



THE UPPER TRIAD

SET NUMBER 11

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THE UPPER TRIAD

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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. 201 - THE ALL OF TIME

Objective experience is usually viewed in terms of time and space since these two variables (which are actually two expressions of a single variable) provide the basic framework and focus for objective (personality) experience. The apparent reality of time (and space) is not usually questioned, but when the spiritual student begins to realize the greater reality of the soul (on its own level), the world of time becomes quite insufficient as a point of reference or focus. Consequently, the spiritual student must learn to function consciously unhindered by the distraction of time and space. The real world of the soul is clearly beyond such limitation; the spiritual student needs to be free from the habit of thinking only in terms of time and space, that he might remain free to think and function in terms of time and space or not, as the case need be. As the student progresses in his soul relationship, a new reference frame is evolved based primarily on consciousness and independence from time.

Time (space) is merely a perspective, one way of viewing the experience of objective manifestation (with emphasis on the world of effects), and it is a very small portion of the reality of existence. Since time is a necessary phenomenon during incarnation, there is no harm in its acceptance, but the spiritual student should at least acknowledge time for what it is (a temporary and illusionary perspective) rather than an absolute reality. The ocean of time is subject generally (greatly) to perception and interpretation; beyond time there is an inclusive understanding and a potent realization that is relatively free from the distortion of perception. Meditation (and other forms of abstract and subjective thinking and realization) is a way by which the student can ultimately and consciously achieve the transcendence of time (and its inherent limitations)(at will), while simultaneously functioning in the lower worlds.

The real understanding of life (and events) comes when the mind (and soul) views life as inclusively as possible, beyond the sequence of events and experience in time and space. The phenomenon (panorama) of karma is unbound by time (though obviously related to time-dependent events). Therefore, any real understanding of cause and effect relationships can only exist on higher levels of consciousness than those which are merely time-dependent. Any real understanding of life must take into consideration the existence and character of the soul (the unit of human evolution); but the soul does not exist in time and space (nor does the soul exist as (or through) a single incarnation). The soul exists (in reality) as the totality of experience (past, present, and future) and the integration of all related perspectives (levels of consciousness)(and simultaneously as an integration over all lives).

The all of time (of the soul) is not an extension of time; it is the integration over time such that time-dependence is inclusively eliminated. Time-dependence could be eliminated by treating time as a constant (by successive differentiation), but that would not be all-inclusive. By successive integration (rather than differentiation), the reality of higher existence (beyond time) is approached in consciousness, and the illusion (appearance) and exclusiveness of lower (finite) existence is successively overcome. The past, present, and future are merely distributions of energy (as the soul itself is essentially energy). Time (separated existence in time and space) is seen to be only a focus for objective experience, replaced as a reference frame by the timelessness (reality) of the soul. Refusing to be completely absorbed in time, the esoteric student dwells primarily on the subjective whole, the all of time, and views all events and experience in the greater light of life and consciousness.

The eighth tractate of the First Ennead is entitled the Nature and Source of Evil. Considered is the relationship between good and evil, between being and non-being, and between the soul and the opposition of good by evil. The primal evil (evil absolute) is said to exist as the independent (and abstract) principle of non-being (the absence of being)(or the quite distant image or reflection of being), as the absolute (lifeless) formlessness and lawless void that exists prior to (and to a certain extent during) manifestation. As an emptiness (non-existence)(the negation of reality), evil is real in the sense that it complicates life and consciousness, but it is unreal in the sense that it has no real life of its own.

On the other hand, the good is said to be the abstract principle of being which has its root (source) in God (life)(reality) and produces the ordered purposeful manifestation of life and consciousness. In one sense, the good is associated with the highest formlessness, unbound and unlimited, but having an inherent purpose and an ordered synthetic nature. The good is inserted into the lower formlessness (emptiness)(chaos) by successive differentiation and reflection. The ordered nature of being produces patterns (forms)(structure) within the lower formlessness. From life (spirit), through quality (consciousness), to appearance (matter), the spiritual impulse reaches a lower (relative) limit. That lower limit (the greatest diversification of matter on the lowest level of manifestation) confronts the lower formlessness, and by association is qualified by evil (a lack of purpose)(the random, chaotic force). Thus evil is said to be inherent within matter, though evil is actually a derived quality.

So absolute evil is an abstraction inherent in unqualified formlessness. And those forms which come into closest contact with such formlessness (in the lower sense) acquire a degree of evil by association and to the extent to which the indwelling life and consciousness permits (or is unable to prevent). Higher forms can take on an increased measure of this evil quality by continued association. Matter itself exists at a lower level than that of patterns and forms, and therefore it exists in the realm (interface) between form and (lower) formlessness. Bodies are not true forms (archetypes); bodies are formations of matter and are therefore very easily swayed by material forces. The lower mind is associated with evil only in the sense that it is associated with its bodies (personality) and works therefore with matter and form. The higher mind (and the soul) remains untouched by evil.

But that which identifies with the lower limits of form takes upon itself some character of evil. Thus human ignorance (evil) begins with the identification with form (illusion) and ends with the identification with life (reality). What is normally called or characterized as evil is simply the manifestation (induction) of evil by association with matter. Matter tends to control whatever is manifested through it; thus are forms corrupted and considerable effort is required on the part of consciousness to secure their relative freedom. The abstract evil does have a place within the evolutionary scheme, however, for it opposes evolution and therefore moderates all activity in the lower worlds, thus providing a framework of experience. Evil (ignorance) manifested within the human form (body)(personality) is a resistance (inertia) to be overcome, ultimately yielding greater potencies for good. All forms within the framework of manifestation have within themselves a degree of the inherent good (by virtue of their source of creation and how close they are to that source). Thus the human being is essentially a very noble creature.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 203 - NAMASKARA

'Namaskara' is a Hindustani word that can be used as a greeting or salutation of considerable spiritual significance. 'Namaskara' is actually a salutation and recognition of the divinity within the human form; it can be used as a form of communication (invocation)(evocation) between the mind and the soul, or it can be used between two or more individuals. It can be used silently (mentally or in meditation) or it can be spoken (or written) with mantric (energy) value. As a word of power, the greeting carries with it an inherent energy of invocation, to draw the higher self more fully into the waking-consciousness. Used with an intelligent and conscious recognition of its significance, the word carries with it a considerable potency for good.

Used internally (vertically)(between the mind and the soul), the word 'Namaskara' parallels the English expression (mantram) 'I am That I am' in the evocation of higher consciousness. The lower self (the mind)(personality) is so easily distracted by the outer (mundane) world and personality experience (absorption) that the spiritual student may frequently need to align himself with the spiritual self (the divinity within). Through such conscious alignment (or through the attempt or effort toward alignment) the inner energies become more easily manifested and the student is better able to maintain a spiritual poise (perspective)(temperament)(disposition) throughout the waking activities. Such alignment is also an essential part of any serious meditation effort. Thus, this word of power (or an equivalent formula) can be used internally to bring about a stronger and more meaningful relationship between the personality and its higher self. In the recognition of the God-self within comes the eventual manifestation of that God-self through the obedient and willing (purified) personality.

