



# THE UPPER TRIAD

SET NUMBER 13

Commentaries on the Esoteric Philosophy

- No. 241 - The Superficial Mind
- No. 242 - The Second Ennead (7)
- No. 243 - Types of Ashrams
- No. 244 - Ashramic Work
- No. 245 - Peacefulness
- No. 246 - The Second Ennead (8)
- No. 247 - Keywords
- No. 248 - The Subjective Work
- No. 249 - Communication
- No. 250 - The Second Ennead (9)
- No. 251 - Keywords and the Seven Rays
- No. 252 - Mass Consciousness
- No. 253 - Infinity
- No. 254 - The Third Ennead (1)
- No. 255 - Keywords and Triangles
- No. 256 - Self-Consciousness
- No. 257 - Conformity
- No. 258 - The Third Ennead (2)
- No. 259 - Autism
- No. 260 - Group Consciousness

## THE UPPER TRIAD

The Upper Triad is a journal of metaphysical, theosophical, and esoteric philosophy. The journal is published monthly by the Upper Triad Association, a tax-exempt nonprofit philosophical society.

The Upper Triad is distributed free of charge to any interested persons. This work is financed entirely by voluntary contributions. Contributions in support of the journal are applied toward actual printing and mailing expenses. There are no paid staff members. All contributions are tax-deductible.

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

THE UPPER TRIAD  
P.O. BOX 1370  
MANASSAS, VIRGINIA 22110 U.S.A.

(USA)

### 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. 241 - THE SUPERFICIAL MIND

The superficial mind is that aspect of the mind with which most of humanity are familiar. But the mind itself is vastly greater and much more complicated than its superficial interface with the objective world. The superficial mind is the waking-consciousness that functions as the focus of the mind; the external surface of a much deeper (potent) instrument. The superficial mind (as a mental focus) may be active on virtually any level or dimension of the mind depending on the training and mental capabilities of the student. The waking-consciousness usually resides in the concrete (lower)(objective) mind where ordinary thought-forms are created and projected. In the case of the spiritual student, the waking-consciousness resides increasingly on abstract (higher)(subjective)(relatively boundless) mental levels, where actual thought-forms can only exist in terms of quality.

Another way of viewing the superficial mind (waking-consciousness) is to relate it to the two depths of mental activity: the superconscious and the subconscious. The superconscious (superior) mind is that which exists above and beyond the normal waking-consciousness, while the subconscious (inferior) mind is that which exists below the threshold of normal thinking. The superficial mind remains the focus of the mind, where the mind is brought to bear on some object, whether well-defined (sharply focussed) or otherwise (relatively) vague. The concrete mind and the abstract mind are fixed in terms of purpose and level of consciousness. The superconscious mind and the subconscious mind (as aspects of the mind) are relative because they depend on the nature of the waking-consciousness, which is itself a floating focus (rather than a fixed focus).

The subconscious mind usually includes much of the concrete mind and serves as an unconscious, programmable interface with both heredity and environment. The superconscious mind usually includes part of the concrete mind and most of the abstract mind, and serves as the correlational mind and as an interface with the soul. The familiar waking-consciousness is only a small (trivial) fraction of the true individuality and mental being. The subconscious (mostly concrete) mind is completely programmable and is usually programmed (unfortunately) carelessly and unconsciously through habit. Much energy can be expended (wasted) through unconscious (subconscious)(subterranean) thinking of a mundane (useless or unnecessary) nature. Once this is realized, the student should endeavor to qualify the subconscious experience and learn how to access information or experience gathered unconsciously (whether programmed or otherwise).

Furthermore, the increasingly enlightened student should also begin to work more closely with the superconscious mind, for it too, can be programmed (though the process is far more delicate (refined) than is the case for the lower mind). The student is urged to (learn to) meditate effectively (truly, without a specific objective or focus), whereby the waking-consciousness can look into the great depths of both subconscious and superconscious levels. Considerable understanding (and self-mastery) can be achieved by studying these aspects of the mind, through the practice of holding the mind steady in the light. The subterranean patterns can be thereby revealed and can therefore be restored to more practical purposes. And superconscious abilities can be tapped for even greater effectiveness. But the student must learn and acquire a considerable amount of self-control, and the mind must be held steady or it (the waking-consciousness) will remain superficial. The waking-consciousness that can clearly reveal the great depths of mental and spiritual (internal) existence is superficial no more, but functions at will through the depths of being.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 242 - THE SECOND ENNEAD (7)

The seventh tractate of the Second Ennead is entitled 'Complete Transfusion.' Plotinus considers the nature of the complete transfusion of material substance as a prelude to understanding the spiritual transformation of the human personality. The concept of transfusion is contrasted sharply with that of mixing. In the mixing of two or more elements or compounds there is a simple combination of components, with each component retaining its separate existence. The volume (potency) of the product of mixed substances depends on the degree of interpenetration (keeping in mind the vast relative spaces between atoms and molecules), and therefore a reduction or increase in volume does not necessarily indicate a more serious process of transformation or transfusion.

A complete admixture is merely a juxtaposition (mutual, lateral coexistence) of components without any real interaction. Transformation implies the passing from one molecular or energy state to another, and this process may or may not be reversible. But the product of such transformation is merely the same substance in a different form or manifestation. Another concept is that of diffusion (permeation), in which one or more elements are diffused in another (and lost in the sense that the energy is not easily recovered), resulting in a (relatively) permanent modification. That modification may be incidental or highly significant (resulting in an entirely new product) depending on the magnitude and type of interaction (mutual influence).

The complete transfusion of material substance always results in a new product, though it may involve a (relatively) permanent qualification or polarization of elements. Transfusion implies considerable interaction, the coalescence (fusion) of elements into a new, independent existence. The primary distinction between mixing and transfusion is that in mixing the elements are separable and independent, while in transfusion the elements are inseparable and interdependent. The concept of transformation is an intermediate concept, between mixing and transfusion, which simply implies a modification of energy levels.

Each of these concepts pertaining to material substance can also be applied to personality refinement. The personality is actually energized (vitalized) matter on physical, etheric, emotional, and concrete mental levels. Consequently, the personality in its various aspects can experience subtle mixing, transformation, and even transfusion, for the quality or character of the personality depends upon the quality or character (qualification)(polarization) of the matter of which it is constituted. And that matter can be highly interactive and dynamic with respect to the environment, the impression of higher energies, and/or the modification of internal energy levels in general. Mixing is a process that usually describes the relationship of the aura to the immediate environment (since the aura is usually somewhat open). If the aura is not properly regulated and controlled by the mind-soul, then the aura will normally experience (some) adverse mixing and some transformation of energy levels (the emotional body, for example, can be stimulated to various energy (vibration) levels by external influence). The same can also be induced internally.

