



THE UPPER TRIAD

SET NUMBER 7

Commentaries on the Esoteric Philosophy

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THE UPPER TRIAD

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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 medium of unity and 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. 121 - GENTLENESS

One of the most important aspects of life on Earth is the improvement of right human relations. And one of the more helpful qualities in this respect is gentleness. Gentleness implies kindness and moderation, especially as far as manners and disposition are concerned. A gentle disposition discourages conflict and encourages cooperation in a peaceful and constructive environment. As the individual begins and sustains a life of enlightened living, so is it easier to induce the implied qualities of such a life within humanity as a whole. The improved quality of individual relationships is the beginning and foundation of right human relations for all of mankind.

Related to the quality of gentleness is the phenomena of offense. Implied within the gentle disposition is the refusal to be offended, at anyone or anything. This is admittedly a high standard, but one that is eventually expected of each spiritual student. The refusal to be offended requires patience and self-discipline. It is virtually impossible (philosophically) to change another's disposition, so it is essential that the student concern himself with his own disposition. It is with a sense of rapport with the greater life (which overshadows any sense of separation from others) that the disciple views other persons while refusing to be offended. This requires a healthy appreciation of justice (karma) beyond that which is apparent, without any sense of self-righteousness or judgement with respect to the actions of others. It (gentleness) means accepting others as they are, with respect and appreciation for the greater life which lives through them (however imperfectly it appears).

With the refusal to be offended comes harmlessness (the refusal to be offensive). Though in the absolute sense it is impossible to offend another, it is possible to contribute to another's offense. A sense of responsibility and the cultivation of a gentle disposition should minimize the possibility of others being offended. Though the student is expected to do what has to be done, the manner in which it is done goes a long way toward encouraging or discouraging proper relationships and cooperation. With a gentle disposition, communication is usually enhanced as reasonableness and receptivity (respect) replace resistance and resentment. Though what is done may be right, it is how it is done that determines appropriateness (and corresponding karma). Apparent justice (rationalization) notwithstanding, the spiritual student can ill afford to be either offensive or defensive.

A defensive disposition tends to sustain a conflict rather than encourage harmony. Defensiveness implies insecurity and self-centeredness (a very difficult combination). What need does a spiritual student ever have to be defensive? Gentleness in all matters transforms an offensive or defensive disposition into moderation and balance. Constructive change and progress pose no practical conflict for a gentle disposition. The gentle disposition makes for more effective communication (words and thoughts) and more effective silence (meditation).

In human courtesy and gentleness there is also a potent factor of healing quality. Emotional and mental wounds can run far below the waking-consciousness, but in gentleness there is the offering of love (respect) and light (encouragement) that is difficult for even human nature to refuse. In harsh words there can be no healing, but in gentle words (and thoughts) of encouragement (rather than criticism) can come healing. The power for good of the spoken word is often forgotten among the noise and selfishness of mundane life. But with a gentle disposition (without ulterior or vested motive) can the spoken word and enlightened living help to restore the plan of God within the human fraternity.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 122 - WORK AND THE PATH

Work is defined as a sustained effort (energy transference) to overcome obstacles and achieve an objective or result. One might easily ask what is the relationship between work and the spiritual path, or what is the nature of the path with respect to sustained effort. The goal or objective of the evolutionary path is reasonably well-known for the human lifewave: it is the perfection of human consciousness. But what constitutes that relative perfection and in how many ways may it be achieved? Are there any specific requirements for liberation? The answers are rather simple ones, though necessarily in general terms.

The requirements for graduation from the human sphere of activity are rather broad, being mostly in terms of quality of consciousness and quality in various areas of experience. The spiritual teachings are filled with suggested preliminary requirements and immediate goals that need to be fulfilled before liberation becomes possible. But every human being represents a path from self-consciousness to God-consciousness, and no two paths will be identical. Each must ultimately fill the general (subjective) requirements, but each way will embrace different (though similar in many general ways) experiences. Part of the beauty of the one path is that it is comprised of so many different (complementary) paths, each of which leads to the same objective and each contributes to the evolution of the lifewave. Though many paths exist, they all eventually blend and merge as the summit is approached. The common denominator is the objective and the overall work or sustained effort that is required for completion. And that completed consciousness can only be described subjectively and qualitatively.

The work involved (in the more abstract sense) remains approximately the same for all candidates. Or in other words, the overall effort (work) required for graduation is approximately the same for every path upward to divinity. But there is considerable flexibility in how that overall effort may be placed. Work might be defined as the product of two factors; where the overall effort remains fixed, the two factors may be varied inversely to accomplish the same objective. The first factor is force or the intensity of effort. The second factor is distance or the duration of effort. An intense effort over a short period of time may lead to perfection in just a few lifetimes. But a little effort over a long period of time may lead to the same end after many incarnations. In either case (and anywhere in between) the end result is the same (at least for the individual), and the overall effort (work) expended is the same. It is for this reason that it is said that there are no short cuts on the spiritual path, that all paths lead ultimately to the summit. But in each path there remains an element of grace to be considered, as well as individual and group karma.

The hastened (deliberate) path of evolution (greater intensity of effort over a shorter duration) is the spiritual path proper, the conscious effort toward evolution. The gradual path (lesser intensity of effort over a much longer time-frame) is the unconscious evolution of the mass of humanity. There are dangers involved with too great an intensity of effort, just as there are dangers inherent in too little intensity of effort. Karma is the overriding factor which compensates for every extreme, leading all elements onward. Intelligent and conscious evolutionary effort (along the spiritual path) is necessary for the relatively few in order to encourage and sustain the evolutionary momentum of the entire lifewave. It is for this reason that the call of the path is sounded, that more of humanity might count the cost (sustained and serious effort) and dedicate themselves to the work and task of the spiritual path, service to God and service to humanity.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 123 - BHAKTI YOGA

From karma yoga (the first six chapters of the Bhagavad Gita) through bhakti yoga (the second six chapters) is evolved dharma yoga, the yoga of divine responsibility. The path of right activity blends with the path of devotion, to introduce the path of philosophical discrimination (jnana yoga)(the remaining six chapters). From life (karma) follows love (bhakti), and from love follows light (jnana). Without love (consciousness), there would be little meaning in all of manifestation. Thus bhakti yoga from its lower form (emotional sublimation) to its higher (the development of the buddhi yogi), holds the key (linking) to the unfoldment of latent spirituality.

The twelfth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled Bhakti Yoga, the yoga of devotion (love)(aspiration)(idealism)(loyalty), religion by faith. Considered are the personal God and the impersonal Absolute, the nature of devotion or worship, and the attributes of the aspirant (devotee). God is considered to be personal (interior)(immanent) as well as impersonal (exterior)(transcendental), with form and formless. But the contemplation of the impersonal God (indeterminate, imperishable, and unmanifest) is difficult, and practical only for those who have developed the abstract mind and the spiritual intuition (and the ability to dwell with equal-mindedness in the contemplative state).