Used externally (horizontally)(between individuals) the word 'Namaskara' is a salutation of one soul to another, a conscious recognition of mutual divinity, regardless of the appearance of personality. When used between spiritual students, the word 'Namaskara' is a word of spiritual strength and encouragement (rapport), an affirmation of recognition of the greater (one) life that binds all lives together. When used by a spiritual student for others, the word tends to draw out the best of qualities (potentialities) in the others and serves as a considerable force of encouragement. When used by a spiritual student for others (humanity)(those who may or may not be on the path), the word can be a potent force for right human relations and goodwill; for in the recognition of divinity within another (or humanity) is that divinity encouraged to unfold. Not only is it a matter of recognition, but a process of identification (of one life with another aspect of the same life). Regardless of the evident (apparent) personality, there exists a God-self within all human beings (and other beings). By focusing the attention on the divine nature inherent within all, the student should find it far easier to overlook the limitations and shortcomings of others (which should not be dwelled upon) and much easier to develop the needed rapport with all of humanity (and with all of life).

In each sense, the recognition of divinity strengthens the spiritual impulse in manifestation (throughout humanity). The divine self is the personal aspect of God, that aspect through which all lives are bound together, that aspect (divine, inner spark of life) which evolves and contributes to the group evolution. In one sense at least, the word 'Namaskara' is more potent than its English correspondence ('I am That I am'); for it has an essential heart-centered quality that goes far beyond the individual sense of alignment. It is that heart essence that contributes to the group (human) consciousness. May it increase.

The spiritual student is tasked with understanding his own (personal)(individual) nature on its various levels (and interactions) as well as human nature in general. One of the interesting features of human groups is their tendency to take on many of the individual human characteristics. The many lessons concerning human nature are frequently found reflected in human groups of various types and sizes. Thus the student is encouraged not only to understand himself, but to observe and analyze group behavior and character as well, that the student might more easily and more intelligently cooperate with constructive forces on various levels and through various groups.

There are a number of variables that can be considered in an analysis of any group. First of all, the size of the group should be taken into consideration, for the size of a group very strongly affects the internal and external group dynamics (along with some of the other variables). Human groups can range in size from a few persons, through nation-states and races, to humanity as a whole. The size of the group contributes to its manageability and potency. The membership of the group should also be examined, for the group nature rests ultimately on the nature of the individuals who form the group (analogously, in the human being, the various aspects and constituent elements of the personality and their relationships with each other). The purpose of the group usually reveals how the membership is related to the group. Group goals and objectives play an important role in attracting the membership and holding it together.

Other group variables of significance include quality, maturity, strength (potency), stability (of membership), level of consciousness (as well as variety and concensus), flexibility, diversity (of membership), frequency (of association), freedom (of the membership), formality, and complexity. The overall quality of the group may be head-centered or heart-centered (or balanced) and allied to any one or more of the seven rays. The maturity of the group is especially important; the strength (potency) for good is related to the group's dependability, stability, and overall maturity. The level of consciousness is also quite important in this respect.

Depending on maturity and the level of consciousness, a group might be reasonably well-integrated (coherent) and spiritually responsive (as a group). Groups of significant duration (nation-states)(races) are qualified each by a personality ray and a soul ray which may substantially interact with the group character (and contribute to its formation). The internal structure of a group also plays a considerable role in the determination of the group character. How the various individuals relate to each other (and to the group goals) affects the various qualities and characteristics that the group manifests. External relationships (alignments)(forces) also (usually) affect the group character.

As all of these variables are considered and the nature of the group determined, it becomes possible to discern the various attributes of the group (such as humility, openmindedness, awareness, moderation, goodwill, reasonableness, practicality, adaptability, confidence, kindness, harmlessness, friendliness, impersonality, clarity, etc.)(of course these qualities may be as much a part of the analysis). Much can be learned concerning human nature and the effects of certain characteristics in the field of human experience, and much of that understanding can be applied to constructive efforts and interactions. What is learned about group dynamics and group character will well serve the spiritual student, for increasingly, spiritual students must work together in a coherent and mature fashion on personality levels and on group levels.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 205 - THE OCCULT RAYS

Four of the seven rays are considered to be occult (head-centered) rays (rather than mystical rays). These four rays (the First Ray, the Third Ray, the Fifth Ray, and the Seventh Ray) form a special and potent group, symbolized in part by the cross of manifestation. These odd-numbered (head-centered) rays provide the bulk of the work (activity) of manifestation, being moderated by the heart-centered (mystical) rays. The occult rays provide the purpose, intelligence, and organization (the structure and framework) for manifestation, while the mystical rays provide the quality (consciousness), guidance, and assimilation of the experience of manifestation.

The occult rays fall naturally into five pairs of rays. On the higher levels, the First Ray and the Third Ray constitute a potent vertical relationship (pair of opposites) of spirit (life)(energy)(will) and matter (form)(consequence), respectively. The First Ray provides the purpose for life and manifestation while the Third Ray provides the field of manifestation (intelligent activity). On lower levels, the First Ray and the Seventh Ray provide another potent vertical relationship. The First Ray provides the power (impulse) of life while the Seventh Ray provides the ordered structure (organization) and material basis for the manifestation of energy (through the process of creation). While the Third Ray and the Fifth Ray also constitute a highly vertical relationship (through reflection), they simultaneously form a horizontal relationship. Together, the Third Ray and the Fifth Ray are concerned with knowledge and truth (light). The Third Ray (in this respect) functions as the abstract mental plane (concerned with archetypes and patterns)(general principles)(philosophy) while the Fifth Ray functions as the concrete mental plane (concerned more with understanding the patterns as manifested)(details and specifics)(science)(application). The other two relationships (the First Ray with the Fifth Ray and the Third Ray with the Seventh Ray) are significant but are less potent.

Of somewhat greater significance are the two synthetic triangles (1:3:5) and (3:5:7) which together form the cross of manifestation. The higher triangle (1:3:5) relates the purpose of evolution to the middle stage of mental formulation, while the lower triangle (3:5:7) carries the energy farther into the external world. Subjectively, these occult rays are concerned with creative plans and light energies (truth)(knowledge), while objectively, they are primarily concerned with the work, activity, and structure of manifestation. The rays of mind provide the middle ground of balance between archetype and created (manifested) form, between theory and practice, between the subjective realm and the objective work.

The substantive world of the occult rays involves invocation and evocation, the manipulation of matter by applied forces to achieve some evolutionary objective. The occultist is an instrument of force in the manipulation of form, while the mystic is the instrument of moderation (quality). The word 'occult' essentially means concealed or hidden, referring to the superphysical or subtle nature of the forces of manifestation. The purpose of occult investigation is to establish the relation of manifested things to their invisible or subtle causes and therefore to be able to cooperate more intelligently with the forces of evolution. The occultist works primarily with the head-centered rays in bringing into manifestation the needed forces. The esotericist blends and balances both occult (head-centered) and mystical (heart-centered) energies, bridging between the world of activity and the world of consciousness, having mastered both great hindrances to occult work: the undisciplined emotions and the ego.