But the complete transfusion of the personality suggests a process and experience of far more serious magnitude and consequence. For in the transfusion of the personality, the soul transforms the qualification and polarization of the (matter of the) personality to greater, more spiritually potent levels, and this process passes beyond mere (reversible) transformation, to a new and different (improved)(highly refined) state of responsiveness (and temperament), in which the personality is infused with the quality and potency of the soul itself.

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 243 - TYPES OF ASHRAMS

Esoterically, an ashram is the energy center of an esoteric group. In a slightly broader sense, the ashram and the esoteric group are virtually synonymous due to the influence the ashram has on the group itself. Each ashram (or esoteric group) is composed of a number of souls so interrelated that the group exists (on soul levels) as a coherent whole, an organism having its own quality and character of energy. In the broadest sense, the lifewave (humanity) is a great ashram of souls. So, too, are each of the seven streams of souls (allied closely with the seven rays) considered great ashrams. But an ashram in the more specific, esoteric sense is a group of relatively enlightened souls conscious as a group and having some particular purpose or assignment in terms of solar or planetary evolution.

Not all souls belong to or are affiliated with ashrams (in this esoteric sense); in fact, (relatively) very few are so associated, for so very few have fulfilled the basic requirements (of experience and achievement resulting in quality) and can function constructively in such a conscious merger of identity (on subjective levels). As the student progresses sufficiently, he is naturally and magnetically attracted to an appropriate ashram. There are basically two types of ashrams, each having its own fundamental rules for admission. The majority of ashrams are organized horizontally within a broad vertical structure of ashrams within ashrams, along ray lines. Each ashram (of the horizontal type) is limited to a relatively narrow range of consciousness. As the members of such an ashram progress, they naturally pass on into the next higher ashram within their ray structure and according to their particular needs and qualifications. Thus, the horizontally-polarized ashrams are relatively dynamic from the standpoint of membership. Graduates of this hierarchial structure pass on into even greater (extraplanetary) levels of expression.

The other type of ashram is vertically-polarized and enfolds a wide range of consciousness, and is also usually organized along ray lines, but with some historical or karmic significance. The karma or history of such a group usually can be traced either to a group of souls of similar character who individualized together, or to a group of souls of similar character who entered into (or were transferred to) an evolutionary pattern (lifewave) together. Such a group will contain those souls (members) who are enlightened (and consequently fully conscious on group levels) as well as those who are not (yet) enlightened but who are affiliated anyway due to the original karma (genesis) of the group. Such affiliation definitely serves as a magnetic force of encouragement, so that the members are usually drawn early onto the spiritual path. In contrast to the horizontally-polarized ashrams, the vertically-polarized ashrams allow for considerable progression within the same (relative) group of souls. Such is not the case for the more specialized (horizontally-polarized) groups.

The basic requirements for conscious assimilation (incorporation) into an ashram are the same regardless of type: the candidate must be well-established on the path of discipleship and have passed at least the first few major tests of consciousness. In earlier days, the requirements were less stringent, so that aspirants and probationary disciples could be assimilated, but the path evolves and the relative standing (assignments) of an ashram evolve also. Nevertheless, those who are progressing in discipleship are naturally attracted to the appropriate ashram (depending on ray type, temperament, experience, qualification, etc.) and even the vertically-polarized ashrams have been known to accept new members who do not share in the original karma.

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 244 - ASHRAMIC WORK

Both horizontally-polarized ashrams and vertically-polarized ashrams may be manifested or unmanifested (though vertically-polarized ashrams are more likely to be manifested). A manifested ashram is one whose sphere of influence extends as low as the lower (concrete) mental plane. No ashram (in the esoteric sense) extends below the mental plane onto emotional or physical levels). A manifested ashram can therefore establish linkage with the minds of its members (workers) (representatives) who are in incarnation (provided they are responsive). An unmanifested ashram does not extend as low as the concrete mental plane, and depending on its character, may not even extend as low as the buddhic plane. Consequently, members of unmanifested ashrams who happen to be in incarnation are usually assigned temporary affiliations, always in a spirit of helpfulness and cooperation, for the greater ashram synthesizes all of the lesser into one coherent whole. Certain ashrams may manifest cyclically as needed.

The work assigned to a particular ashram (or group of ashrams) depends usually on the nature, qualification, and capability of the ashram and its relationship to the character of the work. The ashramic work proper is performed almost exclusively on subjective levels (abstract mental and beyond) and usually involves some form of energy manipulation. That energy manipulation may include reception, transformation, clarification, qualification, modification, distribution, and/or transmission. Each ashram is particularly qualified by one or more of the seven rays, (usually by a primary ray and a secondary ray) and these rays provide the ashram with specific capabilities. The members of the ashram are particularly adept (trained and experienced) in working with the specific (assigned) energies, and they work as a single, coherent, group-conscious organism.

The togetherness implied in ashramic work actually means the merging of consciousness in the group qualification and the playing of dynamic and interactive roles. This by no means implies that these members (souls) function in any objective sense (except by reflection as personalities if they are in incarnation) (but the personalities are not (cannot be) directly involved in the ashramic work (which is limited to soul levels)). As souls the members are interactive on soul levels, without the incapacity of lacking proper preparation (as is the case of the majority of souls), and en rapport to such an extent (subjectively) that there is virtually no awareness of objective manifestation. Besides, ashramic work (proper) does not really pertain to the outer, externalized instruments (personalities), except in the sense that these energies are ultimately passed on to the workers in incarnation and freely distributed on practical levels. The enlightened personalities (if any) do serve a purpose, but it is not equivalent or synonymous with the real (subjective) work of the ashram.

Ashramic work is primarily an extension and fulfilment of hierarchial work and the consciousness of the Planetary Logos (and to a certain extent of the Solar Logos and other planetary logoi). Hierarchial work pertains to the overall evolution of consciousness within the planetary scheme, and with some emphasis on human evolution. There is considerable collaboration with the higher-order deva (angelic) lives and to a certain extent with the group consciousness of mineral, plant, and animal lives. But much of the work involves humanity and the transformation of energy from both internal (planetary) and external (extra-planetary) sources and its liberation (application) for constructive purposes. The hierarchial work deals with these various energies on a rather broad scale (and involves generalized plans), while ashramic work is concerned with the particulars of energy distribution and with specific work (usually along ray lines).

