synthesize its domain, and the Third Ray will synthesize the minor four rays. During this process, each of the three major rays will also synthesize (perform abstraction upon) its reflection: the First Ray upon the Seventh Ray, the Second Ray upon the Sixth Ray, and the Third Ray upon the Fifth Ray.

Within the Planetary Hierarchy, the third department (corresponding to the Third Ray) includes all but the first two of the Seven Rays. This department is headed by the Mahachohan, the Lord of Civilization. The Third Ray aspect in man is the human personality that is created and utilized by the soul itself (by the reflection of energy)(in a subjective fashion). It is the personality aspect through which each soul experiences and expresses itself (subjectively) in the lower three worlds of consciousness (physical, emotional, and mental). It is through the instrument of personality that lives of objectivity (illusion) are effected. It is this third aspect that must be trained to be useful and cooperative and aligned with the self (soul).

In the human world, the Third Ray is the ray of economics, money, justice, philosophy, and scholarly pursuits. It is a ray of comprehension and understanding, of intellect and creative ideation, of active intelligence. It is through the Third Ray (and through the rays of attribute) that man learns to create. Through thinking and feeling, man is a creator, sending out energies (consciously or otherwise) that will bear fruit for either constructive or destructive purposes). The evolving man usually creates carelessly and selfishly. The advanced of humanity create consciously, carefully, and constructively. Where the Second Ray of love and wisdom is also present (to some extent)(in maturity), there is a creativity for the benefit of others. Where the First Ray of power and will (purpose) is also present (in some maturity) there is a conscious and potent cooperation with a greater creator than man.

It is largely through the Third Ray that economic and judicial problems will be solved. Solutions are hindered greatly by man's immaturity and by the selfishness of the nations; but as humanity matures, economic interdependence and the sharing of resources will become the rule rather than the exception. Another of the major contributions of the Third Ray is the energy of goodwill. Many are the lessons of the Third Ray. As the spiritual student grows in maturity he submerges his own interests and willingly cooperates in creative work for the good of humanity and for the good of even greater groups.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 29 - MATTER AND ENERGY

Energy is the essence or real character of the universe; energy is life itself. All that is, is energy. Everything in the objective and subjective universe is alive with energy. From the subatomic and nuclear particles (resonant energies) to the great cosmic entities, all is energy. Matter is simply crystallized energy, energy or life that is constrained and limited to the expression of form. Matter is objective substance, energy in the form of building blocks, whether it be physical, emotional, or even mental matter. Matter is negative (passive) energy, that is moved or manipulated or transformed by positive (active) energy. Energy cannot be created or destroyed, but it can be modified or transformed from one form or domain to another.

From the objective perspective, the densest (physical) matter (and its associated forces and energies) is reality, and the superphysical is the realm of illusion. From the higher (subjective) perspective, the inverse is true: matter is illusion and the world of forces and energies (the subjective realm) is the only reality. Spirit and matter are the two extremes of energy and constitute a duality (paradox)(pair-of-opposites). Spirit is liberated matter and matter is crystallized spirit. Thus is energy the common reality.

Energy is vitality, the capacity to perform work. Force is applied, directed, or focused energy. The task of the spiritual student is to work effectively and constructively with the various energies that are made available to him. The esoteric student bridges the gap (illusion) between subjective and objective realities. The esoteric student lives and works consciously with forces and energies. Work is the transfer of energy from one form or aspect to another. The esoteric student works in the world of causes, responding to the available energies, and mentally transforming and directing them with purpose and wisdom into the objective world in order to produce the needed effects. Behind every effect there is a cause (energy). For every energy sent out, there will be appropriate energies to return, to accomplish the work of karma (which is evolution).

The human being (like every positive life-form in manifestation) is a receiver, absorber, transformer, and transmitter of energy. From one perspective, the work of human evolution is to perfect this complex energy-mechanism through the cultivation of consciousness, where consciousness is the aspect that provides the motivation, purification, and control of the mechanism (the human personality and soul). The unenlightened and separative consciousness (of the ordinary man) is imperfect and careless; the enlightened cooperative consciousness (of the evolving esoteric student) is efficient and deliberately constructive. Energy is neither good nor evil, for energy is divine essence; but the uses of energy, the motives and purposes of the directing agent determine the appropriateness or rightness.

As the human being evolves he begins to respond to the higher forces (applied energies) of the soul and begins to unconsciously (and eventually consciously) cooperate with the higher forces. The effect of energy depends on the nature and quality of the receiving apparatus (the soul, the mind, the astral body, etc.), and the coherence, purpose, and intensity of the force (which depends on the nature and quality of the transmitting agent and of the medium, atmosphere, or aura through which the energy must travel). Where there is little understanding and a lack of maturity, there are the dangers of uncontrollable and wrongly applied forces. With spiritual and esoteric maturity comes the understanding, wisdom, and ability to constructively and potently apply the various forms of physical and superphysical energy.