Courage has been defined as the mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty. It implies firmness of mind and a degree of confidence. In the spiritual context, courage is an important virtue to be cultivated by the student, for the path can be quite difficult at times, and living a delicate balance between the inner world of the soul and the outer world of the mundane personality can be especially trying.

First of all, the soul itself must have courage to incarnate. Many (souls) incarnate easily, and quickly adjust to the external world (by absorption) because they identify more with the lower life than the higher one. Many incarnate with varying degrees of difficulty, due to the foreign nature of life in the lower worlds (foreign to the poise and consciousness of the soul) or due to various karmic phenomena. Few souls incarnate easily (without reservation) and carefully refuse to be absorbed by life in the lower worlds. Some are able to incarnate easily with an implied (but temporary) period of absorption and adjustment followed by a necessarily courageous struggle (later on) (as the personality completes the preliminary (preparatory) work) to regain control of the mind (and the personality) and draw the lower life out of the dilemma (predicament) of mundane absorption.

The spiritual student (being somewhat enlightened and reasonably well integrated) must have the courage to face adverse or unknown conditions throughout the lifetime, for the path is filled with tests and trials of spiritual strength and character, and the karmic workload of one relatively new to the path can be quite a burden (not to mention the intense and almost instantaneous karmic workload of one who has made substantial progress along the path). If the student is to maintain (and increase) his usefulness, and if the student is to progress along the path, he must conquer all events and circumstances (and the lessons found therein). He must remain true to himself, and he must remain true to the work (dharma) (and karma) that has been assigned.

Simultaneously, the spiritual student must have (should develop) the courage to be different (as needed), to adjust his approach to life in the lower world of human events and to be flexible (and reasonable) in his relationships with others. The student must ultimately have the courage to live consistently according to the principles of life along the way (the spiritual path). He must have courage to believe according to the reality of inner knowledge and understanding (in spite of disbelief or misunderstanding in the outer world), and he must inevitably have the courage to live according to the dictates of his philosophy (or suffer the consequences of disharmony between what is believed and what is practiced). The student can ill afford hypocrisy.

Perhaps above all, the spiritual student must have the courage of honesty and truthfulness. He must (should) be honest with himself, and he must be honest with others (the wise person speaks little, but what is said is ever honest and sincere (appropriate)). He must not be afraid to face the truth about himself or about life itself. The student whose self-image approaches reality will have no difficulty in receiving truth, but courage is required for the majority who are unprepared to face the truth. The student must ultimately have the courage to be humble, in a world whose members are traditionally egocentric. For in the deepest and most meaningful humility is found the greatest and most profound truth and realization. With courage and fearlessness the student must guard ever against foolishness and conceit, for courage does not justify recklessness or carelessness, and fearlessness is no substitute for humility.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 207 - THE FIRST ENNEAD (9)

The last tractate of the First Ennead is entitled the Reasoned Dismissal. Briefly considered is the inappropriateness of suicide. The great sin of suicide is its interference with the purpose of the soul (which purpose is experience and expression leading to the evolution of consciousness). It is also perhaps the greatest act of arrogance that a mind or personality can commit, for no one (on the personality level) has the right to terminate life (release life from the form) prematurely. When the soul is ready to withdraw from its incarnation, a simple and natural transition (death) will result.

Suicide implies a voluntary and deliberate act (of interference) on the part of the personality, giving rise to the concept of reasoned dismissal (of the physical plane experience). The reasoning (rational or irrational) may vary widely, but is more often based on strictly emotional experience or at least centered in kama-manas (the desire mind). Higher forms of (strictly rational)(if not reasonable) reasoning often relate to an apparent lack of usefulness. The reasons themselves are not important, for there are simply no grounds which are sufficient (justification) for dismissal (suicide). Suicide is an extreme act, one that has gone far beyond the balance, moderation, and poise of one who is healthy emotionally and mentally. Anyone who dabbles in extreme energies is likely to develop the vulnerabilities which may lead, in turn, to a consideration of suicide. Suicide is sometimes related to the sudden release of an intense attachment (on some personality level), but no matter what circumstances precipitate the event, the event itself is one of failure to maintain reasonable balance and self-control, coupled with a lack of respect and understanding of life and death (and the purpose for incarnation).

The consequences of suicide are among the worst conceivable. At any death, the individual stands free from the body (which is released to its elementary state (uninspired matter)), but not necessarily free from the emotions and the mind. The individual takes into superphysical existence the consciousness (lower and higher) that was experienced in ordinary life (except that the physical form is no longer a distraction). In other words, the personality survives, at least until the soul withdraws from the personality (and the personality is then resolved into its constituent and elementary lives). Furthermore, the archetype of the physical body persists until the intended time of natural transition. During ordinary transition, the life's experience is assimilated on the various levels (astral, lower mental, higher mental) and the soul passes on freely to its natural (higher) state (existence). But in the case of suicide, the soul remains bound to the personality (and to the unfulfilled archetype of the body) for usually a considerable length of time. And that experience is one of the most painful (since it is so contrary to the purpose of evolution).

The conclusions are quite simple; suicide is (by definition) an unjustified and potentially devastating experience. With greater public understanding of the nature of life and death, the problem of suicide should recede and (ultimately) be eliminated. All life has meaning and purpose, whether it is recognized and understood as such or not. It behooves every individual (student) to learn whatever he can as long as the opportunity for life in the lower worlds exists, to face all situations and circumstances with reasonableness (and as learning experiences), and to contribute whatever he can to the evolution of the greater life. Life in the lower worlds (regardless of its appearance) is a golden opportunity for individual and collective progress. And until the soul is free, there is always hope for progress. Usefulness persists.

The individual heritage of a soul is the totality of experience acquired during its existence coupled with all of the energies of experience available to it. That experience may manifest itself in many ways, through capabilities, quality (consciousness), and character; everything that the soul is or can manifest on any level of its consciousness (including those of the personality).

The largest portion of the individual heritage is that which was acquired during earlier existence, both in the case of the individual life (consciousness) and in the case of the independently-evolved form. All of the experience of the soul (consciousness) assimilated from prior incarnations contributes directly to the individual heritage. From the earliest existence of the soul (as a distribution of consciousness within the group soul) through the various stages of involution (prior to self-consciousness) and evolution (after self-consciousness (individualization)), all of the experience is enfolded into the energy pattern (reservoir) of the soul. Thus, all of the specific lessons of evolution through the various kingdoms (elemental, mineral, plant, animal, and human) contribute to what the soul is and to the capabilities and consciousness of that soul. The same is true for the forms which the soul appropriates for utilization in any particular lifetime (incarnation).

By association with the forms of the personality (the various bodies), the soul inherits the experience of the forms in addition to its own experience. In other words, the form follows its own pattern of evolution, and as the soul appropriates (creates) the form out of matter, the actual (earlier) experience of the atoms of matter which comprise the form is available to the indwelling consciousness. The experience of the form in manifestation is also a part of this heritage. The present (immediate) existence of the form and its derived character are also important, for many characteristics are passed on by parent-atoms during the creative process. Those characteristics are, in part, the immediate consequence of the physical, emotional, and mental characteristics of the forms of the parents (or however the form is derived) and, to a certain extent, their qualification by the consciousness of the parents. This is, of course, in addition to the historical experience of the atoms themselves.