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 245 - PEACEFULNESS

One of the accomplishments expected of the spiritual student (aspirant) from the probationary (preliminary spiritual) work is the attainment of peacefulness, both in the sense of inner peace and in the sense of outer peace. This moderate characteristic of peacefulness implies a state of tranquillity or quiet, freedom from disturbance (disorder), freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions, and harmony in personal relations. This peacefulness also suggests a disposition (temperament)(personality) characterized as calm, friendly, moderate, and pacific; devoid of violence or force, and disposed naturally toward peace. But this peacefulness should also be a dynamic, though moderate characteristic, allowing qualified progress and avoiding the inertial peacefulness (inactivity).

The need for peacefulness (and especially with respect to dynamic peacefulness) is derived from the nature of objective existence and the natural, human tendency of response to that objective environment. One of the most basic aspects of objective existence (manifestation) is pressure. There is pressure implied in the very framework of existence; there is the pressure of physical manifestation (were that pressure removed the objective universe would cease to exist); there is the ever-present atmospheric pressure (and all that that implies); there is the pressure of population; and there is the overall (substantial) pressure of evolution itself. In each case, pressure is a natural condition that leads to tension; and tension is a state (experience) that leads ultimately to a release of pressure (force). And in that release of pressure is intended the progress (learning)(development)(experience) needed. That release of tension implies adjustment (response) to the particular circumstances (as well as an overall disposition which supplies the response).

The release of tension may occur in any number of ways, with effects (apparently) ill or good as the case may be. The human (personality) tendency is to react to pressure (tension)(confrontation) in an extreme (uncontrolled)(excessive) fashion, with considerable mental or emotional force (and in some cases even physical force). The extreme of violence (whether it be on physical, emotional, or mental levels) is the most uncontrolled (undisciplined)(unworthy) response. The reactionary (personal)(extreme) tendencies of the personality should be transformed into intelligent (moderate)(controllable) responses, where the lesson of the experience can be learned more effectively, and where the independence of the lower self can be uplifted (transformed) into alignment with the spiritual self. The attainment of peacefulness is one of the steps leading to a balanced and spiritually responsive personality. With the proper (natural) disposition (peacefulness), pressure (tension) can be faced in a mature fashion, and the tension can be released quite constructively.

The outer peace should embrace harmony in all human relations, or at the very least (since the response or repose of others cannot necessarily be determined) a sincere and healthy goodwill toward all persons, regardless of their disposition or feelings. This moderate and dynamic peacefulness should be an encouragement to others and contribute (externally) to the overall working out of the evolutionary plan. In rejecting the use of force can be found a considerable (spiritual) strength for human progress, but that pacific realization includes the sublimation of mental and emotional forcefulness as well as physical patience. The accomplishment of outer peace (peacefulness) complements the simultaneous accomplishment of inner peace. In inner peace is found the spiritual self (reality) and the spiritual potency needed for self-transformation, leading ultimately to the latter stages of the path and increased (more effective) service to humanity.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 246 - THE SECOND ENNEAD (8)

One of the shorter, but more potent of Plotinus' commentaries is the eighth tractate of the Second Ennead, entitled 'Why Distant Objects Appear Small.' Plotinus takes what might otherwise be considered a rather trivial subject and challenges the very (apparent) reality of objective, three-dimensional existence. It seems quite obvious that distant objects appear reduced in size (magnitude) and close together (less distinct). And in purely physical terms one can easily and satisfactorily explain (rationalize) the phenomenon of diminution. But in philosophical (and metaphysical) terms, the problem is not so easily dismissed, and the physical solution is clearly inadequate.

The problem of three-dimensional (spatial) recession (diminution) involves four conceptual problems: distance, objectivity, perception, and magnitude. In spatial terms, distance implies the extent of separation between two points or objects. And in the three-dimensional spatial (physical) universe, distance is easily measured and assumed to be a function of physical reality. But distance (the interval between an observer and some observed object) assumes the existence of an intervening space, and in the higher reality of consciousness, space is merely a conceptual existence, and the three ordinary dimensions of voluminous experience are easily overcome (as spatial existence is recognized as having no intrinsic reality). In consciousness, any space serves no intervention; there can be no spatial separation (in the greater reality of consciousness).

Objective existence, likewise, has little basis in consciousness. An object is something capable of being seen, touched, or otherwise sensed. Or in other words, the reality (existence) of any object depends entirely on sense perception. Sense perception in itself is a function of objective (illusionary) existence. Thus the reality (appearance) of any object depends upon observation, the medium and method, the perspective, and the interpretation of sense impressions. Furthermore, the perception of any object depends upon spatial parameters and the magnitude of the observation (as opposed to the magnitude of the object). An object may be viewed microscopically or macroscopically, and the appearance (and subsequent conclusions) may differ dramatically. Thus the spatial existence of any object is questionable, as is any process of perception, colored as it is by intention and consciousness.

And even if an object has some apparent existence that can be perceived from some apparent distance, there remains the problem of size (magnitude)(mass)(bulk) (extent). The reality of an objective magnitude (intensity) extends onto subjective (energy) levels, though the physical magnitude has little significance; for the physical magnitude depends again on spatial reality and the perception of that quality. For a distant object to appear small is a consequence of the apparent (illusionary) nature. For an object may appear large or small according to the position (perspective) of the observer, and truly there can be no absolute magnitude (size) for any object, since magnitude itself is a relative quality. Objective measurement is an interesting exercise, even necessary to objective experience, but of futile value in any (higher) subjective sense.

The reduction of apparent magnitude upon recession is actually not a function of distance but a function of changing perspective. In consciousness, the perspective can be changed without any physical or spatial movement. Magnitude is known only incidentally, by virtue of perception and the interpretation in consciousness that perception implies. The process of diminution is hardly worth attention, yet it does serve as a means of focus for the discernment of appearance and quality (consciousness)(a higher reality).

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 247 - KEYWORDS

Keywords are an important part of philosophical study, and used intelligently can lead the student to a much deeper, more effective understanding of the ancient and eternal wisdom. A keyword is literally a word that serves as a key or device, a means of gaining or preventing knowledge and understanding. A keyword exemplifies the meaning or value of a particular idea, concept, or relationship; a keyword indicates a thread or chain of philosophical (abstract) or scientific (concrete)(rational)(analytical) thought.

Keywords are symbols that represent a considerable amount of relatable information. In one sense, keywords overcome much of the limitation of language, for keywords contain (relate)(potentially) much more information than any verbal description or elaboration in itself (apart from keywords). Each keyword has an associated (intrinsic) energy (philosophical) value, an energy of some basic (fundamental) significance. Keywords are clues, uncluttered by verbiage, that indicate and implicate meanings by association and correspondence with other keywords and the ideas and concepts that they represent.