The Spiritual Hierarchy of the planet is the esoteric government that guides the evolution of humanity. This group is known by many names: the Great White Lodge, the Spiritual Hierarchy, the Planetary Hierarchy, the Occult Hierarchy, the Elder Brotherhood, etc. This esoteric Hierarchy is the Second Ray planetary center, working with and for the First Ray center (which is called Shamballa) and the Third Ray center (which is humanity). Shamballa represents the personality of the Planetary Logos (Sanat Kamura) and the power aspect (the plan, the purpose, and the will of the Planetary Logos). The Hierarchy is the love-wisdom aspect, dealing with the evolution of consciousness through manifestation.

The Hierarchy has three major departments with seven subordinate departments, corresponding to the three major rays and the Seven Rays respectively. The first department is headed by the Manu of the Aryan root-race, who is responsible for guiding the development of racial forms and characteristics, and their eventual combination and synthesis. The second department is headed by the Bodhisvatta, the World Teacher, who is responsible for guiding the development and expansion of consciousness. The Bodhisvatta is the leader of the Hierarchy and is known as the Christ (Lord Matriya). The third department is headed by the Mahachohan, the Lord of Civilization, who oversees the work of the Third Ray and the four rays of attribute. The seven minor departments work primarily with the energy of their own (corresponding) ray.

The members of the Hierarchy are the masters (adepts), human souls who have achieved relative perfection and have fulfilled their individual earthly karma (and are no longer required to incarnate). They are the pioneers of the human lifewave, and are far in advance of ordinary man. These particular graduates of the human school of experience who work within the Hierarchy are those who have chosen to remain here (within the planetary aura) for some duration of time, to lead humanity further along the path of evolution. Throughout the course of evolution, each lifewave is assisted, in turn, by the preceding lifewave. Those who lead, turn to offer a helping hand to those who follow. Thus, the Hierarchy is one link in an endless chain of cooperative effort between the various lifewaves.

As the inner government of the planet, the Hierarchy works primarily with consciousness, guiding and encouraging the aspirants and disciples of the world who, consciously or unconsciously, are their workers in the objective world. There is not any interference in the lives or wills of men, for man must create his own destiny. The Hierarchy is bound by certain rules and principles according to karma and the intentions of the Planetary Logos. Thus the Hierarchy is primarily a force of encouragement, and governs only in a loose sense (of indirect government).

The members of the Hierarchy very rarely work openly among men (if at all), though the Hierarchy may be externalized when humanity has been sufficiently prepared. The workers in the Hierarchy work with souls rather than personalities. It is the task of the aspirants and disciples of the world to find and maintain a rapport of mind (personality) and soul, and through that soul contact, to respond to the plan and purpose of the Hierarchy, that the spiritual student might more effectively serve the Hierarchy and humanity. The means for establishing this soul contact is meditation. Through meditation and the paths of aspiration (probation) and discipleship, the spiritual student prepares himself for the life of service. Through selfless service and group (planetary) meditation, the disciple becomes the (impersonal) instrument and extension of the Spiritual Hierarchy of the planet.

In every sphere of evolutionary development there are three distinct stages. The first stage is life, the quality of beingness. The second stage is intelligence, a quality built upon the foundation of life, a quality that is the result of experience. The third stage is virtue, a quality that is built upon the prerequisites of life and intelligence. Virtue is a quality that is the result of consciousness. Virtue is a principle of right relationships. Since the soul is the consciousness aspect of the human life, it is the soul that is the center of virtue. It is through the soul that the human mind becomes aware of the needed qualities for continued progress along the path of enlightenment. It is through soul contact that the spiritual student begins to demonstrate or express virtue in the daily life. It is through experience and soul contact that the student's values are changed and improved.

Virtue is rightness (appropriateness) in action, feeling, and thought. Virtue is a spiritual strength that demonstrates as moral and ethical excellence. To the student of theology, virtue is living according to the laws and doctrines of his religion. To the rationalist, virtue is reason. To the hedonist, virtue is pleasure. To the scientist, virtue is living in harmony with natural law (nature). To the spiritual student, virtue is wisdom in relationships. Virtue is morality, character, and goodness is wise expression; but true virtue is also a natural unconscious disposition that is the result of developed consciousness. Virtue is the living of the life of wisdom, the practice of truth. Virtue may be manifested through various qualities and actions, depending on the appropriateness (merit) of the situation.