The surest path to God for most aspirants is through devotion and contemplation upon the innermost divinity, the personal God-immanent. In this respect the personal becomes the superpersonal, which is the impersonal. God transcendent is reached through the personal, inward path. But the need in devotional yoga for an intermediary is also recognized. For those who cannot yet conceive of the formless subjective reality, for those who cannot yet recognize the divinity (soul) within themselves, and even for those who can, the externalization of God through an intermediary (such as Krishna, Buddha, or Christ) can be quite meaningful. The divine incarnation and the teachings can be a powerful form of inspiration and guidance. The incarnation of expressed divinity (through example) is a showing of the way. And above all (on every level of approach) the aura of such an incarnation is real, is persistent through time, and can be touched and felt as a reality in consciousness.

The object of devotional yoga is to find the soul, and through that soul to consciously enter into the life of God. The reality of a divine incarnation can be a means of introducing the waking-consciousness to the soul or divinity within. Progressive devotion (meditation upon God) can lead the meditator from study and prayer, through concentration and meditation, to contemplation and illumination (union). Ritual is replaced by knowledge (understanding); knowledge is replaced by meditation; and meditation is replaced by contemplation (renunciation). Great is the power of the inner life.

The attributes to be attained by the student of bhakti yoga (and all disciples) are many and varied. The devotee is to be without hatred; to be friendly and compassionate to all; to be free from self-centeredness; to be free from exaltation, fear, impatience, and expectation; to be even-minded and contented; to be steady in spiritual exercise (meditation); to be self-disciplined and harmless; to be steadfast in the spiritual life; to be desireless, selfless, and devoted to the cause (the path); and to be free from attachment. The list of attributes (building blocks) is almost eternal. It is through the bhakti (personal) yoga that the fires of purification burn away the obstructions of the separated self. And without thought of the outer self, the mind of the devoted student can soar with the energy of aspiration, as love is made manifest.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 124 - THE SPIRITUAL STUDENT

The spiritual student is a student of life who has made a subjective commitment to the spiritual path of deliberate evolution. The spiritual student may be a seeker, an aspirant, a probationer, or a disciple, for each who lives upon the path is a student. A student is one who studies and learns from the experiences of life, whether or not the learning process is formal or informal, conscious or unconscious, attentive or casual, objective or subjective. The spiritual student seeks to learn (evolve) the lessons of life consciously, thus speeding up the unfoldment and expansion of consciousness while simultaneously contributing to the experience and developing consciousness of humanity. The learning process is really never-ending; the scenes and the circumstances change (along with the intended lessons), and the life changes (deepens), but throughout is maintained the position as a student.

The spiritual (metaphysical)(theosophical)(esoteric) scholar is simply a spiritual student who applies a greater than average effort toward advanced or more comprehensive studies. The scholar is a student of somewhat greater intensity of effort or completeness. There are places upon (within) the path for both the student and scholar, though the emphasis upon the path is on wisdom and service (expression) more so than knowledge and self-invoked experience. Among the immediate goals of the spiritual student are self-transformation (improvement) and effective (selfless) expression of the inner life. Thus the student is concerned both with the depths of the internal life (the subjective world) and the extent of the external life (the objective world).

When an individual becomes a spiritual student, the ordinary learning processes (and the field of life) are changed as the forces which provide the circumstances and lessons of life are transformed. Prior to commitment, the force of karma is relatively gradual and gentle; after the individual has embarked upon the path, the rules of life are changed (and continue to change)(by degrees) to increase the time-effectiveness of experience. The standards and expectations are increased as karma becomes a much more potent (evident) force in the life. Considerable karma is expected to be fulfilled in a relatively short period of time, so that the student might be free from limitation, and at the same time, be able to constructively channel and express the higher consciousness. Thus life becomes a rather enhanced learning experience.

In the totality of being, the spiritual student is an onlooker, a perceiver, and an actor. The onlooker is the spiritual monad or virgin spirit which is not limited by involvement in the lesser worlds. The perceiver is the intermediary (the soul) which subjectively translates the experience of the actor (the personality) and encourages the right expression of the personality in the lower worlds. In one who is not a spiritual student, the relationships between monad, soul, and personality are not so direct, so that considerable time is required between incarnations for the assimilation of experience. The spiritual student, however, is expected to assimilate much of the experience en route, sacrificing much of the time between lives.

The real emphasis in the spiritual life is the cultivation and expression of spiritual quality. Human spirituality pertains directly to the quality of consciousness and the relationship of the individual to the group life (humanity). The spiritual student is concerned far more with humanity and consciousness than with appearance and matters of mundane (limited)(individual) consequence. The spiritual student is not considered to be special, for the mission of the student is to be helpful from within the lifewave.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 125 - PERSONALITY INTEGRATION

The process of integration and alignment is the culmination of the probationary effort. The probationary path is primarily a path of purification and preparation for discipleship. As the personality is purified it becomes easier to integrate the elements of the personality into a more unified, synthesized instrument. That unified personality can then be aligned with the overshadowing soul. There are basically two methods or forms for the integration of a personality. One is a rather forceful method resulting in a temporary but functional form of integration which may even hold together for an entire incarnation. The other is a more natural method which involves refinement and adjustment, normally resulting in a relatively permanent and spiritually responsive form of integration, one that may hold together for a number of incarnations.

The method of integration by force involves considerable stress upon the elements of the personality, in order to hold them in line. Forceful integration calls for a strong, dominating mind, a relatively weak but homogenous emotional body, and a responsive physical body. It does not really call for much purification or refinement. In fact, forceful integration actually discourages purification and practically disallows subsequent alignment. The strong, dominating mind is generally not responsive to spiritual impression. The method of forceful integration is normally used (unconsciously) by the intelligent, evolving individual who has not yet entered upon the spiritual path. The advantage of integration by force is the (temporary) lack of the need for purification. Such integration allows for considerable and meaningful (but not really spiritual) experience. The main disadvantage is its difficult and temporary nature which requires eventual integration through purification.

The natural method of integration involves the cultivation of a purified and disciplined personality. Force may be applied as a form of encouragement and guidance, but it is not really a forceful application. The idea is to win the cooperation of the various elements of the personality through purification and refinement. Natural cooperation is quite superior to forceful and strained obedience. Purified elements tend to fit together (integrate) easily, resulting in an effective and spiritually responsive personality mechanism. The mind acts as the agent of integration, but as natural integration is achieved the personality acts as a unitary and coherent instrument rather than an amalgamation of diffuse and competing (or dominating) elements. Only a personality that is naturally integrated can be effectively aligned with the soul. Then, in subsequent incarnations it is a relatively easy matter to re-integrate the personality.

The concept of integration can be used to illustrate various degrees of human evolution. The relatively unevolved individual has a homogenous physical body, a strong but incoherent emotional body, and a weak and somewhat scattered mind. In the unevolved individual there is no real cooperation between the three major elements (mind, emotions, and physical form). There are many minor centers of scattered and competing consciousness, resulting in a very complicated and difficult personality. In the relatively evolved individual, on the other hand, the three major elements are reasonably well-developed (each integrated on its own level) and the entire personality may even be forcefully integrated. Such a personality is less complicated and easier to work with, but there still exist a number of competing elements, subdued somewhat as they may be. But in the fully and naturally integrated personality of the evolving spiritual student, there is only one center of lower consciousness, resulting in a simple (coherent) and efficient instrument for experience and expression.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 126 - FOUR FORCES OF EVOLUTION

Among the many forces which come into activity during a period of manifestation are four basic forces associated with the law of evolution. Each of these four forces is overshadowed by the law of karma and other related laws of manifestation. The four forces of evolution are involution, evolution, devolution, and convolution. Each of these forces has its domain or field of activity, and each is interrelated with the others.