Keywords arise (derive) from the underlying philosophical (and scientific) framework of universal manifestation, from the grand (natural)(precursory) philosophical system that represents universal manifestation (life, quality, and appearance)(spirit, consciousness, and matter) in all its glory (systematic detail). That philosophical system is eternal (dynamic) and exists beyond language; it consists of the basic ideas and the subsequent or consequent details and relationships which can (in turn) be assigned symbols (keywords) or representation in any language. But keywords pass beyond definitions and semantics, for the energy of a keyword is a deeper matter than the word itself. Language serves merely to introduce the concrete mind to the particular thought-forms which lead (in turn) to deeper realization (understanding). Definitions and semantics are only the (superficial) beginning; as more and more relationships are recognized, the greater (deeper) is the meaning embraced.

But without that philosophical system in the first place, keywords would have no intrinsic energy. The energy arises from association, from the deliberate (natural) attribution of a keyword to a particular thread of energy. The system simply ties all (meaningful) threads (ideas) together in a universal (interrelated) fashion. When the (enlightened or responsive) student embraces the body of knowledge that the system represents, any or every aspect of that philosophical system is available (potentially). First the student must develop the capacity for understanding and the ability to embrace the energy of the esoteric philosophy (the system)(body of knowledge). Then it is a simple matter of evocation using the various (selected) keywords to guide the mind in its love (inclusion) of truth (reality).

The important (necessary) human link in this matter is the abstract mind of the soul and its healthy relationship to a well-developed (trained and subordinate) concrete mind. It is the abstract mind that bridges the gap between knowledge and general (universal) understanding. The vision must necessarily be broad-minded, for infinite are the number of relationships that exist between the (selected) keywords. A narrow (closed)(predominantly concrete) mind will be unable to incorporate the associations and correspondences necessary to understanding. But the properly prepared mind can gradually improve its capacity and philosophical capability, as the keywords are studied and (especially) as the relationships between keywords are recognized. The set of keywords simply provides an index (simplification) to the entire philosophical system.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 248 - THE SUBJECTIVE WORK

The subjective work along ashramic lines can be compared and contrasted with the combination of objective and subjective work of the mind-soul in incarnation. As souls, the enlightened of humanity are involved in ashramic or hierarchial work. As mind-souls in incarnation, the various workers (aspirants and disciples) are responsible for applying or manifesting the ashramic energies on more concrete levels and thereby assisting in the distribution and fulfilment of the needed energies. The souls involved in the ashramic work proper cannot serve this particular function because they are not externalized (and are not able to function on concrete levels because they are committed to higher work) and because, as souls, they are prohibited from working directly with the minds of men (there are considerable karmic and evolutionary reasons to support this prohibition). Consequently, they depend on the aspirants and disciples in incarnation to fulfil the needed extension and application of their energies.

Unmanifested ashrams work entirely on higher levels without recourse to concrete mental levels, while manifested ashrams do function to some degree on concrete mental levels and are therefore able to impress the minds of their responsive and respective workers. This process of qualification parallels the general release of these energies for all of humanity. The mind-souls in incarnation facilitate the sharing of energy simply by virtue of their presence within humanity; by responding to the subjective energies (consciously or unconsciously) the aspirants and disciples of the world establish subjective patterns of response and assimilation for others to follow (unconsciously, in response to the mental atmosphere). Thus the embodiment and sharing of these energies by cooperative and responsive spiritual students is a very potent force of encouragement for all of humanity. Workers in incarnation have greater freedom for the application of these energies than their subjective counterparts, because workers in incarnation share directly in the karma and immediate consciousness of humanity. Such would not be the case for energies imposed from external sources.

Much of the subjective work of the spiritual student is performed unconsciously or during meditation. A great deal of work may be accomplished during sleep, when the mind-aura is free from the confines and limitations of the lesser body. A great deal of work may be accomplished unconsciously through the aura, simply through the presence of a spiritually potent consciousness. The student who walks in the light and love is forever sharing these energies subjectively whether the student is aware of it or not. And during meditation, the spiritual student can link up with the subjective energies directly, better qualify himself for their useful application, and consciously begin sharing these energies by projection. The enlightened student still declines to interfere or impose these energies upon others (no matter how great the apparent need), but rather, the student will make these energies available to all who need (and who are also receptive and responsive).

The subjective work of the spiritual student should complement and supplement the objective work. The effectiveness of the student is enhanced considerably by the extent and duration to which the student is fully aligned with the soul, and conversely detracted considerably by the extent to which the student is absorbed by personality (mundane) matters. Thus the student is always encouraged to maintain his spiritual repose (alignment)(consciousness) regardless of involvement in objective matters, to perform the needed work, whether it is subjective or objective, spiritual or necessarily mundane, but without absorption in glamour and without distraction in the personality.

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 249 - COMMUNICATION

Communication is the process by which information (meaning)(energy) is exchanged between focal points of consciousness, through some common means or system of symbols. The process requires an originator (precursor)(sender), a message (energy), and a recipient (and usually includes feedback). The originator and recipient, as focal points of consciousness, must each be polarized in some common way, or at least have some common ground of experience, in order for understanding to occur. Effective communication implies the accurate understanding of the intended message.

The least effective communication occurs between separated units of consciousness. Separated units of consciousness must rely on discrete means of communication, subject to inaccuracies (misunderstanding) at every stage of the process: the limitations of language, the utilization of words (symbols) that mean different things to different people, the problem of interpretation (and the bias of expectation), and the various problems of personality-centered experience. Such communication (between separated units) can be improved by the establishment of a common basis (foundation) of communication: a common core of experience, familiarity, honesty, openness, and sincerity.

The most effective communication occurs between focal points of consciousness which experience deep, subjective, intrinsic rapport and a harmony of integrated fields (of consciousness)(harmoniously integrated auras, regardless of distance or apparent separation). If direct, rational, and coherent communication can be (first)(properly) established (in the objective sense), based on mutual trust and objective understanding, then that process of communication can be enhanced (and ultimately transcended) by more subjective factors in consciousness. Then the exchange of information can be enhanced by the energy of the exchange and the subjective rapport that exists (as a consequence) between the respective minds (hearts)(souls)(units of consciousness).