The qualities to be considered by the spiritual student are many and varied. According to the environment and purpose of the student, some qualities may find a greater appropriateness, emphasis, and application than others. Some of the more obvious qualities are love, truthfulness, cheerfulness, ease, happiness, timeliness, honesty, compassion, awareness, selflessness, stability, serenity, strength, moderation, goodwill, reasonableness, practicality, common sense, consistency, adaptability, perception, harmony, aspiration, devotion, reliability, accuracy, availability, understanding, confidence, self-reliance, freedom, appreciation, intuition, conscience, humanitarianism, kindness, silence, cooperation, unity, humility (magnanimity), unimportance, illumination, wisdom, dharma, responsibility, thoughtfulness, progress, harmlessness, friendliness, impersonality, detachment, balance, self-realization, purity, self-discipline, determination, endurance, sacrifice, helpfulness, usefulness, interdependence (realization of oneness), cleanliness, calmness, clarity, courage, brotherhood, inclusiveness, and carefulness. Many are the meaningful qualities and conditions to be pondered upon and clarified.

As a student and his values grow, the living of the life of rightness is more and more guided by the inner self. Lower values, realizations, and truths are replaced by or transformed into higher values, realizations, and truths. Limitations and weaknesses are transmuted into freedoms and strengths, adding to and enhancing the capacities and qualities, and leading to the expression of virtue. Through ever increasing and expanding consciousness, virtue becomes an active part of the individuality that is the soul expressing itself through objective manifestation. Life is the energy of the soul; intelligence is the organization of the soul; and virtue is the cooperative existence of the soul. As man the macrocosm becomes man the microcosm, the cycle of life, intelligence, and virtue is repeated on a new and greater (higher) level.

The Fourth Ray is called the ray of harmony through conflict. The Fourth Ray is a ray of attribute and forms a portion of the third aspect of the Trinity. This ray demonstrates as the plane of intuition (buddhi) and qualifies all cycles of number four (of seven). Since the human lifewave presently inhabits the fourth kingdom of nature, the Fourth Ray is especially potent with respect to humanity. The planetary life (on Earth) is presently experiencing the fourth globe of the fourth round of the fourth chain; thus the Fourth Ray plays a significant role in planetary affairs.

The Fourth Ray is the mystical ray of balance, balance between the inwardly directed rays (the first three rays) and the outwardly directed rays (the last three rays), and balance between each major ray and its reflection. The Fourth Ray is also a ray of balance and struggle between the objective and subjective worlds, and between all of the various pairs of opposites (such as: male and female, good and evil, positive and negative, soul and personality, reality and illusion. This ray is a major factor in the life of the spiritual student whose task it is to balance the pairs of opposites and tread the middle path.

In the objective world, the Fourth Ray is the ray of beauty, culture, and art. It is a ray of imagination, perception, dramatization, and expression. The Fourth Ray of duality is a ray of conflict, struggle, and instability leading to harmony, peace, balance, and stability. It is often a painful ray with many lessons to give the human soul and its personality; it is a ray of crisis, tension, and challenge. With Fourth Ray energy the spiritual student gradually learns to control the emotional life and bring it into harmony with the dominant mind. Then the student learns to bring the head (mind) and the heart (buddhi)(and the higher emotions) into balance. The Fourth Ray energy leads the student from the selfish personal life into the unselfish, relatively impersonal life; from passion, extravagance, self-deception, and alternation of moods, to self-control, serenity, purity, and balance; from duality and separation from God to unity and oneness with God.

The Fourth Ray principle in man is the spiritual intuition, the buddhic principle, the voice of the soul, the enlightenment and encouragement of the Christ-self. When the personality has been integrated, it must then be aligned properly with the soul so that the lower self may be guided and directed by the higher self through the intuition. The spiritual intuition is not the emotional or astral sensitivity, though it is often confused with that lower psychic sense. The spiritual intuition is a much higher sense, as the higher self or soul functions through the mind that has integrated the personality. The possibility exists for both emotional and intellectual self-deception, until the mind has been properly absorbed by the soul.

All of the struggles, tests, and conflicts of men and nations, internal and external, are opportunities for enlightenment, growth, and increasing perfection through the Fourth Ray energy. With increasing maturity, men and nations begin to withdraw from the external conflicts and learn to live in harmony with the outer world, replacing conflict with cooperation and peace. Conflict then becomes harmless, as it becomes the struggle between reality and illusion. The lessons of the adversary (conflict) are many and potent. Pain and suffering due to imperfection must inevitably lead to peace and happiness in the harmony and beauty of relative perfection. May the glammers and illusions of the objective world be transformed into the balanced light (enlightenment) and love (wisdom) and power (purpose) of the greater life.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 33 - ESOTERIC ASTRONOMY

Exoteric astronomy is the physical, chemical, and mathematical science of the various (physical) celestial bodies and of their magnitudes, motions, constitution, and associated phenomena. Contemporary (orthodox) astronomy recognizes many greater and lesser bodies: meteors, asteroids, planets, moons, stars, clusters, galaxies, etc. The exoteric science of astronomy deals only with the dense physical (solid, liquid, and gaseous) forms and their (various) objective energies. The esoteric side of astronomy deals mostly with life and the higher (non-physical) forms and energies.