Probably the most potent factors in the individual heritage are the immediate experience of the soul (including its physical, emotional, and mental development through (and weighted heavily towards) the most recent incarnation) and the current state of its karma. Many environmental factors controlled largely by the soul and its karma contribute directly to the immediate heritage of the soul. Much depends on the ability of the soul to sift through the environmental (karmic) factors and control them (or more precisely, to control the response (if any) to those factors). Furthermore, the soul chooses (subjectively) (within karmic limits) what characteristics will be manifested or emphasized in a particular incarnation (out of those which have been earned or developed). Thus the entire heritage is available, but not all of that heritage is used. Only that which is needed or pertinent is actually enfolded into the personality patterns.

Finally, perhaps the most important factor is the dynamic and creative ability of the soul in incarnation (how the soul applies its heritage to life in the lower worlds and the lessons in consciousness). The soul may (if it can), from time to time, adjust the various factors, bringing in new energies and withdrawing old ones, as needed. The soul (and the enlightened personality) can actually draw consciously upon its entire heritage, and upon the heritage of the entire lifewave.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 209 - THE MIND AND ITS BRAIN

The soul tends to develop (evolve) a form or instrument for each plane of consciousness in the scope of its experience. On the manasic (mental) level, the primary instrument is the mind, in its two parts: the abstract mind of the soul itself and the concrete mind of the personality or lower self. On astral levels, the primary instrument is the astral or emotional body. On physical levels there exists a dense physical instrument (body) and its etheric (vital) double. Occult or head-centered work is concerned primarily with the mind and its particular instrument within the physical body, the brain.

The brain is a strictly physical instrument having a dense physical structure and an etheric counterpart. It is analogous to the hardware (physical instrument) of a computer system (specifically, to the central processor). The brain is concerned primarily with three things: processing sensory inputs, physiological processes (the control and coordination of the physical body), and localized memory. As a dense physical form, the brain has no consciousness of its own (except for the elementary consciousness of the physical and etheric atoms). It is simply a piece of hardware associated with (and necessary to) the physical body, but it is also the primary instrument through which consciousness can function and experience on physical levels. Without the brain, it would be extremely difficult for the waking-consciousness to experience anything on physical levels. The brain is not required for thinking processes, but it is needed for observation, awareness, and interaction on physical levels.

The mind on the other hand, is an instrument of a much higher order than that of the brain (a higher order as far as plane of consciousness is concerned albeit not nearly as structured (organized) as the brain). The mind is the instrument used on the mental plane of consciousness, the instrument of reasoning, thinking, and understanding. It exists more as an aura than as a detailed form, though the mental body itself is becoming more organized as far as mental matter is concerned. The lower (concrete)(superficial) mind provides the single-track processes of thinking and reasoning (with the generation of thought-forms in mental matter), and the (conscious and subconscious) programming of the personality on mental, emotional, and even physical levels).

The concrete mind is analogous to computer software, the programming that utilizes lower-order instruments (hardware). The abstract (higher)(inner) mind is a higher order of programming (software) that operates on multiple-tracks and has virtually no structure. The abstract mind provides an interface with the concrete mind of the personality, by providing various energies (guidance) from the soul. The abstract mind is more concerned with relationships, understanding, comprehension, realization, and contemplation; while the concrete mind is more concerned with programming, concentration, and application.

The intellect is that aspect of the concrete mind that has so identified itself with the brain (and with physical experience) that its patterns and processes (programming) have more or less crystallized. The mind utilizes the brain intimately for physical awareness, and that relationship is usually a considerable distraction (absorption) for the mind. In fact, the mere presence of the brain in the personality system tends to burden (dull)(slow down) the entire thinking process. Since the brain and the mind are closely related during incarnation, it is almost inevitable that an intellect will develop to sustain the illusion of lower (independent) existence. Memory processes, too, contribute to this complicated involvement of mind and brain. They are both involved to a certain extent with etheric memory processes.

No. 210 - THE LUNAR CYCLE

The lunar cycle is a major energy cycle of significance to humanity. Serious spiritual students of all faiths observe the lunar cycle in their pattern of daily and monthly meditation, primarily because of the opportunities to work with special, qualified energies that are available according to the monthly rhythm of the lunar cycle. This meditation process is one of cooperation on a number of levels: cosmic, solar, planetary, group, and individual.

As far as energy is concerned, the sun (physical symbol of the manifestation of the Solar Logos) plays the primary role in the lunar cycle and the corresponding planetary meditation effort. The sun is a relative source of energies from outside of the immediate (solar) system. Various cosmic (extra-solar) energies (on subtle levels) from those sources (cosmic lives) which provide a heavenly background for the sun (relative to the earth) are received by the sun, intensified considerably (and qualified by the nature and character of the Solar Logos), and redistributed by radiation throughout the system. Those same energies are almost always available directly (except when interfered with by other bodies), but with much less intensity (and without the specific solar qualification). For example, the energies of Aries are always available to humanity in one form or another, but when the sun is in Aries (relative to the earth) those energies are particularly magnified and redistributed. The energies that are specially available in this fashion vary according to the solar cycle (as the sun moves (relatively) along the path of the ecliptic).

The sun is also a direct source of energy pertaining to the entire (solar) system. The particular nature of the Solar Logos is reflected in the sun's own energy (on subtle levels as well as purely physical and etheric levels). Furthermore, the sun is a relative source of various planetary energies. Each planet has a distinctive aura which qualifies (or is qualified by) the energy (character) of the planetary life. Those various planetary energies can be received directly, or via the sun. Since all of the planets are dynamically and esoterically coupled (with each other and with the sun), the sun reflects and qualifies all energies within the system. All of the planets (physical and non-physical) (and other lives and bodies within the system) exist (live)(are manifested) within the solar aura. That aura provides a dynamic medium through which all of the planetary lives are linked together by their various energies. That aura constitutes a vast sea (energy field) of qualified substance (etheric and superphysical matter) and associated energies.

The movement of various physical and non-physical forms (bodies)(and lives) through that dynamic medium (aura) creates wavefronts of energy qualified by the particular form or life. Though the moon itself is not an active influence, it does interact with the various planetary and solar energies by virtue of its presence within the solar aura. The moon acts as a gate (valve) that moderates the amount (intensity) of energy received by the planet. The first half of the lunar cycle is primarily one of receiving energy; the second half of the lunar cycle is primarily one of redistributing the energy for planetary (and humanitarian) purposes. At the period of the new moon, the moon is positioned (relatively) between the sun and the earth, and so the energies received from the sun are impeded. As the moon continues its motion from the new moon position to the full moon position, the flow of energy received from the sun increases. At the period of the full moon, the moon is positioned on the far side of the earth relative to the sun, and therefore has minimal impact on the energies received from the sun. Thus, the solar sign of the full moon is quite significant.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 211 - RIGHTNESS

Rightness is defined as the state or degree of being right, in accordance with what is just, good, or proper. Rightness is concerned with correctness, suitability, appropriateness, truth, and wisdom (discretion). As a servant of truth and as a servant of evolutionary purpose (love), the spiritual student should be consciously concerned with rightness in regard to each aspect of waking activity; but the student should not be attached to any sense of rightness, nor should he be concerned with the rightness of others' behavior or motives in the three worlds (of physical, emotional, and mental experience).