The involutory force is the force which dominates during the period of the descent of life into the complications of form or matter. Involution might be called unconscious evolution, as it is the period that precedes self-consciousness or individualization. The elemental, mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms are examples of the involutory domain. It is the force of involution that gathers together the atoms of matter which comprise the form. Involution is primarily concerned with the preparation of various forms through which the various lives and lifewaves can evolve. The force of involution is also involved with the evolution of various group lives, prior to individualization. Evolution in the general sense encompasses both the path of descent (involution) and the path of ascent (evolution in the more specific sense).

The specific evolutionary force dominates the life and consciousness during the ascent of life out of the complexity of matter and into the simplicity of higher existence. It is the evolutionary force which is of greater interest to the spiritual student who is concerned with the evolution of consciousness. While involution governs the preparation of the form, evolution governs the utilization of the form by the indwelling consciousness, the expansion of that consciousness, and the ultimate withdrawal of life (consciousness) from the world of matter. Specific evolution begins with self-consciousness and ends (practically) with the relative perfection of life (the attainment of fully functional group consciousness).

While involution and evolution are basically constructive forces, devolution is essentially the destructive force of nature. Where evolution involves (ultimately) the simplification of life, devolution involves the simplification of form. The force of devolution is the force of disintegration and destruction. Forms are organized with purpose, and when purpose is accomplished (and the forms are no longer needed) the forms are released into their elementary constituents, the atoms of matter. Those atoms are then free to be re-formed into more useful aggregates. The devolutionary or destructive force is a natural and essential force, but great care must be evident as devolution is potentially very dangerous and a force that is easily misused.

Where the first three forces are concerned mostly with cause and effect, convolution (circulation) is a force that is concerned with the underlying processes of evolution (in the general sense). The convolutionary force is bipolar in nature, and might be called the force of differentiation and integration, or the force of entropy (structure and organization). Differentiation is a process of increasing complexity and multiplicity (creation), while integration is a process of increasing simplicity and unification. During the involutory period, the convolutionary force acts to differentiate the descending lifewave, and to integrate (in the elementary sense) the various forms. During the evolutionary period, the convolutionary force acts through the process of integration (as to consciousness). Convolution (through differentiation or integration) is a transformation, as the fabric of life and form is folded or transformed into a different mode or phase of activity.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 127 - THE OPEN MIND

As the spiritual student proceeds along the ever-deepening and expanding lines of consciousness, it becomes increasingly important for the student to maintain an active, open mind free from attachments and broad enough to recognize the inclusiveness of truth. The degree of passivity (the extent to which something is active or passive) and the degree of closure (the extent to which something is open or closed) of the mind together indicate the possibilities for discernment and realization.

The open mind is subject to both external and internal impressions. If the mind is also passive, then the external impressions will normally dominate without discernment or any concern for relevance or validity. If the open mind is active rather than passive, then the individual will normally think for himself, giving consideration to impressions received consciously. A passive mind tends to accept as valid whatever external thoughts or impressions are offered, consciously or subconsciously as the case may be. A passive mind also implies weakness and vulnerability to the glamour and illusion of the worldly atmosphere. It is the active and open mind that offers the best combination for the evolving student. The active mind gives (suggests) strength and the opportunity for self-control, plus the open mind gives flexibility and the opportunity for growth.

The degree of closure takes precedence over the degree of passivity. A closed mind, for example, offers very little flexibility, while an open mind is far more workable and easier to develop and improve. A closed mind is usually the result or consequence of fear or inertia. Both fear and inertia are difficult obstacles to overcome. But as fear and inertia are slowly overcome, the closed mind becomes more active (along narrow lines, at first), which in turn encourages more progress toward the gradual opening up (broadening) of the mental character. Though a closed mind is rather limiting as far as consciousness is concerned, the open mind is not without its problems.

One of the more serious problems of living in the objective world is the influence of the world's emotional and mental atmosphere upon the emotional and mental activity (or passivity) of humanity. That atmosphere is qualified mostly by human thought and feeling, glamour and illusion. That mixture of thought and feeling is impressed upon passive minds and emotions, which further complicates the problem. The problem is a rather delicate one, for the spiritual student needs to be open and actively responsive to both the external and internal worlds while maintaining self-control and thinking matters through to determine an individual set of values and beliefs. External and internal impressions need to be discerned and evaluated, that the individual might grow (deepen) and expand in perspective. Values and impressions received visibly, verbally, emotionally, or mentally should not be accepted passively as valid or true, but should be accepted, deferred, or rejected based upon recognized merit or realization. And it should be remembered that there exists no real authority for truth.

The student must be free to observe, to evaluate, and to respond appropriately to every experience in life, including every possible exposure to spiritual insight, internally through meditation and contemplation (and intuition), and externally through art, science, religion, and philosophy. With an active and open mind there is freedom for self-determination (and voluntary cooperation with the evolutionary pattern), and there is freedom to grow and expand. May closed and passive minds be transformed into minds of disciplined mental activity and openness (humility); and may unconscious and passive acceptance be replaced with conscious and voluntary discernment and self-realization.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 128 - HASTE

The spiritual path is often called the hastened path of conscious evolution, but the implications of haste are not entirely appropriate for the spiritual path. The spiritual path is certainly quickened and accelerated, but the path does not imply haste, urgency, or rashness. The path is actually guided by experience, wisdom, and maturity, with deliberation and concern for quality, stability, and effectiveness. Haste implies undue eagerness and a lack of preparation or wisdom.

Haste tends to precipitate (encourage)(call forth) mistakes, and although mistakes are often a part of growing and deepening spiritually, they should be a natural part of qualified experience rather than a consequence of hurrying. Hurrying along any path can involve a reckless (inefficient) expenditure of time and energy. One of the many guidelines for progress along the path is to proceed with reasonable dispatch (speed and efficiency) and reasonable deliberation (carefulness and understanding). Flexibility, dynamic usefulness, and even momentum are associated with the path, but haste is not. Hurrying is often an unconscious process that undermines the flexibility and the momentum of the spiral path of increasing consciousness.

One of the greatest covert deterrents to spiritual progress is impatience. Impatience, like undue or intense seeking, creates stumbling blocks. Like haste, impatience is a potent force for blinding and distracting the individual from the inner guidance that is necessary for successful progression. Allied to impatience in its effects is a sense of urgency. Such a sense is usually founded in exaggerated importance (both for the individual and for humanity). There is a certain spiritual impression that is sometimes misunderstood and interpreted as an encouragement for urgency from those who subjectively guide the human evolution. But even on hierarchial levels there is no real sense of urgency. There is always concern and interest in humanity, along with encouragement and guidance in many ways (if it can only be properly recognized and understood), but there is no exaggeration of the significance of any individual nor is the value of humanity exaggerated, on those higher levels. Patience and constructive encouragement are among the guidons for humanity.