Esoteric astronomy is the science of the various celestial lives and of their properties and influences in terms of qualified energies and cycles. Astronomy need not be confused with astrology. Astrology deals with the effects of extra-planetary energies as they qualify or influence life and consciousness. Astronomy deals with the nature and purpose of the sources (causes) of these energies and with their transmission and transformation before they are qualified by the planetary atmosphere. Thus astronomy and astrology are both complementary and supplementary. It is from the esoteric astronomy that the theosophical teachings concerning cosmology and cosmogenesis are found, teachings of the cyclic manifestation of the universe and of the planetary, solar, and cosmic lives. It is from the esoteric astronomy that the synthesis of greater life is realized.

Each of the active planets within the local system (whether physical, astral, or mental) is the body of manifestation of a Planetary Logos, a great intelligence (life) which is the soul of the planet, incarnating and expressing itself through the planet as the human soul incarnates through its personality. All of the various kingdoms and lifewaves within the planet are contained within (and are therefore a part of) the aura (energy field or consciousness) of the Planetary Logos. Some planets are sacred planets; a sacred planet is a manifestation of one of the Seven Rays within the solar system, a major (relatively permanent) incarnation of a Planetary Logos. Other planets are inferior or non-sacred; a non-sacred planet is a minor (temporary) incarnation of a Planetary Logos. The planet Earth is presently considered a non-sacred planet. Some planets are synthesizing planets and will play major roles toward the end of the solar manifestation. Some planets are primarily radiators of energy; some are primarily absorbers; and some are primarily transformers. All planets modify to a certain extent the energy that passes through them.

The seven sacred planets of the local system are major (psychic) centers of energy within the body of manifestation of the Solar Logos. The star which is the physical sun veils the inner spiritual sun (Son) that is the true objective essence of the Solar Logos. The Solar Logos (which lives through the solar system) is a cosmic center (cosmic atomic sphere) within a far greater being, the Cosmic Logos. From the microscopic atom to the macrocosmic atom, there exists a succession of greater and greater beings, with each lesser life living within (and forming a part of) a greater life. Even space itself is a living entity. At the most obscure limit of human perception is the Absolute Being, of which all of the manifested universe is but a symbolic derivation.

All of manifestation is held together by the ordered purpose of cosmic intelligence. Manifestation proceeds in a complex but ordered succession and superposition of progressive cycles and incarnations of cosmic, solar, and planetary lives and their (internal) lifewaves and kingdoms. The esoteric astronomy is a science of unity, for it shows (by degrees) how all things within the universe fit together to form a supercosmic unity.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 34 - THE PLANETARY NETWORK

There exists within the aura of the planet, a vast network of lines of force through which the various spiritual energies and stimulations flow. Part of the network exists as the etheric web or the energy body of the planet. Another part of the network exists in mental matter rather than etheric matter. The network itself provides a medium (mechanism) for the distribution of spiritual energies to all parts (aspects) of the world.

As the heart center of the planet, the Planetary Hierarchy functions in part as a transformer of extra-planetary energies and as a source of intra-planetary spiritual energy. The Hierarchy works closely with the Planetary Logos in guiding, qualifying, and transmitting these higher energies into the network for distribution. The type and intensity of the energy are qualified by purpose and by the solar and cosmic energies available (that are appropriate). The hierarchial energies flow through the network and are made available to human souls and esoteric groups who then retransmit the energies on more concrete levels, making the energies available to all who can respond to them, and utilizing the energies for constructive purposes.

The prayer life and the meditation life of the religious and spiritual students of all levels enhances and strengthens to a certain extent the planetary network. Prayer and meditation (of the right order) not only strengthen the network but strengthen the relationship of the individual to the network. The greater the (constructive) response of the human soul and mind to the inflowing energies, the greater the effectiveness of the soul. The mind that is aligned with the soul responds to the higher stimulation with constructive service. Thus is the student who meditates effectively and sincerely a critical link in the chain of energy distribution.