One of the eternal problems of rightness is its inherent relativity. It would be easy to classify all moral, ethical, and behavioral activity (and all decisions and conclusions) into one or the other of two extremes (right or wrong). If truth were absolute, then rightness would be a simple matter of logical and analytical reasoning. But truth is relative, dealing more with universals than absolutes, and treating rightness in absolute terms is a considerable limitation. Some well-defined standards may be established and adhered to, but with openmindedness and respect for the relative nature of truth. But the concrete mind (and human nature) prefers certainties and the exclusiveness (separativeness) of clearly defined dualities. And human nature (with its vanity) tends to polarize forces and considerations so that the spectrum of consciousness is difficult to realize. But nonetheless, the student should moderate his relative understanding of experience and activity, so that the stumbling blocks of polarized or extreme conclusions are overcome.

The principles of rightness are the same for behavior (activity) as well as belief (truth). Rather than trying to discern the extremes of what is right or wrong, the spiritual student should discern what is relatively right. Of all the known alternatives, the student should endeavor to recognize the one that is (or seems) best, keeping in mind the relativity of his life and decisions in the three worlds. The spiritual student is simply urged to do what seems best (after due consideration or intuition), knowing full well the futility of absolutes and the fallability of human consciousness. It is rarely a matter of right or wrong; it is more often a matter of right and more right. The student should not be afraid to make his decisions and proceed, for in action and experience come greater understanding. As long as the student is sincere and true to his beliefs and understanding, he should not be ashamed of failure, for all is relative, and the lessons of apparent errors are still fruits of meaningful experience. And the student should also respect the perspective and consciousness of others, for what is (relatively) right for one may not be so for another; such is the greatness of truth and consciousness.

Another problem of rightness is its relationship to levels of personality-centeredness. The student is urged to experience and express himself in the highest possible way, according to his consciousness. The lower form of rightness is righteousness manifested externally (so that it provokes personality effects and reactions from others). Such righteousness (self-righteousness) is usually a greater hindrance to progress and right human relations than it is a help. The spiritual student may well be concerned with justice in the outer worlds, but he should ever respect with faith and confidence (and humility) the law of karma and the rights and freedom of others. The rightness (righteousness) of the spiritual student should be of the higher form, an individual matter of quiet, introspective, and humble righteousness. Such righteousness that is internalized (as a factor in consciousness) is far more meaningful.

The Second Ennead of Plotinus considers the heavens and the two kinds of matter. The Second Ennead begins with the first tractate, entitled the Heavenly System. Considered in the first tractate is an analogy of the microcosm (the human being) and the macrocosm (the ordered universe), with a clarification of the heavenly system in its various qualities and characteristics. A distinction is made between individual persistence and the persistence of type; the macrocosm is seen as a useful combination of soul and form where the soul persists (endures) and the form suffers limited duration. The ordered universe, then, is seen to have a changeless foundation, a ceaseless and dynamic, ever-changing manifestation, and a perpetuation (purpose) based upon the will of God.

On human levels, the persistence of type refers to the form, as the souls (lives) are reintroduced to objective levels in new forms (personalities)(bodies) which sustain the type. Also seen is the interrelatedness of heavenly lives and forms, analogous to the human experience. The heavenly system is considered a ceaseless flux, but one which is a (relatively) closed system (with primarily internal changes). The heavenly system (like the human) is self-consistent and stable (though interactive). Identity (the monad) remains unchanged, while consciousness (and form) changes (progresses). The concept of eternal beginnings is also introduced, and a restoration (of flux) is seen not to be needed, for the immortality of the cosmos (and its intrinsic internal character) are sufficient.

A restoration of energy is only needed in the lower worlds, yet from a higher standpoint the energy is not lost, but merely involved in ceaseless transmutation. The cosmos (the ordered universe) has no beginning or end, only relative beginnings (and endings) as the cycles of manifestation proceed. The flux is not outgoing, but self-contained. In the lower sense, the flux appears to be outgoing only because the whole is not taken into the vision. Lives which expend themselves are merely transformed. Forms which have completed their usefulness are returned to their constituents, and as the universe completes its immediate usefulness, all is returned to chaos, that a new beginning may follow.

The ceaseless activity of manifestation is seen to depend on four major elements: fire (heat)(light), earth (matter), air (space), and water (cohesion)(magnetism). But even these elements of the heavenly system undergo transformation and reformation. And these elements, too, are completely integrated with respect to higher purpose. Lower forms are derived and therefore suffer less permanence (as formations) than consciousness. The reality of cosmic fellowship is seen in the utilization of life, consciousness, and form by the life of each higher dimension. The lesser is not dominated, but rather the qualities and characteristics of the lesser are determined by the guidance of the higher life.

Earth-centeredness is also seen as a relative phenomenon. The dynamics (internal motion) of the heavenly system depend almost entirely on the reference frame or perspective. Every major element (star)(planet) of the heavenly system can be viewed as being self-centered (with respect to its frame of reference), just as each self-conscious life (human being) views his personal universe as centered in himself. But in the greater reference frame (unanimity), there is no self-centeredness (or earth-centeredness), only an omniscient and internalized (all-inclusive) vision. With such a vision, no external forces (body) is needed to insure permanence (divinity flows from within and provides the soul with immortality). But the soul does not (cannot) share its permanence with its instrument (the body)(personality). The same also holds true for the macrocosm, by correspondence.

The human being in the physical form known to ordinary consciousness is actually a very small portion of a much more complicated lifeform. In reality, the human being is a spiritual monad of which the physical form is the lowest and most distant relation. The monad is the highest spiritual aspect of the human being, and it is one of three major levels of existence through which that life manifests. The other two levels are the soul and the personality. Together, the monad, the soul, and the personality form a significant triplicity.

The monad is the least objective and most abstract level of human existence, although it is misleading even to call it human; the human distinction is merely academic on monadic levels. The monad is the divine spark of the flame of the life which is God. Its presence or nature cannot even be glimpsed by ordinary consciousness. The presence and nature of the monad can only be revealed through the conscious attainment of soul-consciousness, and even then, only through a difficult alignment of the soul with its monad. The monad is that aspect of the human life which remains on the atomic level without itself descending into the lower worlds. The descent of the monad is achieved only through its reflection onto lower levels of consciousness, while the monad itself remains en rapport with the Godhead. That Godhead descends only to the level of consciousness adjacent to, and one degree higher than that of the monad. Since the monad exists on the atomic level, there is no substantial barrier between itself and the next higher level. On its own level, the monad is the only reality, an integral and undifferentiated part of the Godhead.