Ultimately, a telepathic rapport can be developed which embraces a continuous exchange of energy, with or without conscious involvement. The exchange of a discrete, objective message (energy) then simply strengthens (confirms) the energy link between the centers (units) of consciousness, and allows stronger, more subjective energies to flow. In the case of the evolving spiritual student, it is essential for the student to overcome the impediments of the personality in order to achieve effective (unprejudiced) communication. Reactionary tendencies must be transformed into intelligent and intentional (meaningful and reasonable) responses. The fear and vanity of the personality must be properly overcome or eliminated, to allow for unbiased interpretation and more complete understanding. The tendency of the mind to make personality-centered assumptions must also be overcome, for a considerable misunderstanding can arise where implications are exaggerated, distorted, or misinterpreted along personal lines. A complete dedication to truth and honesty in all matters can substantially enhance the communication process.

The process of communication (energy transfer) can occur horizontally (between units of consciousness on the same plane or of the same relative magnitude) or vertically (between units of consciousness on different planes or of different relative magnitude). The communication of the macrocosm with its microcosm is paralleled by man's communication with the lesser lives of his own constitution and with the energies (lives)(forms) within nature. A considerable volume of communication exists within the framework of human experience, of which only a small portion is realized or involved consciously.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 250 - THE SECOND ENNEAD (9)

One of the more comprehensive of Plotinus' commentaries is the last (ninth) tractate of the Second Ennead. It clarifies the basic principles of the esoteric philosophy, in response to and in contrast with certain teachings of other philosophical schools. Plotinus begins by affirming the simplicity (essential, primal nature) of the trinity. The three primary rays (principles) are referred to as the Good (the One)(the First), the Soul (consciousness)(interaction), and the Intellectual Principle (mind)(creative intelligence), respectively.

There are only these three (major) principles (primals), from which all else is derived. The nature of each of the three primals determines all (secondary) distinction. The One (the first aspect) is the absolute primary. The soul (the second aspect) constitutes a middle ground of consciousness (quality) between divinity (the monad)(the Good) and the lower sphere of the less noble (personality). The measure of the soul's potency is the degree of its absorption in contemplation of divine (subjective)(monadic) existence. That greater vision may be impaired to the extent of the soul's involvement in (attachment to) the lower self. Thus by no means implies any objective involvement, but suggests a subjective dependency on the integrated experience of the personality. The more potent (well-developed, experienced, older) soul is absorbed by the greater yet able to transmit (subjective) energy (illumination)(guidance) to its less noble self (the personality), while the less potent (younger, less experienced) soul is distracted somewhat by the (need for) experience of the lesser self.

The second aspect (the soul in its broader sense and group context)(the All-soul)(over-soul) provides for the communication of light energy from the higher levels to the lower, depending on the receptiveness (and intelligence) of the lower forms (and lives). Even matter (at the extreme (conclusion) of the unbroken chain linking lesser lives with the greater) receives, assimilates, and reflects some light energy. In collaboration with the third aspect (light), the second aspect (love) is also involved in the divine (creative) process. This process (stimulated by the light energy) embraces manifestation (differentiation), externalization (creative activity), and ascension (integration).

The greater soul is sovereign (with respect to the lesser) and immune to the distraction of lesser matters. The life of the personality is derived from the soul; that (personal) life is terminable, while the soul continues eternally (in principle). The higher is not bound to the lower; the conditions of the lower are not communicated to the higher; only the quality developed is communicable to the soul. The immortal (the student who has achieved conscious alignment with the soul) is not troubled by material things, has no attachments in the lesser worlds, but accepts his responsibilities and proceeds with the cause of truth (the spiritual path in its group context). The (relatively) more perfect the man, the greater is his humility and compliance (harmony) with the greater life.

The science of invocation, based upon understanding and cooperation with natural forces, has considerable merit; but self-centered (arrogant) invocation replete with various glammers (misunderstanding) has little merit. Creation is not a matter of self-assertion, but one of purposeful cooperation with greater principles. The light of greater existence ever illuminates the lesser, according to the ability of the lesser to recognize truth. Truth stands revealed ever on its own merits; truth requires no assertion. The pursuit of pleasure and personal advantage is inconsistent with the object of life (evolution)(spiritual progress) (goodness)(virtue). In virtue is found the joy of helpfulness (cooperation) in God-centered existence.

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 251 - KEYWORDS AND THE SEVEN RAYS

Every aspect and attribute within the scope (framework) of human experience and beyond is qualified by one or another of the seven (energy) rays. These seven rays (lives) constitute all of manifestation and quite conveniently (naturally) classify (qualify)(organize) all of manifestation into seven fundamental domains. These seven rays can be studied (and understood) by their fundamental and applied nature (properties and characteristics) and by their domain, at least to the extent that the human mind can embrace and associate the various keywords that are naturally assigned to the respective rays.

Thus the seven rays (manifestation) can be understood (by degrees) by studying the various associated keywords and the relationships that exist between the rays through the correlation of keywords. Once a student has mastered the basic concepts involving the seven rays and has accomplished a comprehensive study of the rays (and has achieved a considerable understanding based on a well-developed mind and a balanced ability of discernment), it is a simple matter to recognize any word or concept as it relates to any one or more of the seven rays. Thus even words hitherto uncorrelated can be easily assigned to their proper places within the divine (natural) taxonomy of the seven rays.

However, in the natural assignment (realization) of keywords there are two governing principles: a uniqueness principle and (paradoxically) a conformity (plurality) principle. Each keyword can be uniquely (singularly) assigned to only one ray in the most basic, intrinsic sense. Or in other words, each keyword can be conclusively assigned to its (singularly) natural ray, according to its intrinsic character. But, at the same time, the same keyword can be assigned to each of the remaining six rays, depending on context (implication)(application). Thus, each keyword exists (correlates) in an active sense (in qualifying) as well as in a passive sense (by being qualified singularly). For example, the keyword 'energy' is associated uniquely with the First Ray, in the most basic sense, for the First Ray is the unique aspect (concept) of energy. But each of the seven rays is a particularly qualified energy. Second Ray energy can be distinctly contrasted with Third Ray energy, etc.

Another example is the keyword 'truth' which has a number of aspects or implications, depending on context. Truth in the sense of freedom is clearly within the First Ray domain. Truth in the sense of wisdom is clearly Second Ray. Truth in the purely philosophical sense falls within the Third Ray domain, while truth in the sense of knowledge is more closely associated with the Fifth Ray. Thus, the assignment of a keyword may depend very much on the implication (context). The assignment of keywords is further complicated (by only to a certain extent) by the relationships that exist between the rays, so that a keyword belonging to one ray may also belong to another (by inference) according to the relationship(s) between the rays. Though no limit exists on the number of keywords, the rules (patterns) that determine assignment are relatively few.