The meditation life of a group (both exoteric and esoteric) will have an even greater effect on the network and the effectiveness of the group. A group that has achieved a unity and purity of spiritual purpose will receive and distribute considerable amounts of spiritual energy on human levels, whether it is done consciously or unconsciously. Group meditation work is difficult, for it requires the overcoming of limitations that would impair the group unity. The disciples of the world are learning to function more and more effectively in this group work that transcends the illusion of differences between man, religions, and philosophies. Group work does not require physical proximity since the network provides for the necessary linking. The contribution of individual efforts to the various groups and the (one) group of esoteric groups is considerable. Individual meditations can be qualified for group service whenever the spiritual student gives of himself to the greater needs and spiritual purposes of humanity.

The emotional and mental lives of aspirants and disciples also have an effect on the network and on the relationship of the student to the network. The coarse (lower) emotional and mental vibrations are destructive, and the pure (higher) vibrations are constructive. Glamours and illusions tend to dissociate the student from the energies of enlightenment while the greater truths bring the student into closer alignment. During these times of crisis and change, opportunities exist for personal and group purification and growth. As human minds seek to cooperate with the higher forces (in service to humanity), even greater will be the encouragement, guidance, and enlightenment available to those minds through the planetary network, and through the efforts of the Hierarchy and the aspirants and disciples of the world. Thus does the quality of consciousness attained and expressed by the student contribute to the energies available.

Science is that branch of knowledge that deals with a body of facts or truths gained by systematic study and objective investigation. Of the four major perspectives (philosophy, religion, science, and art), orthodox science is the most objective and tends to be the most materialistic. The state of science today is a real consequence of the descent of the human lifewave into the occult blindness of matter (materialism). Orthodox science tends to treat the objective world as the only reality; and yet (by degrees) this science will come to know again the realities of the higher realms and fully respect again the contributions of art, religion, and philosophy.

The ancient science (from which the present arcane science is derived) is in many ways superior to the present orthodox science. The enlightened of the ancients knew a great deal more about the universe and reality, and had far greater control over the forces of nature, but the ancients wisely veiled their knowledge from the unprepared and the unequipped masses. The arrogance of modern (orthodox) science is considerable, yet the scientific knowledge and understanding of the esoteric masters far exceed that of modern science. The ancient science was a divine science, and as orthodox science comes more and more attuned with God, so shall it rediscover many of the ancient truths for the benefit of humanity, and so shall its own contribution be extended along more useful lines.

It is the actual purpose of science to learn of God (and the universe) through the study of objective manifestation (exoteric science) and subjective manifestation (in the case of esoteric science). It is the real or intended purpose of science to serve humanity through the training of the mind and through the application of power and technology for constructive work. It is not the purpose of science to prolong illusion (dependence on science and technology), nor is the purpose of science to keep man immersed in materialism.

Progress implies cyclic (spiral) growth. In the past, man has passed through many cycles in which the emphasis has alternated between science and religion and philosophy and art. This has been necessary in order to prevent a preoccupation with crystallizing forms in any of the perspectives. Now (on a higher turn of the spiral) man must learn to synthesize science, religion, philosophy, and art; for each is only a perspective on truth, and in the greater reality, the four perspectives can be blended to form a unity.

Science can shed light on religion and philosophy, while religion and philosophy can shed light on science. There is danger in each of the four extremes and in failing to realize that each has a contribution to make to the greater whole. The greater truths come when the mind can perceive the togetherness and the relevance of all things, without being impaired by the many illusions of the four perspectives. There are many scientific facts yet to be realized or rediscovered; and there are many so-called facts yet to be recognized as illusions of objectivity. As humanity grows and matures, the emphasis in science will be more and more constructive, for the good of mankind (and other lives), and less and less corrupted by materialism.

The greatest value of science is in the scientific method and in the training of the mind. Through the discipline and organization of the mind, the human personality becomes a more perfect instrument for the soul to use. With the illumined mind (guided by spiritual intuition) will come the true brotherhood of man and the cooperative effort needed for humanity to march onward and upward. The scientific contribution, merged with the contributions of religion and philosophy and art, will evoke further light upon the path of evolution.

The Fifth Ray is called the ray of concrete knowledge. The Fifth Ray is a ray of attribute and forms a portion of the third aspect of the Trinity. This ray demonstrates as the mental plane (the gaseous sub-plane of the cosmic physical plane) and the principle of mind (manas). It is also the reflection of the Third Ray of active intelligence and divine mind. The abstract region of the mental plane is qualified by the Third Ray, while the concrete region is qualified by the Fifth Ray. The principle of manas is simultaneously the highest attribute of the personality (the lower mind) and the lowest attribute of the soul (the higher mind).