Another aspect of haste concerns the intensity of objective life, or the pace of life on Earth. Amid the noise and haste of common (worldly) existence is a powerful force for absorption into that which is mundane. Those who live a life of great intensity in the lower worlds are quite easily absorbed and distracted from a real sense of spiritual value. Where the pace of life is great, it is quite difficult (almost impossible) to maintain continuity between the higher self and the waking-consciousness. But where the pace (intensity) of the lower, objective life is not so great; where the spiritual student maintains the inner calm amid the intensity (noise) of the outer life; there is an effective discipline of spiritual poise, where the waking-consciousness can function clearly and with wisdom through an aura undisturbed.

The relationship between human nature and haste is easily understood as the force for evolution and the pressures inherent in objective existence are recognized. Haste is simply a response to increasing pressure. But there is really no need for haste; humanity has an eternity in which to evolve. And each human being who heeds the inner call has time enough to accomplish the goals of evolution, with expedition (efficient promptness) and without haste. The disciple is asked to proceed conscientiously, that the pressures of the outer world might be balanced, and that spiritual poise might be enfolded and shared with all.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 129 - KSHETRA KSHETRAJNA VIBHAGA YOGA

The thirteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled Kshetra Kshetrajna Vibhaga Yoga, the yoga of the discrimination of matter and spirit, the knower and the known, the field and its knower. A profound synthesis of esoteric truth is revealed (and concealed) as the path of philosophical discernment (jnana yoga) is introduced. Considered are the one who knows (the knower)(the onlooker), the field of knowledge (and perception), and knowledge (activity) itself. Kshetra refers to prakriti (nature), the not-self, matter, and phenomena. Kshetrajna refers to purusha, the self, being, spirit, and the noumenon. These two (prakriti and purusha)(and their mutual relationship) constitute everything, all that is. The discernment of matter and spirit is the task or role of consciousness.

From the standpoint of duality, kshetrajna can refer either to the level of spirit (as the monad) or to the level of consciousness (as the soul); likewise kshetra can refer either to the level of consciousness or to the level of matter (as the personality). Thus each is seen to be relative to the other, rather than absolute or arbitrary. Kshetrajna is the spirit or soul, the dweller within, the drummer, the realm of immortality. Kshetra is the field of knowledge (the fertility of experience), the realm of mortality (time)(transience), and that which responds ultimately to the higher rhythm. The body (in one case) refers to the causal body, the relatively immortal light body of the soul. In the other case, the body is the personality or the illusion of separated existence, the shadow of reality.

From another standpoint (perspective)(that of triplicity) there is the more abstract synthesis (and consequent discernment) of the knower, the field of knowledge, and knowledge itself. The knower is the energy (life) of being; the field is the force of consciousness; and knowledge is the material of objective existence. But each of the three elements can refer in many ways to the others, so that discernment becomes the lesson of relative distinction, value, and implication. The outer (secular) knowledge must be discerned from the inner (sacred) knowledge. The known must be discerned from knowledge, and the field of consciousness must be discerned from the knower. And all that is real (light)(immortal)(the self) must be discerned from all that is unreal (illusion)(darkness)(temporary)(the not-self).

The real object of knowledge is self-realization, the reality of the impersonal (superpersonal) life, the attainment of (the realization of) immortality, the living (being) through all of creation (and that which remains uncreated), through the inclusive yoga of divine union. The field of change produces the wisdom (love) required for that attainment, through any of the four great paths (and their many variations and stages): karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, and raja yoga. Through each experience are the seeds of mundane life planted in the field of consciousness.

The key to all of this is the breeding (growing) of reality (wisdom)(self-culture) through the cultivation (assimilation) of higher knowledge (quality) (character), regardless of the particular method. Through the spiritual discipline is found reality, and in reality is found the divine self who dwells within the greatest silence of being. The agent of the self (the personality) is thus lost in the (higher) self as diversity is seen in truth to be the unity of that self, and as that unity is perceived through all. The owner of the field then illumines the entire field or domain of consciousness and existence. In the union of the field and its knower is produced all that comes to be, for the divine self is the creator of all.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 130 - STRUCTURE AND MEDITATION

Much of the emphasis in spiritual meditation has been placed upon structured meditation where there is a form, format, or pattern of meditation. But equally important is unstructured meditation, where form and structure are replaced (overshadowed) by simplicity (purity) and quality. As the spiritual meditation life evolves, it may pass through various stages of different emphasis. Some of those stages will normally be structured; others will normally be unstructured. The degree of structure depends upon the purpose and the appropriate means of accomplishment or expression. The experienced disciple may choose between the various types of meditation as the situation warrants.

The main advantage of structured meditation is the pattern or organization which provides a form or point of focus. This advantage is quite applicable to the training and discipline of the mind, as well as to the guidance and direction (projection) of focussed and constructive thought-forms. It is also helpful in bringing forth a coherent rhythm of meditation for a group formation, but even the developing group meditation should provide for some unstructured meditation. The simple form of structured meditation is concentration. More comprehensive forms of meditation provide a sequence or pattern to be followed, in order to keep the attention and focus of the mind and in order to properly release the various energies involved in spiritual meditation.

The expansion of consciousness (through meditation) requires organization (structure) in order to support it. Beginning forms of meditation are often designed to provide a foundation or framework for expansion, whether it is consciously realized or not. Once that foundation has been established, much of the structure becomes unconscious rather than conscious. If the structure or pattern of support is deliberate and intelligent, then subconscious programming can expand naturally and easily without much attention. If however, there are habits or patterns of subconscious activity already present (by default), then those patterns must be clarified, purged, or purified as necessary for further progress. In the higher forms of meditation the structure is usually so fine (esoteric) and formless that meditation becomes unstructured (in the higher sense).

Unstructured meditation provides freedom from the limitations of overt structure, freedom to respond intuitively (with wisdom) to both external and internal impressions, and freedom to achieve true contemplation and realization. But the higher form of unstructured meditation cannot really be achieved or sustained constructively without the lessons of structured meditation having been learned. The thoughts of the beginning student are usually rather undisciplined and scattered; an unstructured meditation at that point would be fairly incoherent. The mystical experience and contemplation can be achieved by the pure heart, but without the corequisite mental training it would be virtually impossible to manifest or express the higher energies.

Meditation in the heart or in the soul is normally unstructured, without form, while the expression of soul energies through the mechanism of the personality may be either structured (conscious and focussed) or unstructured (unconscious or superconscious)(wherever there is consistent alignment). The real joy of meditation involves the quality of the soul in a truly aligned and unstructured meditation. The disciple is one who recognizes the value and application of both types of meditation; the disciple is neither absorbed in the intensity of the soul, nor absorbed (distracted) by the pace of objective (mundane) life. The true disciple lives from the higher world, serving as a bridge of life, love, and light to all who are caught in the darkness below.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 131 - PERSONALITY ALIGNMENT

Once the personality has been properly qualified and naturally integrated it becomes possible to achieve and maintain the alignment of that personality with its higher self. Proper alignment requires the adjustment and upliftment of the purified personality into direct and immediate correlation (resonance)(harmony) with the overshadowing soul. This process is simple in concept, but normally quite difficult to achieve due to the many distractions of living simultaneously in both the objective and subjective worlds. There are two basic methods for alignment: one method is head-centered and involves concentration and the element of will; the other method is heart-centered and involves aspiration. The best all-around method is a combination where the will is tempered by aspiration. Neither method will really work unless the personality is prepared and the soul is ready to permit alignment.