The natural order (organization) of universal manifestation into seven streams (categories) of qualified energy provides the underlying potency of keywords in the first place. In understanding the seven rays, the spiritual student can apply the various keywords to any aspect of his experience and learn even more through association (correlation) and integration (since all of manifestation is inter-related). Provided the student avoids arbitrary (personal) assignment and association, and recognizes the natural order (rather than an order of personal (human) origin), the keywords associated with the seven rays can be a considerable tool leading to greater understanding and realization.

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 252 - MASS CONSCIOUSNESS

In the course of human experience, the spiral circuit of evolution leads the lifewave onward and upward through various alternating (parallel) cycles of progressive activity. In a sense, the spiral circuit is a progressive pendulum of activity and inactivity, of active experience (expression) and inactive experience (assimilation). In such a way has humanity progressed from unconsciousness to mass consciousness, leading ultimately through self-consciousness to a greater form of (group) consciousness (on a higher turn of the spiral).

The present state of human consciousness is predominantly mass-centered, with some degree of (limited) self-consciousness. The mass consciousness has its roots in a much earlier (major) cycle in which the present (human) lifewave experienced a consciousness analogous to the animal (mass) consciousness. In the animal kingdom there is no individualized consciousness, no self-awareness, and no independence from the influence of the group entity (the animal group-spirit). As a particular lifewave passes from the animal kingdom into the human kingdom, the group-soul is differentiated into many (localized) units of consciousness. This process is called individualization, and it leads to a limited sense of self-consciousness overshadowed by group instincts.

From the purely animal (mass) consciousness, the various lives within the lifewave pass collectively through various stages of increasing (apparent) independence from the lifewave, as the respective (incarnated) personalities achieve greater self-consciousness. From the predominant animal (species) consciousness, the mass consciousness is gradually transformed into predominantly racial, cultural, social, or national polarizations. But with increasing self-awareness (in the lower, personal sense), the human personality experiences the illusion of self-consciousness and independence from the group (mass) influence.

However, the individual consciousness (in the vast majority of cases) is still very much a part of the traditional mass consciousness, still very dependent upon (responsive to) that mass consciousness for patterns of thinking, ideas, glammers, etc. That traditional mass consciousness is inertial, so that habits of consciousness easily dominate. From the higher perspective, the vast majority of humanity are asleep in the massive sea of glamour and illusion, being highly responsive to mass influence while maintaining some degree of self-consciousness. This state of affairs is natural, and is being slowly transformed by higher impression. There is considerable stimulation for increased self-consciousness and independence (freedom of thought), and many are passing into the potency of self-consciousness and self-determination (though many of these still respond to some degree unconsciously to the mass consciousness).

The problem of the spiritual student with regard to the mass consciousness is to achieve a complete freedom from mass influences while maintaining the ability to relate to humanity in an inclusive manner. Where this is achieved, the student is able to contribute to the process of constructive and progressive stimulation of the lifewave. Care must be taken to avoid (minimize) falling asleep (in the sense of being absorbed in the strictly mundane influence), and care must also be taken to temper the sense of independence with a higher group consideration. Ultimately, the individual must be assimilated into a group consciousness where the potency of the individual is subordinated to group needs and the talents can be more effectively utilized. The passage of the spiritual student from mass consciousness to group consciousness is a relatively narrow path, a path of freedom and humility, where the personality must be carefully cultivated and properly trained as an instrument of higher (greater) impression.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 253 - INFINITY

The value of infinity is found within its contemplation, and from its contemplation should arise a mental broadening and a considerable evolutionary encouragement. Infinity is difficult to define, for it embraces an unlimited, indefinitely large extent of time, space, or quantity. But it can be approached in contemplation and leads the mind ultimately to the concept of God having an infinite extent and having an integral presence in all of manifestation.

Mathematically, the concept of infinity can be defined in two ways. One can approach infinity by continuously increasing the scope of some finite extent until the finite magnitude becomes incomprehensible; but infinity shall still remain beyond even the incomprehensibly large (but finite) magnitude. One can also approach (realize) infinity more directly, through the conception of some null quantity (zero) and its relationship by division to any non-trivial finite quantity (any finite quantity larger than zero, divided by zero yields an infinitely large magnitude). Either approach may be extended or applied to any conceptual domain (such as time (duration) or space) in any number of dimensions. Consequently, infinity enfolds all of time and space (and beyond), especially since infinity remains beyond the limited extent of (ordinary) human experience.

The concept of infinity can be applied in two basic directions: to the endlessness of the infinitely large and to the endlessness of the infinitely small. The macrocosmic extent of universal manifestation is essentially infinite in its boundlessness and in its perpetual (cyclic) activity. And the microscopic extent of the infinitely small is limited only by the resolution of human consciousness. From both extremes come unanswered questions and an appreciation of the natural (divine) order of manifestation (and the humble place of human consciousness). Yet the endlessness of manifestation in time and space is a paradox, for reality (being) transcends the illusion of time and space.

Manifestation exhibits a basic, exponential nature, both in its progressive, cyclic activity and in its septenary structure (where seven planes of consciousness constitute an order of magnitude within greater and lesser schemes). Within the contemplation of this apparently infinite manifestation come a number of concepts or theories of manifestation. The theory of finite manifestation is quickly discarded since no end to manifestation has yet been realized (what could possibly exist beyond any finite limit?). The theory of unconditioned (infinite) manifestation is more humble (though bothersome), as it accepts the endlessness of both extremes. A third theory presents a more comforting (moderate) explanation: the concept of an infinite universe conditioned by a paradox of exponential inversion; or in other words, an all-inclusive universe in the form of a multi-dimensional cosmic Moebius' strip which embraces all levels of consciousness. In such a formulation, progression through the infinitely large would lead to a relative emergence from the infinitely small (with an appropriate phase change).

This would not violate progression (evolution), for the conditions and consciousness would be ever-changing, and each successive experience would be unique. This ever-changing, never-ending loop suggests a universe that folds upon itself in any translational direction and which includes lateral (angular) folding as well. The vertical dimension would have infinite extent while the horizontal dimension would be limited (lateral movement would be impossible). This concept of infinity (conditioned or otherwise) leads directly to a realization of God immanent, for with infinity, a God transcendent could not exist without being simultaneously immanent within all lives and forms. Furthermore, God transcendent must be a totality or the totality must be a reflection of some God transcendent.

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 254 - THE THIRD ENNEAD (1)

Plotinus' Third Ennead deals with the cosmos. The first tractate of the Third Ennead deals specifically with the idea of fate and the nature of causation. Plotinus considers several deterministic theories of cause and effect before elaborating on the distinction between internal and external causes. The basic controversy is the assumption of a teleological universe (one having a purpose and subject to divine encouragement) as opposed to an order in nature derived from entirely mechanical processes.