While the fourth root-race (the Atlantean) sought emotional stability, the fifth root-race (the present Aryan race) seeks mental development and stability. Mental development is the keynote of the Aryan race, and this Fifth Ray of concrete knowledge is the means through which man accomplishes that activity. The ray of concrete knowledge is the ray of science, exoteric education, research, and objectivity. Through the Fifth Ray man learns about the objective world and through the soul ray man gradually masters this worldly experience and frees himself from the limitations of objectivity. The Fifth Ray domain is often the realm of the educated, evolving, thinking human being (regardless of ray); but for the spiritual student, the Fifth Ray domain (as a preoccupation) is superseded by the soul energy which can then utilize the Fifth Ray and the personality as instruments of expression and guided, enlightened experience.

The Fifth Ray is an occult (intellectual)(head-centered) ray and without a complementary mystical (devotional)(heart-centered) ray, it may be so intellectual or rational that the result is an unenlightening and illusionary rationalization of events, experiences, and observation. Perfection implies balance between the head and heart. The mind must be developed and the mind must integrate and purify the personality; but the mind must not grow too strong or independent, for if human perfection is to be achieved, the developed mind must willingly submit itself to the higher energies of the soul. The soul must be allowed to purify and discipline the mind. Then the mind becomes a powerful but controlled and constructive instrument, rather than the ordinary, undisciplined, illusionary, and separative mind. The independent and separative mind is somewhat destructive. A fundamental weakness of the lower mind is its tendency toward criticism (and all criticism is essentially destructive).

The Fifth Ray (as the ray of science, knowledge, and education) plays a major role in the objective evolution of humanity and a preparatory role in the subjective evolution of mankind. The Fifth Ray in exoteric education finds its complement in the Second Ray of esoteric education (the transmutation of knowledge into love-wisdom). The Fifth Ray as concrete knowledge finds itself the reflection into matter of the Third Ray of abstract knowledge and comprehension. The Fifth Ray as an occult ray finds encouragement in its supplementary rays: the First Ray of power (will)(purpose), the Third Ray of activity, and the Seventh Ray of organization.

But the Fifth Ray in the human domain is still primarily the ray of the lower (concrete)(rational) mind, the mind which is the focus of attention in the outer, objective world. The Fifth Ray is the ray of observation, analysis, and evaluation, and as such contributes considerably to individual and group evolution. The Fifth Ray dominates the process of discrimination (discernment)(judgement), and remains the primary ray of focus for the waking-consciousness in most of humanity, in fact the principal instrument of the soul in the lower worlds.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 37 - GRACE

In the sense of unmerited or personal divine assistance given man for his regeneration or sanctification, grace is nonexistent. God transcendent is impersonal, having a polarization of consciousness threshold far above even the souls of men. God immanent, though personal (actually superpersonal), works totally with the consequences implied in the meritable and demeritable energies of karma. All divine activities are guided by a spiritual motive that concerns the welfare of a greater cause than that of man. Special favors, privileges, or reprieves outside of merit and purpose simply do not exist.

However, the grace of God does exist as ordered purpose through cosmic law; and in this greater sense, grace is very real. Grace is actually an inherent property of all manifested lives. The purpose of God is evolution on cosmic levels. And therefore, the affairs of men are subject to the encouragement and conditions of cosmic law, so that man will contribute his efforts toward that greater purpose. Karma is the primary agent of this law as it concerns individual and group lives. The grace of God is very much interrelated with the law of karma. The grace of God is also very much inherent in the concept of greater and lesser needs.

In the strictest sense, the existence of need is impossible due to the divine virtue that manifests as grace. Cosmic law (grace) dictates that every need be fulfilled. Therefore, a need cannot exist, by definition; for cosmic law anticipates (impersonally and automatically) every possible need and achieves fulfillment in a continuous fashion (while necessarily functioning outside of the realm of time and space). However, needs do not necessarily equate to specific hopes or desires or wishes (that the individual might think to be his needs). Every (hypothetical) need is meaningful and necessary to the ordered purpose of manifestation, no matter upon what level of consciousness, microscopic, human, or macrocosmic. If anything is a need, it is fulfilled. Specific desires may or may not be fulfilled, according to the intensities of feeling, the consciousness involved, and whether or not such desires have their place, purpose, lesson, or function in a greater scheme.

The sanctification or unmerited removal or forgiveness of sins is also quite impossible. The concept of the forgiveness of sins is a blind, and a misunderstanding of the concept of karmic fulfillment through experience and progressive consciousness. Sins (ignorance and error) generate karmic energies which encourage (and eventually force) progress through enlightenment (higher consciousness). Sins are forgiven only in the sense that ultimately, cosmic law is fulfilled, and through divine grace (karma), man achieves perfection. It is for man to learn to continually radiate an energy of love and understanding for the experience and expression of every other human being; to learn to forgive (in the human sense) the sins or weaknesses of others; and to realize that through divine grace (and karma) there exists absolute justice (which automatically eliminates any need or justification for retribution).