The preparation of the personality is quite important. Alignment involves the bringing together (mixing) of two fundamental energies: the personality and the soul. Both must be vibrating according to the same pattern if union is to be achieved. The probationary disciple is powerless to modify the character or vibration (quality) of the soul, so he must adjust the personality in order to achieve harmony (synthesis). It is the character of the personality that must be brought into the higher rhythm. Once the soul and personality are vibrating together, the will or aspiration can be used to uplift the lower self into alignment. But the soul must be ready to permit alignment. If the personality proceeds prematurely, the gate between the soul and its personality will be closed and the effort will not succeed. Thus is it cautioned that development (alignment) should not be forced. It should be naturally encouraged from within. It is really the soul that sends forth the note or call for alignment and a willing and responsive personality that then enters upon the task.

The intensity of the soul should not be taken lightly. The soul is a powerful, yet subjective entity that does not relate very well to objective existence. The consciousness of the soul is far different from that imagined or conceived by the inexperienced student. But through right (spiritual) meditation and the method of aspiration the gap between the soul and its reflection is more easily bridged. The gentle approach of aspiration and wisdom involves gradual adjustments based upon the experience (observations and intuitional guidance) of the projector (the mind of the personality). The less gentle approach, utilizing the will aspect, may be quicker, but will probably involve a somewhat forceful response on the part of the soul, as the soul demands (and enforces) the immediate adjustment of the personality.

Once alignment has been achieved (by degrees), the task is to maintain or regain that alignment. With experience and perseverance, the task becomes more and more reasonable. If the alignment is achieved in a strictly spiritual environment, it should be easy to maintain while in that environment. But alignment so gained may not be strong enough or of sufficient quality to be maintained outside of that environment. An alignment gained while living balanced between the two worlds is more difficult to achieve initially, but may be maintained far better in mundane or worldly surroundings. This is one of the greatest of spiritual tasks, and one expected of the disciple, to achieve and to maintain the spiritual alignment, refusing to be absorbed by the lower world while working and living effectively within the delicate balance. Great is the human tendency toward absorption (in the mundane or lower sense), but greater still, for those who strive (allow), is the power of the soul.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 132 - VIBRATION

In the perspective of form (complexity), all that exists is vibration, in one way or another. Every element and every aspect of the differentiated universe is vibration, from the microscopic realm to the macrocosmic. A vibration is a cyclic or periodic process having various properties, parameters, and characteristics. Matter consists of vibration; applied force is a vibration; even energy (life) is vibration, (being) a cyclic process of some well-defined character. It is such vibration that provides the basis and continuity (unity and coherence) of all of life and consciousness and form.

The perspective of vibration is quite potent due to its virtual universality and the insight it can provide into the nature of form and manifestation. Physical forms have an atomic and molecular structure composed ultimately of simple vibrations. Every such complex form (vibration) can be (theoretically if not practically) resolved into a superposition or product of basic or fundamental components. Similarly, etheric forms and forces are composed of vibration. And analogously, emotional (astral) waveforms (feelings) and mental thought-forms (waves of energy) are composed of vibration. The interactions between the various types and levels of vibration further complicate matters, but at the same time provide the basic framework for integration and correlation.

A key to this perspective is rooted in the original process of manifestation. At the beginning of time, the unmanifested reality is stretched so that vibration can be inserted (this implies pressure or tension). From the simple insertion of basic energies (vibrations) the complexity (structure) of the manifested universe is developed through differentiation. The seven fundamental rays and the seven planes of consciousness are derived (evolved) from the original insertion and form the basic pattern of spirit, consciousness, and matter. The seven rays and the seven planes form an interlocking matrix of interactive vibration. From there, it is a simple matter to achieve further complexity (differentiation) based upon various combinations or resolutions of the components of the (ray-planar) matrix. Each derived vibration can be further complicated (structured) (hopefully with some purpose in mind) by the introduction, modification, and variation of various characteristics.

Among the various basic and introduced parameters are frequency, intensity, polarization (related to the plane or sub-plane of consciousness), ray character (or mixture), purity (degree of cleanliness (lack of distortion)), and quality. Some of the characteristics can be observed objectively; others can only really be discerned subjectively. The reference frame (perspective) of observation also has an effect on characteristics as perceived. A vibration of very large and well-defined frequency, for example, might appear as a very simple vibration when viewed from a distance time-wise (where the frequency of the reference frame is far-removed (in magnitude) from the frequency to be perceived). In this way (by changing the perspective), the greatest of vibrations becomes the least (or vice versa) as it passes from one domain (field) to another.

A study of vibration can lead into many allied areas, such as color and sound (the note and tone of the soul may be of interest to the head-centered student in seeking alignment). Vibration is also a key to the mystery of life (and time) (as a life-thread is (subjectively) integrated over time, conclusions can be realized concerning the wave-nature of life and the wave-nature of the monad) (are not vibration and energy merely indications of the presence of life). A study of vibration can also serve to bridge the (apparent) gap between orthodox physical science and its metaphysical and esoteric correspondence.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 133 - THE HIGHER SELF

The soul is the abstract and subjective expression of the monad. The soul is the upper triad of atma-buddhi-manas, and the unit of human evolution and synthesis. It is the true individuality, of which the human personality is but a shadow (reflection)(expression)(instrument) in the lower worlds. Whereas the personality is mortal (temporary), the soul is relatively immortal, incorporating the patterns for personality development (incarnation) and assimilating the character, experience, and quality produced through the personality. As the higher self, the soul is relatively insensitive to the pain or pleasure of the personality; the soul is not concerned with specific events in time and space in any objective sense. The soul is only really sensitive to overall quality, which is the integration of personality experience over time and space. In other words, quality (the soul) is beyond (the transience of) time and space.

The three aspects of the soul form a trinity in consciousness. The first or highest aspect is atma, which means (approximately) spiritual will and purpose, the seat of identification. Atma is the aspect which is most detached or removed from the lower life, and provides a thread or link to the monad. The second aspect is buddhi, which implies spiritual intuition, the seat of union. Where atma provides the power of choice (in the divine sense), buddhi provides the power of insight. Buddhi is the real seat of spiritual perception, being the central element in soul-consciousness. In buddhi is found the prime (dynamic) quality of the soul itself, which is love (inclusiveness) in its higher (impersonal) sense. The third or lowest aspect of the soul is manas, which is the principle of mind. Manas provides the thread or link between the soul and its personality, through intelligence and spiritual activity. Through the union of buddhi and manas (love and intelligence)(soul and personality) is produced wisdom.