Though Plotinus rejects each deterministic theory in turn, he draws upon aspects of each to show the interrelatedness in thinking and the contribution of each to a self-consistent formulation of apparent destiny. The deterministic theory involving purely mechanical consequences is dismissed by a consideration of teleological needs. But the subjection of material elements to external forces resulting in mechanical consequences is considered realistic, for material elements have such limited (extremely localized) consciousness that they are entirely at the mercy of environmental forces. Another deterministic theory involving an absolute cause is dismissed with the need for interactive consciousness. A third theory, involving sidereal (astrological) determinism, is rejected on its universal determinant, though the forces involved are accepted as viable, evolutionary forces; as impelling factors, not as compelling factors.

The wide influence of astrological forces on material aspects is acknowledged. The unaligned personality is considered as a material (physical, emotional, and mental) instrument subject almost entirely to external (environmental and astrological) forces. But the personality that is relatively integrated and aligned somewhat with the energy (will) of the soul is increasingly free from external forces, and increasingly determined by internal volition. The sidereal circuit is recognized for its overall protection, but its influence is limited to the unaligned lesser self and has no bearing upon the soul. The soul is (ultimately) master of itself: the more noble the soul, the greater is its power over its environment (and the external forces).

There exists no universal compulsion, only a universal purpose and derived (secondary) forces which qualify and encourage all lesser lives, while drawing upon the creative interdependence of those lesser lives. The soul is a powerful entity, responsive to higher impression (first principles) but potent in its own right (and cooperative). Though divine intention (the plan) brings order to the cosmos, there are many intermediate causes (creative beings) which provide secondary forces. All that happens is a consequence (effect) of cause. But the ordinary mind is satisfied with the nearest (apparent)(superficial) determinants. The spiritual student, however, is urged to pass beyond the mundane (superficial) causes through the various intermediate causes to a realization of purpose.

With inherent purpose are all of the various effects resolved as meaningful, evolutionary experiences, even when greater lives are taken into consideration. For all of the noble lives serve a common (universal) purpose, though the soul (through its experience as a personality) is the primary determinant for human evolution. The human condition is a direct consequence of earlier action (causes); thus the human being is fully accountable and responsible for its own condition, though many forces cooperate to achieve the needed consequences. In fact, all of the causative (interactive) forces (on all of the various levels) enter into the (karmic) system, including those of the individual himself; these forces comprise an endless multidimensional causative chain. All such forces affect the individual, though most are negligible and self-generated forces prevail.

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 255 - KEYWORDS AND TRIANGLES

In any philosophical study involving keywords, there are two primary considerations: a study of the various keywords individually (as a necessary first step), and a study of the various keywords by association (correspondence)(implication)(application). The study by association may proceed pairwise (involving pairs of keywords naturally related) as well as by correspondence with the seven rays and other (triple and septenary) implications. Pairwise association (and study) can be particularly potent in the case of natural dualities (pairs of opposites), especially where the student realizes that a continuum exists between the extremes. But this study of pairs of opposites is an intermediate stage, at best, for such a study is limited to one (primary) dimension and the pairwise association cannot be resolved at that level.

The advantage of triplicities should be readily apparent. Triplicities allow several dimensions to be considered, while maintaining a relative simplicity (potency). Pairs of opposites can be resolved through a contemplation (study) of their natural triangular relationships. These relationships demonstrate a natural, dynamic interaction between the three points of focus. As the minimum (optimum) unit of circulation, triangles are usually more potent than other alternatives (though a number of unresolved pairs of opposites can be quite potent paradoxically). There are few examples of meaningful study by association beyond triplicities (mostly quaternary or septenary).

In synthetic triangles, a positive (clockwise) circulation (3-2-1) implies integration (synthesis) and the ascent of energy (consciousness), while a negative (counterclockwise) circulation (1-2-3) implies the process of manifestation and differentiation (the descent of a higher energy). In any circulation, a fourth keyword may emerge in the center of the triangle, signifying a product of synthesis. Keywords used in synthetic triangles should be of the same class (type)(category) or be linked together progressively. The triangle itself may belong to one of the seven rays in particular, in which case the three keywords function as subordinate elements (with appropriate secondary ray correspondence). So much depends on connotation and implication; the same keyword may be assigned different positions and/or different rays, depending on the situation (connotation)(and the implied relationships).

The procedure for studying keywords via synthetic triangles assumes some knowledge of the basic philosophy and some meditative (contemplative)(intuitive) ability. In any event, the exercise or effort expended in study should encourage the development of such ability. The student should first study the keywords individually, taking into consideration any apparent or implied correspondence with the seven rays. The student should then study each of the three pairs of keywords, taking into consideration the relationships of any correspondents. Then the student should consider the circulation of energy (thought) through the three points (keywords), in both clockwise and counterclockwise directions (since each may yield some insight). Finally, the student should apply the dynamic interactions of the three by inference. This last stage requires a meditative posture and the presence of the intuition (and a comprehensive, abstract understanding of the various factors and their relationships). This effort leads ultimately to synthesis (realization) and a relatively profound conclusion (provided of course that the student is dealing with a valid triangle in the first place). The student should nevertheless endeavor to remain openminded throughout this process, since concrete patterns (mental habits)(opinions, beliefs, and prior assumptions) serve as prejudice and normally limit the realization achieved.

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

### No. 256 - SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

Self-consciousness in the ordinary (lower) sense is a state or condition in which a person is conscious of himself as an individual. This (limited) self-consciousness emerges as the soul passes from the animal kingdom into the human kingdom, through the process of individualization. By definition, animals have no self-consciousness, no awareness of individuality. Humans, by definition, do have some (limited) self-consciousness, in the sense that they are aware of themselves as separate, distinct personalities. The problem of self-consciousness in this lower sense is that it is based entirely in the illusion of separateness and identification with the personality (which is merely an instrument of the true self (soul)). This condition, however, is necessary to the development of objective consciousness.

This necessary experience (of limited self-consciousness) is well-founded in the glamour and illusion of (human) mass consciousness. But as the individual assimilates more and more of his objective experience, he becomes relatively less dependent upon the massive thought-forms and glammers, and more able to think (independently) for himself. This transition is very, very gradual and serves to strengthen the independence (individuality)(potency) of the personality. That illusion of independence is the major factor in human experience (development), but before true self-consciousness can be achieved, the individual must overcome the personality-centeredness and realize (and accept) the subordinate position of the mind (personality) with respect to the soul. Through continued experience (and assimilation), personality cultivation, and meditation, the student gradually achieves self-mastery (in the lower sense of the mind achieving complete control of the personality) and his consciousness begins to approach the true self.