The subject of divine grace leads to the subject of thanksgiving. For though a human being may be a trivial and microscopic form of life within the universe, the human being is infinitely dependent upon the greater life that (impersonally) provides every necessary sustenance. Through divine grace and through the simple existence of a far greater life, the human being is granted life (and consciousness) and the nobility of a God within the form. Thus, thanksgiving is always an appropriate state of mind, especially for beginning and ending the experience of each day, and as a qualification for every meditation period.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 38 - THE KARMIC EQUATION

The karmic equation is an abstract representation of the karma (causes and consequences) of an individual or group. It may be used as a focal point of tension for the study of karma. Since karma is such an exceedingly complex energy (even for the unevolved individual), the equation must necessarily be symbolic and abstract, with an indeterminate series of many-dimensional terms. The reason for this is quite simple; karma is a superposition of inputs (causes) and outputs (effects or consequences) and their interactions, over a diverse continuity and fabric of time, space, and consciousness.

The inputs to the karmic equation are the vast sea of causes (physical, emotional, and mental behaviors and motives) which spans past moments, days, weeks, years, and lifetimes. All of the past actions have been entered as causes, and new causes are added continuously as the individual lives, thinks, feels, and otherwise experiences. The relationships of an individual to other persons are often major (potent) inputs. The output of the equation is the continuous (weighted) sum total of external forces and influences on the individual or the group. A further complexity is introduced by the superposition of individual, family, group, racial, national, and planetary karma.

The major portion of the karmic equation concerns the relationships (superpositions and transformations) between the causes and the effects. Since the effects are (mostly) continuously responsive to the causes and relationships, the effects constitute a feedback mechanism (the response of the individual creates new causes which in turn modify somewhat the new effects). Each karmic equation is continuously changing, though the changes may be quite small when compared to the output or yield. In general, a large number of causes are superimposed (and distributed in time) and transformed to produce timely and appropriate effects.

The study of karma is the study of experience and evolution, for the purpose of karma is always to encourage evolution by providing the various lessons, experiences, and opportunities needed (earned). Karma can only be fulfilled as the lessons are learned, consciously or otherwise. No real external interference is possible. Under certain conditions, karma can be changed in time and space; and with accelerated learning and the creation of new causes, the karmic effects can be modified. But karma cannot be circumvented, lessened, or modified without ultimate fulfillment. The lessons must be learned, one way or another, or the individual will suffer incompleteness.

All karma is earned (anticipated). Talents, qualities, experiences, and opportunities are all earned, just as pain, suffering, and the various forms of limitation are earned, whether from carelessness, ignorance, unconscious action, or deliberate action. No karma is arbitrary. Karma is infinite wisdom, for the effects are conditioned not only from the (literal) causes but also from the state of consciousness, the motives, and the circumstances at the time the cause is created as well as at the time the effects are produced. All conditions are taken into account automatically, for the greater good.

The conscious study of causes, effects, and their relationships (both in a practical sense and in an abstract sense) tends to enhance and expand the capacity of the student for understanding. Efforts to find relationships (mostly through meditation) and the partial understanding that results can only lead to progress (light and love). With understanding comes greater abilities and insight, and progress along the path is made more rapidly, more easily, and more constructively. Karma in the individual sense is eventually fulfilled, enabling the student to deal with group (human, planetary, and solar) karmic forces.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 39 - RELIGION

The nature of religion is progressive revelation, primarily for the masses. Throughout history and pre-history there have been revelations or new exoteric religious teachings for the multitudes. As man has evolved, so have the outer teachings of each revelation been consistent with man's consciousness and his capacity for understanding. Man does not create a (true) religion. A religion is evoked by (given to) man according to his needs, and man then objectifies and interprets (or misinterprets) the teachings. The older religions (and even a few of the newer ones) were often custom-fitted to particular races or cultures, leading the people onward and upward one step at a time.

Such is the work of religion, to lead and to guide the larger groups of people (in terms of consciousness) and to slowly prepare them for the spiritual path. The deepest esoteric teachings of all religions are essentially the same. Only the outer teachings of the various religions differ, and then only according to the needs (and responsiveness) of the people. Even so, there are many common elements in the outer teachings. By degrees, the inner teachings reflect a measure (and perspective) of the ancient and timeless wisdom that constitutes the foundation and basis for all of the lesser and greater mysteries, and with those inner teachings can the spiritual students of the world find some guidance and encouragement.

Wherever there is consciousness significantly below that of the masses (or consciousness unresponsive to religious teaching), there are man-made religions (superstitions) and greatly misunderstood older teachings. Even with the consciousness of the majority, there are many man-made elements to the orthodox religions (and considerable but inevitable misunderstanding). But wherever there is consciousness significantly higher than that of the masses, there is a higher (progressive) revelation, from the soul itself. Wherever there is a higher consciousness (in some degree), there is an availability of certain of the esoteric teachings. As a man is capable of understanding, so shall he receive.