The soul is the consciousness of life which is expressed through the three elements (physical body, emotions, and mind) and the seven major chakras (and the many lesser centers) of the personality. The chakras provide for the communication of energy between soul and personality. The personality is the agent (means) of experience and expression, while the soul is the method of consciousness. The soul does not really get involved or entangled in the personality life. The soul perceives the effects (as integrated experience and quality) of life in the lower worlds, but only indirectly. For those who are not on the spiritual path, the soul extracts (assimilates) the experience of each lifetime in the interval between incarnations. For those who are on the path, that process of assimilation becomes more direct as soul contact is achieved during the lifetime.

At the interface between the concrete (rational)(personal)(objective) mind of the personality and the abstract (impersonal)(subjective) mind of the soul is found a key to soul-consciousness. The concrete mind is limited by form, whereas the abstract mind is free of thinking entirely. In the soul, thinking is replaced by direct realization and comprehension. In the soul is consciousness without form, and the awareness of consciousness itself. The soul is thus characterized by internal recollectedness and constant (unstructured) meditation. The various personal attributes relate to the higher ones through the principle of correspondence, but to think of the soul in ordinary human terms can be quite misleading. Through identification (in actuality) with the soul, the meaning of the character of the soul becomes apparent. Words are not enough to describe the true mystical experience (realization) imparted through the inner communion. The silence of the presence of the soul must be entered, almost constantly, in order to appreciate or understand that nature of reality.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 134 - PERCEPTION

An area of special interest to the spiritual student is perception. It is important (meaningful) because it involves consciousness, sense-impressions, and the paradox of reality. The concepts and mechanism of perception are keys to the ultimate resolution (clarification) of reality and the release of the human mind from the bias and habits of illusionary existence. The process and basic tenets of perception are actually quite simple.

An object or event has some sort of existence or reality. An observer (perceiver) interprets in consciousness certain sense-impressions received from the object or event. But those sense-impressions are received through a medium and through an agent. The medium includes the aura of the object, the aura of the agent, and the atmosphere or mechanism in between the two. The agent is the personality and its components (personal senses). In subtle matters, the mechanism of perception can even change the object (or event) itself. The medium is real; the sense-impressions themselves are real; even the agent is real, each having some sort of existence. But, the problem arises from the assumptions of identification, and the conclusions and interpretations based upon those assumptions. Most people assume unconsciously the identification of the object with the sense-impressions of the object, and the identification of the sense-impressions with the actual perception or interpretation (conclusion) in consciousness.

But sense-impressions are not the object, and conclusions made in consciousness are not the same as the sense-impressions themselves. At each stage in the process changes occur so that the reality of an object is far different from the reality of the conclusion based upon sense-impressions. To identify one with the other is to introduce confusion and illusion. The aura of the object or event may introduce distortion due to its quality or character. The medium or mechanism will qualify the perception due to its character. The medium may include distortion due to the limitations of language (communication) or due to the transient and impression-filled nature of the atmosphere through which the observation is made.

Even the agent (the personality) is a source of distortion and confusion, depending on its quality, training (discipline), and intention. Perception is a very selective process. How often does a person see (hear) what he wants or expects to see (hear) while disregarding the rest? The senses cannot be trusted at face value; and even the interpretation in consciousness of sense-impressions introduces distortion due to desire, habit, and other forms of bias. The mind and feelings can exaggerate, substitute, and otherwise change impressions which are then accepted as valid in consciousness. Sense-impressions can be interpreted in the light of experience or in the darkness of ignorance. Personal energies tend toward distortion and self-deception; impersonal energies tend toward accuracy, honesty, and reality.

All of this is not to say that sense-impressions are not useful. It is to say that things are not usually what they appear to be; that there is a marked difference between sight and insight; that when dealing with sense-impressions, one must be careful to minimize distortion and confusion. The senses can be trained to be more useful, with greater accuracy, (outer) discernment, and quality. But the waking-consciousness must deliberately place matters in perspective, recognizing the distinctions between objects, impressions, and conclusions, discerning inwardly the values and conclusions to be accepted. As inner realization increases, the spiritual intuition and subjective rapport can be used to complement the sense impressions, thereby improving perception.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 135 - GUNATRAYA VIBHAGA YOGA

The fourteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled Gunatraya Vibhaga Yoga, the yoga of the division (distinction) of the three gunas (the three constituents of nature)(the three qualities)(the three moods). Therein Krishna discusses the field of nature, which is the field of human evolution, and the path to freedom, in the practical terms of karmic fulfillment and liberation from the three constituents of nature. The three gunas (conditions of nature) provide the framework of (apparent) limitation in the world of form. They are named sattva, rajas, and tamas; and together they constitute nature (prakriti) as a trinity in expression (while remaining one in substance). The three gunas are the agents of nature which bind the forms of the lower worlds of human endeavour. They are inherent in the human personality, but may be viewed in many ways throughout manifestation. One of the three may predominate in a given situation or perspective (such as to character), while the others may prevail from time to time. Moreover, each is also a field or domain of expression as well as a grade or force.

The first of the gunas is sattva, the highest of the binding forces of nature. Sattva binds unto earthly happiness and to lower knowledge. As light, sattva is intelligence and the light of knowledge, giving birth to wisdom through the path of ascension. The first guna is related to the Fifth Ray and the binding force might therefore be called illusion, or attachment to knowledge. The sattvika disposition is for those who seek truth, being relatively unbound by the lesser gunas. Sattva is also the realm of natural law (rhythm) and in the higher sense portrays response to divinity.

The second of the gunas is rajas, the middle constituent (or ground), being fire and the nature of passion, the source of attachment through desire. Rajas is activity (unrest) which binds unto activity. The field of activity and experience is rajasic life, where karma finds its primary expression as action and reaction (consequence). Rajas is the level (gradual or preparatory) path and the realm of natural energy. Rajas is related to the Sixth Ray and the binding force might therefore be called glamour (entanglement in personal energy). The rajasika disposition is for those bound by activity, desire, and attachment, by mobility and change.

The third or lowest of the gunas is tamas, meaning darkness, inertia born of ignorance. Tamas binds through sleep and rest (dullness), maya which overclouds awareness. The attachment is that of matter itself and the inertia implied by every form. Tamas rules the path of descension (involution and devolution) and is related to the Seventh Ray. The tamasika disposition is for those who sleep while walking through the fields of life on earth. An understanding of tamas yields insight into the dullness (inertia)(resistance) of the personality (form) to higher impression, as well as insight into the character of matter. Through tamas are the forms of nature held together or dissolved, as appropriate.

The intention of the path is for all to pass through and beyond the three powers (gunas) of nature: to fulfil the requirements of experience and activity, thereby loosening the ties that bind. The student progresses from the state of absorption by form (tamas), through the state of absorption by kama-manas (karma) (rajas), to the state of absorption by truth (sattva). The final freedom (transition) comes when one is liberated from all of the binding forces of earthly life, having learned the lessons well and having transformed one's own nature. The one who passes (or can pass) beyond the gunas is one who has neither distaste nor longing, who remains unruffled and detached from petty matters (and petty thoughts), who lives as the inner self, steadfast in wisdom.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 136 - THE VALUE OF LANGUAGE

The value of language is manifold. Though the limitations of words and language are many and varied, and though more direct communication (mental or buddhic union)(realization) is preferable (and ultimately inevitable), thought-forms expressed through language remain the primary means of communication one to another. In communication there is the sharing of (approximate) thought-content and information which can stimulate constructive thinking and thereby enhance experience and consciousness. Encoded as language, information can be effectively and usefully communicated. Language is so much a part of the contemporary learning process that many persons take it for granted, without utilizing its full potential or realizing its varied expression.