The monad is the supreme element of that life from which the human being is a derivation. It is supreme in the sense that it is the only imperishable aspect of the triplicity; the personality is the least permanent aspect, while the soul is relatively, but not quite immortal. As the universe comes into and out of manifestation, the character of the monad persists, while all that functions on lower levels is dissolved, at least at the end of manifestation. Obviously, the monad is the least known of the three aspects, from the standpoint of human consciousness, for the monad is beyond consciousness, and few (if any) souls in incarnation can be aligned consciously with the monad. Since the monad is beyond consciousness, it can only be approached on its own level (being).

The soul is the first but distant reflection of the monad onto the next lower levels. The monad remains unconcerned with the plight or experience of the soul, though a thread of life does link the two aspects. It provides a most vague form of qualified energy, but it should not be construed as guidance. For the most part, the soul is almost completely independent of the monad. One cannot even really say that the experience or quality of the soul is ultimately assimilated by the monad, for the process of assimilation implies consciousness, which is denied the monad on its own level. So the monad can only be described by analogy and correspondence, and only then in the most vague of terms. One can say that the soul somehow contributes to the purpose of the monad, but it would not be quite right to say that the soul contributes to the evolution of the monad, for the monad does not evolve on its own level. The soul is the unit of human evolution; the monad is beyond evolution, since evolution is a process, and limited to the second aspect of trinity. Furthermore, the monad has no specific existence; the monad simply exists on its own level as a most vague distribution of energy. The only value of the monad to human experience is the distant provision of the ultimate energy (source) of life; and as an object of contemplation, akin to absolute recession.

The soul is the first or primary reflection of the monad into consciousness. The soul is itself a triplicity, functioning on three levels of consciousness. Those three levels associated with the soul form an upper triad of atma-buddhi-manas. Atma provides a quality analogous to the spiritual will. Buddhi is the next lower level of soul-consciousness which manifests as the true (subjective) (spiritual) intuition. Manas is the next lower dimension, the principle of mind. In the case of the soul, manas refers primarily to the abstract or higher mind, that aspect of mind that is unburdened by thought-forms. This upper triad of atma-buddhi-manas is the derivation or reflection of the monad on soul levels. By correspondence, atma is more directly related to the monad; buddhi is directly related to the soul itself; and manas relates the soul to its own reflection which is the personality.

Also by correspondence, the seven rays relate directly to the three aspects of the human life, to the three aspects of the soul, and to the seven principles of human experience. The monad is the First Ray aspect, providing the ultimate thread of unrealized purpose. The soul or upper triad is the Second Ray aspect, providing the method or process of evolution (consciousness). The personality is the Third Ray aspect, providing the means of experience. Atma is governed by the Third Ray since it is the third of seven planes of consciousness, but as the first or highest aspect of the soul it is also qualified primarily by the First Ray. Buddhi is governed by the Fourth Ray since it is the fourth plane of consciousness, but as the second aspect of the soul it is also qualified primarily by the Second Ray. Manas is governed by the Fifth Ray since it is the fifth plane of consciousness, but as the third aspect of the soul, it is also qualified primarily by the Third Ray. Thus each aspect or element is qualified by one or more of the seven rays, by correspondence and by relativity.

The soul is also viewed as the relatively immortal essence that incarnates under the law of karma, time and time again, through the various personality rays. That evolution of the soul contributes also to the evolution of the greater life, for each of the three aspects of the human being correspond to cosmic, solar, and planetary manifestations. The human monad is inherently absorbed in the unified and singular monadic life which corresponds to a reflection of the planetary monad on cosmic physical levels. And the human soul is inherently a part of the soul aspect of the planetary life, as a group soul that corresponds to the planetary soul as reflected into the cosmic physical plane.

The human soul, then, is the aspect of consciousness, that essence that relates life in the lower worlds to the divine life of monadic and cosmic existence. The soul naturally transcends the earthly worlds of consciousness, yet persists as the totality of integrated experience, talent, virtue, and conscience. As the subjective individuality, the soul reflects itself into the lower regions of human consciousness as a personality that, in turn, functions through the several vehicles or bodies. Like the monad, the soul is without sexual distinction; only the androgynous personality is manifested as either male or female. The soul exists as a seat of dispassion, uninvolved in personality matters, yet in its own way subjectively linked to the quality of personality experience. The indwelling (overshadowing) soul actually creates the personality (as the soul is a creation or reflection of the monad), although the soul does qualify the personality more directly than its higher counterpart. The soul remains essentially on its own level, though a part of the soul is imbedded in the personality instrument to provide the needed linkage and continuity.

As the third aspect of the human lifeform, the personality is formed of several vehicles for manifestation on objective levels. Each vehicle is attuned to a different rate of vibration of matter and functions on some level of consciousness, though the rate of vibration can be raised or lowered within each respective plane. The three aspects of the lower self (personality) are the concrete mind, the astral body, and the etheric body. The concrete mind is actually the reflection of the abstract mind into the world of form. The astral (emotional) (desire) body is the instrument of feeling, and the etheric (energy)(vital) body (the etheric double) constitutes a matrix of energy which vitalizes the dense physical body. This lower triad of mental, emotional, and physical aspects excludes the dense physical body; but if that physical form were included in the personality, the lower triad would become a quaternary or four-fold instrument.

As the third aspect of the human lifeform, the personality is governed by the Third Ray, more so as it is integrated, less so as it functions as several uncoordinated elements, each qualified by its own rays. The physical body, for example, is naturally qualified by the Seventh Ray since it functions on the seventh or lowest plane of consciousness, and by the Third Ray since it is the third aspect of the personality. The astral body is qualified primarily by the Sixth Ray since it corresponds to the sixth plane of consciousness; but as the second aspect of the personality, the astral body is further qualified by the Second Ray. The concrete mind is qualified by the First Ray as the first aspect of the personality, and by the Fifth Ray by virtue of correspondence with the fifth plane of consciousness. As the personality is integrated, the concrete mind becomes the dominant force or factor, and finally the mind is associated with the personality ray itself.

As the soul continues to reincarnate, it qualifies each personality, in turn, by a particular personality ray. Each of the rays are chosen, according to some pattern or need, until the experience that each has to offer has been fulfilled. Each personality ray qualifies the experience of the personality during incarnation. That relative qualification depends on the degree of development and maturity of the personality, as well as the natural relationships between the soul ray and the particular personality ray being manifested. The personality matrix is further qualified by all of preceding experience, by degrees, along each of the seven rays. The personality exists throughout each incarnation as energized or organized matter with a rather primitive consciousness of its own. The soul is a far higher consciousness which provides the deep-seated (subjective) motivation of the personality form, while external forces, karma, and various personal energies provide the superficial motivation.

The respective rates of vibration for each of the aspects of the human personality can be adjusted, more or less independently, provided the mind is strong enough and provided the personality is reasonably well-integrated. As the quality of consciousness is raised, each of the three vehicles is naturally raised in vibration, since each vehicle is made of matter and consciousness moderates vibration. But the vibration of each vehicle is also subject to external forces in the three worlds of human endeavor, depending on the degree of integration and self-composure. Each vehicle may be quite vulnerable to external or karmic forces, so that deliberate adjustment on the part of consciousness is required for proper resolution. That normal, waking-consciousness is (essentially) the concrete mind, hopefully inspired and qualified by an alignment with the soul, and hopefully not absorbed by mundane consideration.