Religions are normally founded by certain individuals who achieve (either partially or completely) union with the soul (and the greater wisdom) and are used as instruments of revelation, often by earlier design. Among the many historical revelations are those of Abraham, Akhenaten, Confucius, Gautama (Buddha), Hermes, Jesus (Christ), Krishna, Lao-tse, Melchizedek, Mohammed, Moses, Orpheus, Padmasambhava, Plato, Pythagoras, Quetzalcoatl, and Zoroaster. Although the personalities are relatively unimportant, the teachings that pass through them are important. Among the major (orthodox) scriptures are the Old and New Testaments, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Qabbalah, and the Tao Te Ching. Each of the religions (revelations)(teachings) has many lessons to teach regardless of the consciousness of the student. Most of the real scriptures are very symbolic, with several layers of meaning. However, some have been manipulated to a certain extent through ignorance and selfish design, and therefore require even greater intuition (realization) for the discernment of their essence.

The organized religions of the world offer even the most advanced students opportunities to serve humanity. Though such a student must be careful not to become absorbed by a religion or its atmosphere, there is still much that can be done and learned that is of value. Through religion should be imparted the encouragement of the ethical, moral, social, legal, and spiritual welfare of humanity. Through religion humanity is exposed to the orthodox and objective manifestation of truth. But in the final analysis, there can be no religion higher than truth itself.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 40 - THE SIXTH RAY

The Sixth Ray is considered to be the ray of devotion and idealism. The Sixth Ray is a ray of attribute and forms one of the dimensions of manifestation of the third aspect of the Trinity. This ray demonstrates as the astral plane (the plane of desire and emotion), is linked to the buddhic plane (the plane of the spiritual intuition), and is the reflection of the Second Ray of love-wisdom. In one sense, it is the Second Ray reflected (or objectified) into matter, with the inherent limitations of the world of matter.

The Sixth Ray is a ray of personal love, desire, idealism, devotion, aspiration, and religion. Through the Sixth Ray the unregulated and distorted (personal) emotions (stormy waters) are uplifted into the quiet, purified, and clarified (disciplined) emotions (the calm sea) of aspiration and impersonal devotion (to God rather than to personalities or individuals). That struggle itself is qualified by the Fourth Ray of balance (contrast), through its mystical relationship with the Second Ray and the Sixth Ray.

The Sixth Ray is the primary ray of glamour, and is therefore the ray of liberation from glamour (through transmutation). The Sixth Ray is a very mystical ray, a ray in which the heart (love) that is centered on the astral plane is transformed into the heart that is centered on the intuitional plane. It is a most difficult ray to conquer, having many weaknesses and many stumbling blocks compounded by glamour; yet within the ray are the energies of overcoming that provide for liberation from the darkness of personal glammers and distractions. The sensitivity of the Sixth Ray is primarily astral (emotional), and is therefore subject to the vast intensity and diversity of glamour that make astral psychism rather undependable and misleading. The relationship of the emotional body (the astral or desire body) to glamour and other astral phenomena makes the Sixth Ray experience a major challenge to the aspirant or probationer. Relief occurs only when the mind has totally dominated and purified the emotions.

Being the ray of religion and a ray of attribute (objectivity), the Sixth Ray is the means through which religious teachings are revealed. It is clearly a ray of idealism, idealism that is the objectification of (divine) ideas, but an idealism that is necessarily clouded by personal energies. Nevertheless, through religion and through the various ideals (limitations of ideas) man is given guidelines for seeking and (relative) goals to seek.

The probationary path is governed primarily by the Sixth Ray. The probationary path is the path in which the life of the aspirant undergoes the transformations that are prerequisites for discipleship and subsequent service. The domain of service, from the highly selfish (personal) to the highly unselfish (impersonal) service, is the domain of the Sixth Ray of devotion. The lessons of reverence, self-sacrifice, and service are all within the domain of Sixth Ray energy. After completing the Sixth Ray experience, the spiritual student can then make decisions based upon higher (impersonal) values and for the good of all concerned, rather than based upon that which is appealing (the lower, personal values). Personalities become less and less distracting and values are uplifted through soul contact, as the student masters the Sixth Ray dilemma.

The Sixth Ray has for quite some time been the World Ray, the ray that especially colors or conditions the planet for a period of time (world cycle). This ray is now passing out of manifestation and is being replaced (as the World Ray) by the Seventh Ray. As this process occurs, the merits of the Sixth Ray order are abstracted to form a foundation for the new order, and the limitations of the old order are dispersed, through crisis (transition).