The basis of language is symbolism. Every letter, prefix, suffix, root, derivative, combination, and word is a symbol (or composite) in its own right. Every phrase, sentence, and paragraph is a symbolic substructure. A language is a symbolic system, the superstructure of which is communication. The language of the poet is an artistic communication, often deeper than its appearance. The language (without words) of the painter is a communication of beauty or meaning potentially more comprehensive and unstructured than words. Even the complex and intricate technical language of scientist has its purpose and its value in transmitting subtleties and abstractions in specialized (and useful) terminology. The universal language of mathematics has an even greater and deeper usefulness in symbolizing concepts. Even the language of computer programming has its contribution to mental training via symbolic thinking. Moreover, objective language is the basis of concrete thought and can be used in the training and discipline of the concrete mind. And the somewhat more subjective language and beauty of music can assist in the training and discipline of both the mind and the emotions.

The objectives of language include not only more effective communication, but also the attainment of deeper understanding of people, events, and things (forms), mental clarity, and the broadening of perspectives. A study of the various languages can aid in the understanding of various peoples and cultures, and can reveal the common threads (and derivatives) of words and language. Appropriate language can discourage prejudicial and self-defeating mental habits: the variations in language (in words, word order, and structure) from the commonplace can be used to stimulate thinking and avoid the habitual perspective and its concomitant limitations. How often does a person study or even think about particular word meanings, roots, correlations, or implications? A richness abounds in every language for the broadening and deepening of perspective and communication. Language is a tool for the student of life, as well as for the scholar.

Wisdom and intelligence in the transmission (via speech, the written word, or other means) and the organization of (specific) language implies the reasonably accurate transmission (sharing) of meaning. The careless transmission or offering of language may be relatively empty of significance or even misleading. With the proper projection of energy, considerably much more than words (or even thought) can be shared through language. Language then becomes the key to the release of energy, understanding, and realization far greater than the appearance of words. As the mind is trained and disciplined, the correlations of a broad enough perspective can encourage that realization. As true realization is found, dependence on language is reduced, as the energy of an object or event or concept is perceived independently of language or ordinary perception. In that way, ordinary language is actually replaced by specialized and more abstract (composite) symbolism.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 137 - COMPASSION

Compassion is a quality that has to be experienced directly in order to understand. For the spiritual student, the experience of compassion can bring about (or result from) the unfoldment of the heart; it can place the waking-consciousness in touch with humanity (and life itself) and the consequent realization of the common thread (which is unity). Compassion is defined as a sympathetic consciousness of others' distress coupled with a desire to alleviate that distress. But any emphasis upon pain or suffering is somewhat inappropriate for the spiritual student; the spiritual student is expected to concern himself mostly with positive matters, in thought and in deed. But the student must, at the same time, be realistic; besides, it is the rapport with humanity that should be the real emphasis in compassion.

For the heart-centered student, compassion can be a problem if it is offered or experienced on emotional levels without control or without detachment. For compassion to be meaningful and useful (in the sharing of energy and in understanding) it must be experienced in a mature manner, with love, but without distraction or undue involvement. One cannot afford to become entangled in pain or distress; yet one can hardly afford to forego a sharing of the feeling of humanity, if union with the soul of humanity is to be achieved (as it must). A compassionate appreciation of the problems of life (which appear to produce pain or suffering) is a way to understand the causes (or at least the intermediate causes) and possible solutions in consciousness. Through participation (does not compassion imply a degree of participation?) is revealed a means of healing and progress, as consciousness is gradually changed (raised) (both in the individual sense and in the sense of humanity). And all of this comes about through the heart and the prize of the heart which is compassion.

For the head is an altogether different approach. Compassion cannot be experienced in a purely rational or head-centered manner. Therefore, there are no problems relating to compassion in the head-centered student, except for the lack of compassion. Therein lies the real problem of the head-centered student: the undeveloped heart and the great difficulty in opening the heart in a reasonable manner. For the head-centered student to become compassionate, a great deal of work is involved. Some of the protective mental barriers must be deliberately lowered so that the feelings of sympathy, compassion, and even others' pain can be experienced, by degrees. Compassion comes easily to the heart. But it does not really come at all to the head. The head must be brought into the heart; that is the difficulty, for the head must yield to the heart (not to the emotions, but to the unfolding and stabilized heart center).

The complementary approach of the head and the heart to the feelings of other persons (or humanity) involves both compassion and impersonality. Controlled (impersonal) emotion (via the stabilized heart center) is the key to (meaningful) sympathetic, compassionate, and even empathetic expression. Though the evolving student is expected to cultivate increasing impersonality, that impersonality needs to be balanced with the experience (and the identification with the experience) of humanity, through the instrument (and quality) of compassion. Evolution is mutual and interdependent; the student must not only understand the lifewave to which he belongs, but the student must also contribute to that lifewave. The understanding can be found and the contribution can be made, with intelligent participation through the head and the heart linked inseparably. Compassion is a primary theme for that experience and expression, compassion that is a dynamic expression of love (the heart quality), leading to atonement and to harmlessness.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 138 - WAVES AND MATTER

In the classical (traditional)(orthodox) view of the material world, matter is that which can be considered as an aggregate of material particles. Material particles are supposed to have well-defined mass and observable positions in space-time (localized, with sharp boundaries). But in the modern (orthodox) experience (especially on sub-atomic and atomic levels), matter has been found to exhibit the properties of waves or particles, depending on the method or perspective. Fundamental particles have been discovered in which the mass is not well-defined; such a particle might appear to be an energy resonance rather than a distinct particle. In quantum mechanics, even traditional particles (like the electron) can be observed (indirectly) as well-defined particles or as wave phenomena. By wave phenomena it is meant that a particle may be spread out in time and space (a distributed mass, for example, or a distributed position or probability).

The phenomena of wave-matter duality sheds some light upon the etheric realm and even further (though the proper relationships of energy and matter are quite well-known in the esoteric tradition). Physical vision is awfully objective (in which macroscopic objects are well-defined), but the resolution of atomic and sub-atomic phenomena is denied the ordinary vision. Etheric vision (and its astral counterpart) is less well-defined; etheric vision is concerned more with an energy (wave)(aura) perspective than it is with the perspective of matter (well-defined forms). Subtle vision or perception may be relatively objective (turned outward) while maintaining an energy perspective, or it may be rather subjective (turned inward) in which the energy perspective transcends even wave phenomena. In either case, the reality of energy is confirmed, and the transience of matter is recognized.