The spiritual student is urged to be as accurate as possible (reasonable) in all aspects of life in the lower worlds; in the spoken word, in the written word, in thinking (consciously and unconsciously), and in all belief. The reasons for this are quite simple: to encourage and sustain greater clarity of communication, greater understanding, and closer recognition of truth. Truth (humility)(honesty) (reality) is paramount in the evolution of consciousness; with greater accuracy, some of the problems of illusionary (mundane) existence can be overcome.

Accuracy is defined as relative freedom from mistake or error. It suggests (relative) correctness and conformity to truth. Accuracy also implies carefulness and deliberation in realization, thinking, and expression. Naturally disciplined (inspired) thinking and expression (verbal or written) is a boon to the spiritual student, especially in the sense of manifesting the internal energies (of the silence). Carelessness in thinking, especially when reinforced by carelessness in speech leads to greater dishonesty and continued self-deception. Many persons are so accustomed to the petty, casual lies of mundane experience and expression that they cannot properly discern truth or reality. Thus the illusions of personality-centered existence are sustained and reinforced. But the relatively enlightened student must be careful to realize the relative truth and accuracy of all thoughts and statements generated and thereby contribute more to the cause of good (truth).

One of the real problems of inaccuracy is its tendency to increase in momentum. Small distortions in truth lead to larger distortions. The communication of inaccuracy coupled with the inherent limitations of communication (perception) (interpretation) leads to greater inaccuracy and exaggeration. But what is worse is the effect of inaccuracy, untruth, and exaggeration on unconscious levels. The apparent (superficial)(assumed) validity of all thoughts and statements is absorbed on unconscious levels, so that even a statement known to be false will, usually and in time, be assumed true by the unconscious. This process of self-deception is only one of many problems associated with the habits of illusionary existence, habits which breed continued complication through glamour and illusion.

So the spiritual student should ever seek to be as accurate as possible in all matters. The senses should be trained for clarity and accuracy, as should the entire temperament and personality. Truth should be valued as highly as possible, and honesty and humility should be valued (highly) as aids to the recognition of truth. Since (realized) truth is affected by perception, the mind and the emotions should be clarified. Habits should be examined for their usefulness, and anything that leads to distortion or inaccuracy should be properly transformed. With persistence, the awareness of the student on mundane levels will be heightened and the relative glamour and illusion will be accurately perceived for what it is. The possibility for deception and self-deception will be minimized and the temperament (tendency) toward truth will be encouraged. And the inherent disharmony of inaccuracy will be effectively eliminated.

But all this does not mean that accuracy should be carried to any unreasonable extreme. There are few certainties or absolutes in life, and the limitation of words (and perception) is considerable; so the student should be as accurate as possible (reasonable) but not needlessly so. One can be quite accurate and still be subject to interpretation and the problems of perception. Or in other words, accuracy should not be considered as an end in itself, but rather, accuracy should be considered as a reasonable aid toward the identification of (with) truth and the liberation of humanity from its sea of resistance.

The second tractate of the Second Ennead is entitled the Heavenly Circuit, and considers the abstract existence and motions of the heavens (the soul). The heavens reflect the abstract principles of philosophical existence, and from the heavens may be discerned much concerning the nature of the soul and its universality. One of the most potent of abstract concepts is that of motion.

Physical plane motion includes vibration, translation, rotation, revolution, and progression. Each of these aspects of physical plane (objective) motion has an abstract, subjective counterpart. The soul has no spatial or objective movement. But the soul can animate matter and therefore involve spatial motion; likewise, the movement of heavenly bodies is a matter of appearance (effect)(animation) rather than consciousness (life)(reality). Care must be taken not to confuse physical appearance with levels of causation or reality. The circular movement of the heavens (the cosmos)(the soul) is spatial only incidentally. The real, non-spatial movement is ceaseless, infinite, and unlimited; a movement of self-awareness in the universal sense; a movement of the soul toward itself (the source) in the most encompassing manner; a movement of eternal and never-ending attainment (approach)(refinement), with only relative degrees of fulfillment to mark the various cycles of reflection (activity) and evolution.

The need for such (abstract) motion is inherent within the nature of life and manifestation. Being (existence) requires motion (vibration)(ceaseless flux); life is movement, the reflected energy of manifestation. Without motion (in the abstract sense), there would be no life or consciousness; and without motion (in the concrete sense), there would be no objective existence on physical, emotional, or mental levels. Consciousness requires interaction, the communication (movement)(exchange) of energy (information). But motion (on both abstract and concrete levels) is opposed (balanced) by inertia (friction)(moderation); otherwise there would be no purpose and no possibility of progression or achievement (expansion of consciousness). Thus time and space (in the lower sense) and motion and being (in the higher sense) are distinctly related to cosmic purpose. Motion (in the abstract sense) is the eternal attainment, the advance toward perfection (universality).

That advance is one of circular (spherical)(abstract) existence and the simultaneous movement of the soul inward toward the center (source) of existence and outward toward the same (inverted) center of existence (as that center is drawn toward the focus of the soul and as the focus of the soul expands). The soul is that advance, an impulse of self-awareness and imperative mobility, a gravitation toward the God (source) of its being. That abstract and subjective advance contrasts sharply with that of the animated form which knows only forthright movement. The soul remains in the repose of relative stability (the ordered synthesis of ceaseless vibration), while the animated form (personality) experiences the limitations of time and space. The movement of the soul is one of grace; the movement of the form is one of intermittent translation. But an aspect of the soul remains localized with that animated form, overshadowing the objective existence and experience, while the essence of the soul persists at rest, in the motion (tendency) toward perfection.

The most obvious example of this heavenly circuit can be found within atomic existence (the existence of life within a self-turning atomic sphere). The soul is an atomic sphere of considerable order, while the greater soul (the cosmos) is an atomic sphere on its own level. The motion (distributed energy) of atomic existence is not really spatial (or temporal) but statistical and abstract.

Geography is a science that deals with the earth and its life, with emphasis on the description of land, sea, air, and the distribution of plant and animal life; or in other words, a study and description of the surface phenomena of the earth. The spiritual student may very well be interested in the origin of the various surface phenomena of the earth and their relationships to consciousness and the pattern of evolution.

The geography of the earth is substantially related to consciousness, both from the standpoint of evolutionary purpose and from the standpoint of the continued interaction of geographical phenomena with consciousness. The basic geography of the earth is an effect of consciousness, created to form the material foundation of planetary manifestation for evolutionary purposes in time and space. Many interrelated lifewaves pass through the experience of living on or near the earth's surface, and their evolution of consciousness interacts with the geography of the earth in a rather dynamic way. The major lifewaves concerned with the geography of the earth correspond to the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom, and the human kingdom. In addition, the deva or angelic lifewave is heavily involved in consciousness and is related to each of the other kingdoms and lifewaves.