In the superphysical, but objective realms, wave phenomena predominate. Thought-forms and feelings (emotions) are examples of energy phenomena that take on some wave properties. Feelings tend to be rather poorly defined (vague) but are transmitted almost objectively, in waves. Thought-forms can be fairly sharp (focussed)(concrete) or relatively vague, but either way remain somewhat objective, being within the world of form. It is only when the abstract regions (beyond the concrete mental) are entered that subjective forces predominate. On those levels, forms are nonexistent, but a subjective phenomenon (analogous to waves) does exist, called consciousness. The world of form is a world of matter and waves; the world beyond form is a world of consciousness and finer energies. But there are other, more profound implications to wave-matter duality.

Some of those implications (linking waves and matter, depending on the point of view) elucidate the reality of a universal thread. An example is the appearance of an isolated individual human being (matter perspective) compared with humanity (wave perspective). Another example involves the appearance of an individuality isolated in time and space (objective, matter perspective) compared with an individual life (monad) which is distributed in time and space (subjective, wave perspective), living simultaneously (beyond time)(through self-projection) throughout the past, present, and future. The appearance of an individual in incarnation, then, is merely part of a life extending along the individual space-time track and extending also across the distributed wave front of the human lifewave. The perspective of matter (particles)(discrete lives) leads through the various chains of complexity; but the more powerful (meaningful) perspective of waves (energy)(integrated or continuous lives) leads more directly to simplicity through the universality of the subjective lifewave.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 139 - STOIC PHILOSOPHY

The Stoic school of philosophy was founded by Zeno of Citium about 300 B.C. The foundation of Stoic philosophy is based in the subordination of the individual to the logos (law)(God)(nature). The Stoics held that the wise should be free from passion, unmoved by joy or grief, and submissive to natural law. Or in other words, the orderly nature of the macrocosm (universe) should be reflected in the self-disciplined lives of the wise. From idealistic and almost unattainable standards of conduct, Stoic philosophy developed over a period of 500 years into the practical philosophy of Marcus Aurelius. Though somewhat materialistic and deterministic, Stoic philosophy is not without its contributions to (derivations from)(and accord with) the esoteric teachings.

Stoic materialism is founded in the identification of monistic deity (God) with the entire (material) universe. That God is said to be the consciousness (creative fire)(reason) of the world, and relatively providential. Stoic determinism includes natural predisposition (tendencies), eternal change, relative free will, and eternal recurrence (a cyclical universe of manifestation). All of the parts and events of the universe are said to be mutually related. The individual human being (soul) is said to have within itself the spark of creative fire (divinity), and therefore a direct relationship with God. The Stoic universe is definitely ordered; thus the logic and physics (theology) of the Stoics is based upon that natural order.

But the real strength of Stoic philosophy is in ethics. Derived from the orderly (rational) nature of the universe, Stoic ethics tend toward inward tranquillity and social duty. Stoic values are dependent on conformity with natural law, and Stoic ethics are therefore (ideally) self-sufficient (motivated without hope of reward or fear of punishment). The wise man is one who consciously follows (chooses) the path of (group) destiny (intention), by living voluntarily according to the laws of nature. The instinct of self-preservation is eventually transformed into self-perfection (self-mastery) under reason (the law of nature within man). Virtue is said to be the means of achieving that ultimate peacefulness (conformity of the human will with divine will).

The four cardinal virtues (of Stoic philosophy) are intelligence (moral insight), bravery (courage), justice, and self-control (temperance)(self-mastery). Each of these are said to be interdependent, requiring the others for consistency. As the Stoic system developed, a path was envisioned to allow practical (ordinary) humanity increasing degrees of wisdom. The discipleship of the Stoics implies the simplicity of gradual moral progress. Wisdom includes the inner freedom to choose (and attain) the higher values. The wise man of the Stoics is to be free from passion (pleasure, depression, desire, and fear) and (ideally) indifferent to pain (unruffled by circumstances). It is perhaps the standard of indifference to pleasure or pain that is the greatest contribution of Stoic philosophy.

The Stoics concerned themselves more with the merit (or demerit) of intention and motive rather than the action itself. With rational self-control (tranquillity) there should be no resentment for received injury or injustice; and in discernment there should be wisdom based upon humility and honesty. Though rather head-centered, the Stoics set a standard for the resolution of the conflict between human reason (the mind) and animal passion (the body). The allegiance of the individual should be to the universal (God) and to humanity, rather than to the nation-state. The Stoics also developed a sense of social duty (behavioral appropriateness) that went beyond the cultural standards.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 140 - THE WAKING CONSCIOUSNESS

The waking-consciousness is the focus or attention in consciousness. The normal (human) state for the waking-consciousness is the conscious (concrete) mind which lives through sense-impressions and thought-forms. But the waking-consciousness can vary widely in scope and quality, from enchantment by (absorption in) the lower phenomenal world, through various stages of mental (manasic) activity, to buddhic (intuitional) experience far beyond the mind.

The conscious mind (the waking-consciousness) is the lens (link) through which experience is obtained and expression is achieved. That lens may be relatively focused or unfocused. Purely instinctual experience and expression implies the working of a mind that cannot really be focused; and in that case the waking-consciousness is rather vague. The next higher stage of experience is somewhere between the instinctual and the intellectual, where the waking-consciousness is absorbed (preoccupied) through kama-manas (the desire-mind). The desire-mind involves glamour and distortion, so that the waking-consciousness (at that stage) remains somewhat out of focus. Much of the activity and experience of the desire-mind is governed and conditioned unconsciously, especially by the external forces present in the immediate emotional and mental atmosphere which resonate with the tendencies (vulnerabilities) of the personality.

As the conscious mind gradually frees itself from the binding forces and limitations of kama-manas, the intellectual realm of focus is entered. The waking-consciousness may pass freely between the lower and higher states (depending on experience and development), but once the mind is reasonably developed (clarified), experience on any level becomes a matter of consciously or unconsciously directing (focusing) the attention of the intellect or mind. A great deal of coupling (interaction) then exists between the various states of emotional and intellectual experience. Patterns (habits) of thinking and feeling then tend to replace the purely external forces as the dominating influence for the waking-consciousness.

As the mind becomes more and more developed (disciplined) it becomes possible to pass the waking-consciousness into the abstract (higher) mind. Meditation (holding the purified mind steady in the light of the soul) is the method leading to such contemplation (abstract mental activity). When the waking-consciousness functions with form (thought-forms), the focus remains in the concrete mental region. When the waking-consciousness functions without form (in the higher sense) the focus is within the abstract mental region (or beyond)(of the soul). Beyond purely mental activity is the intuitional realm (buddhi) and the interaction between the mind and the intuition (buddhi-manas).

The intuitional realm should not be confused with the instinctual or astral. On intuitional levels, the waking-consciousness experiences awareness and realization, without thought. There may be awareness of consciousness itself, or awareness of thought (as in looking within the subconscious mind from the standpoint of the soul), but there is no direct expression in form, except consequentially as the lower mechanism (personality) attempts to interpret or respond to the higher impressions and subjective experience. The soul (and even the mind) can function practically independently of the waking-consciousness (the temporary focus for consciousness). A great deal of activity occurs on more subtle levels (subconscious and superconscious). One of the goals of the spiritual student is to so expand the focus of the waking-consciousness that the subtle activities can be consciously programmed, thus increasing the utilization and usefulness of the entire human mechanism.