The mineral kingdom provides the basic material framework for objective manifestation. The distribution of mineral lives is related to long-term planetary objectives. The mineral lives evolve very slowly and provide a stable physical basis for the more frequent cycles of higher lives. The plant lives evolve quite slowly, but interact with the higher lives more directly than the mineral lives. The forms of the plant kingdom provide sustenance for higher life forms (as food for animal and human forms) and the chemical processes of the plant kingdom interact directly with the biosphere of the earth. Plant forms are distributed according to the relatively short-term needs and objectives of planetary manifestation. The higher life-forms (animal and human) are quite mobile and have relatively rapid cycles of activity. The animal and human forms move about on the surface of the planet according to the immediate needs of consciousness. But each of these lifewaves (and their kingdoms) is integrated into the larger framework of planetary experience and energy relationships.

The human life-forms are especially sensitive to changes in consciousness. There are many forms of qualified energy distributed in various ways across the planetary surface. Human forms congregate in various places and serve various functions according to particular needs of energy, consciousness, and karma (on its various levels). The diversification of human lives through various geographical and political regions depends very much on consciousness. Each geographical area (broad or localized as the case may be) has an associated energy character or character of consciousness. Each country, state, region, district, city, town, etc. is qualified in terms of life and consciousness, and the inhabitants relate directly to these conditions.

Such factors as climate, weather, terrain, population character and density, economic purpose, earth changes, etc. are all related to various planetary centers of energy and paths of energy distribution. The entire conglomeration of planetary life-forms constitutes a planet-wide network of evolutionary energies on various levels. Each place provides specialized conditions needed or appropriate to the advancement or development of consciousness. And through the evolutionary pattern, forces of karma, and dynamic magnetic phenomena, the various life-forms are drawn into the needed places, circumstances, and conditions.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 219 - KARMA

The law of karma is one of the most fundamental of evolutionary principles, if not the most significant force for evolution. Karma is the law of cause and effect, of action and consequence. As such, karma is the force which sustains the activity of manifestation, allowing divine purpose to be served. Without karma there would be no motion or movement, no vibration, no activity, no life at all in the lower worlds; for in the fundamental sense, karma is the force of manifestation itself, the force (system of forces) which ties all of manifestation together as a means of experience and expression. Karma therefore promotes evolution and gives meaning to all of experience.

Basically, karma provides the urge toward evolution and enlightenment by serving as a superpersonal teacher to each life, creating the experience and lessons and circumstances needed for the advancement of that life. From another point of view, equally valid, karma is simply the unresolved or unfulfilled personal force (or energy). For every action there is a sending forth of energy which must be resolved or fulfilled in some way. That force must return to its sender in one form or another, and simultaneously give meaning to the cycle of energy. The returning force may be delayed in time and space, and it may be transformed into any of the various forms or levels of force, so that the end result is a meaningful learning experience (or opportunity) for the individual who sent forth the energy in the first place. This process of action and consequence is complicated since each person is continually sending forth energies to be fulfilled and those energies are superimposed (and interactive) to create a continuous stream of returning energy. Thus karma is said to be the sum total of all unresolved personal energy at any given moment in time.

Karma is therefore a complicated and dynamic interaction of a continuous stream of causes (action) and effects (consequence). Furthermore, if a particular aspect of unresolved energy could be isolated, it would be seen to be modified in time by subsequent causes (experience). A particular consequence, for example, might be lessened or modified as a result of newly acquired understanding. Karma is not merely retribution for action; it is meaningful (earned) and serves evolutionary purposes. If a particular lesson is learned, there is no need for further consequence and the energy is fulfilled. The majority of karmic energy (effects) is received and assimilated unconsciously. As the spiritual student advances in awareness and consciousness, the process becomes more conscious and much more rapid. When an individual realizes he is responsible for all of his own actions, then the karmic process becomes much more potent, since the learning process is more direct as action and consequence is properly associated.

But in the early going (the lifetimes prior to being placed upon the spiritual path), an individual sends forth far more energy (causes) than can possibly be fulfilled at the same rate or even during the same lifetime. Therefore, each individual accumulates karma during most lifetimes, working off as much as possible according to the degree of experience and consciousness attained. As the individual evolves, it becomes possible to assimilate experience more readily and the accumulated (earned) karma can be resolved or fulfilled at a greater rate. The turning point comes when the individual consciously begins to moderate or discipline his actions, so that the vast stream of unconsciously generated forces is tempered by intelligence and discretion. Ultimately, at some point along the spiritual path of conscious evolution, the student works off (fulfills) the last of the accumulated karmic force, and from that point onward karma is fulfilled at approximately the same rate that it is generated.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 220 - MEDITATION AND THE SEVEN RAYS

Before the student can consciously, intelligently, and safely evoke the energies of any of the seven rays, the student must have a reasonably thorough understanding of each of the rays and their relationships with each other, and the student must be in reasonably good control of his own faculties (with an understanding of his own strengths and weaknesses). Once the student has achieved a basic understanding of the seven rays, it becomes prudent for the student to contemplate and study each of the rays via meditation.

The student should begin by studying each of the rays in turn, and each of the keywords for a particular ray, one at a time, so that the various keywords are understood and consciously (and unconsciously) associated with the appropriate ray. Then the various keywords for a particular ray should be associated with each other. Once this has been done for each of the rays, the student should meditate on each ray (in turn) as inclusively as possible, considering the nature and character or qualification of the ray as a particular type of energy. As this form of meditation is achieved, the student is actually evoking the energy contemplated, with nominal intensity, so that the student is actually learning to function with that particular energy.

The next step is for the student to study and contemplate the relationships that exist between the various rays (planes)(kingdoms)(cycles), since it is not really safe to work with a particular ray without understanding its relationships. In working with a particular ray, there will usually be effects along other lines (via relationships) that should be taken into consideration (by the responsible student). The student can easily and unnecessarily complicate his life by working with energies before they are fully understood, and since the student is held accountable for his actions (and the effects of evoked energies), he is wise to proceed slowly and cautiously. When the relationships among the rays are understood, and when the student has mastered his control of the nominal energies, those ray energies can be evoked and guided toward useful, constructive purposes.

Each of the rays has essentially unlimited application for its energy. The student can evoke a particular ray energy during meditation and channel it wisely toward almost any useful application. The rays may be used internally for purposes of personality cultivation and refinement; for the development of needed qualities; for more perfect integration and alignment; and for deeper understanding of life and consciousness. The rays may also be used externally, being sent forth in conscious support of humanitarian or spiritual activity. As the spiritual student progresses, he is expected to contribute more and more to evolutionary patterns. When the student becomes adept at working with the various ray energies, those energies will be naturally and automatically evoked as needed throughout the activities of life in the lower worlds, whether the student is fully conscious of that current process or not.

The student then becomes a potent channel for the distribution of many subtle energies; he interacts consciously and subconsciously with his environment without being absorbed by it, and that interaction is ever one of sharing energy wherever it is needed, without thought of self. The student should never be at a loss for energy, so long as he is properly polarized and sincere about his work. The student who lacks the basic alignment of mind and soul, who fails to achieve the necessary humility (prior to evocation) will have problems. But, as long as the head-centered nature (of invocation and application of the rays) is subordinated to the heart (the soul or higher self), the student should find no real difficulty in working with and controlling the various ray energies.