Self-consciousness in the higher sense is a product of the merger (fusion) of the soul with its (subordinate) personality instrument. As the mind of the spiritual student approaches the soul, the soul energies become more and more evident throughout the personality, until a complete transformation (reorientation) has taken place. This true self-consciousness is an awareness of the divine potency of the soul along with an identification with the soul and a conscious (subjective) application of soul energies through the personality. Such an individual (who is self-conscious) is free from the ordinary limitations of the personality, free from the imposition of the mass consciousness, and free from the illusions of personality-centered existence. But this (true) self-consciousness is not an objective consciousness; it is a potency derived of realization on subjective levels. The soul itself is a subjective entity, whose objective experience is limited to its reflection as a personality. So the higher self-consciousness remains dependent upon the concrete mind (and the objective focus) for its dealings (interaction) with the lower world of human experience.

Self-consciousness is certainly no end in itself (are ends even possible?), for it is just a stepping-stone to even greater awareness (and ultimately to the passage from consciousness to being). As this self-consciousness is developed, there is gradually achieved a group consciousness of a much higher order than that previously experienced. The soul itself is a gateway to the realization of the group unity that embraces all of life. As the student evolves further, his self-consciousness yields more and more to the subjective group consciousness, and the problems of ego are lost forever (though the individual self-consciousness remains as a potent, contributing factor in the group consciousness). Self-consciousness is more than an awareness of the lower self or even of the soul presence; it is the consciousness of that higher self on its own level.

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 257 - CONFORMITY

Commitment to the spiritual path brings with it a number of problems to be realized and dealt with, problems that may mean little to ordinary humanity. The spiritual student, however, faces the delicate problem of living in the world in a meaningful way without being compromised by worldly values or expectations. The problem of conformity is one which the student must face if he is to succeed in his two-fold mission (to serve humanity and to progress spiritually).

The spiritual student is expected to conform to prevailing standards or customs wherever possible, but not to the extent that the student becomes absorbed by the mundane experience and not to the extent that the spiritual path (values) (lifestyle) is needlessly compromised. The student should respect the laws (rules) of his government (society) wherever possible (ie., to violate a law only where conformity would cause a serious spiritual (ethical or moral) compromise). The student may or may not honor the various social conventions, but he should at least be aware of the consequences, and the action (inaction) should have some merit (and be accomplished in a reasonable fashion) (how a student exercises his values is often more important (significant) than the values themselves).

The spiritual student should not conform passively; but the student should conform deliberately and intelligently, with an understanding of any inherent conflict or contrast with spiritual (ideal) values. Furthermore, the student should have the courage to live openly (but quietly) in accordance with spiritual values (without putting on a show and without imposing those values on others). The student should also have the wisdom to know when and how to exercise those values, so that any effects (subtle or otherwise) may be both meaningful and constructive. The spiritual student cannot help being a nonconformist in some respects, but much of his nonconformity may remain in consciousness and in the quality of his experience. Nonconformity creates its own set of problems; but in any event, the spiritual student should be a moderate and avoid the needless perils of radical nonconformity.

Though the spiritual student supports constructive change (humanitarian and evolutionary progress), his role may vary widely in both place and method. Spiritual students can be found in (virtually) all aspects of society. Many students on the path of approach as well as many aspirants (probationers) (disciples) are actively involved in constructive change (improvement) (guidance), working effectively within the system according to the opportunities afforded. But the more potent spiritual students are less actively involved, and much more involved in terms of consciousness. These (more potent) members are effective by virtue of their presence and consciousness; they blend so well within the orthodox framework that the unenlightened cannot even recognize them; yet with their considerable consciousness they are neither absorbed in their mundane work nor are they compromised spiritually.

In conformation there is an implied agreement (acceptance) (indorsement) (respect) with (for) the customs conformed to (and the values implied thereby), so the student is encouraged to exercise considerable (intuitive) discretion in all aspects of his relationships with the mundane world. There is an element of patience (tolerance) in conformity with values that are not wholly acceptable to the enlightened student. But what matters is the understanding (wisdom) of the student and his proper interaction with society. The enlightened student is neither radical nor highly vocal; the enlightened student is (rather) a potent (quiet) (humble) (intelligent) instrument of consciousness, committed to effective progress (from within).

A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 258 - THE THIRD ENNEAD (2)

The second tractate of the Third Ennead is entitled 'Providence: First Treatise.' Providence is divine guidance, the power which sustains and guides human destiny. Providence implies some (grand) purpose that brings about a qualification of the manifested universe, but not to the extent of any (absolute) controlling influence. Providence is therefore partial (relative) and allows the various (internal) lives to interact creatively with their own destiny.

The primal cosmos is considered perfect (unmanifested). The manifested universe comes about through a birthing process of differentiation into countless elements. This derived lower cosmos is an estrangement (reflection) of perfected divinity; the various (apparent) imperfections arise from the process of differentiation (which is a scattering of life forces), discord being an inherent property of differentiation (manifestation). But universal purpose (providence) brings all of the scattered elements together into an ordered system; and that purpose provides the meaning of existence (the basis of evolution) for all inherent lives. Pure spirit is considered divine reason; matter its greatest (deepest) reflection (corruption); and consciousness the moderating principle.

The world (system) is considered beautiful (noble) in its entirety, regardless of the appearance (illusion) of its parts (divine unity remains beyond the grand illusion of separateness). But even the apparent discord within the system can be resolved, since (divine) law and order prevail; the student need only embrace the whole to see how interrelated are the forces and events of experience. For every apparent imperfection or injustice there exists a causal chain of meaningful purpose (justice). The apparent evil (conflict)(contrast) is not necessarily deliberate, but it may be accepted as incidental to the greater plan (purpose) and advantage taken of the opportunity (contrast) for further evolutionary experience. This relative absence (imperfection) of goodness coupled with teleological forces (evolutionary principles)(karma) provides the drama of human experience.

Human beings are responsible for their own actions, regardless of impelling factors and their own ignorance (lack of self-control); the forces of consequence (providence) take into consideration all aspects of merit (motives, quality of consciousness, etc.)(since each aspect is part of the causal chain). The power of man lies in his (relative) freedom (creativity). But each of his causes must return to fruition, one way or another, eventually, for the good of all. Consequences are determined under law, while man the actor determines the specific actions (and responses to effects). Nothing is left to chance, in the sense that all that happens is determined by some causal chain, though much that happens under law has little or no significance (being natural, incidental consequences).

The conflict (contrast) of divergent elements brings about an ultimate harmony. Meaningful opposition (interaction)(cooperation) supports coherence and being (since it is internal). Evolution within the lower cosmos proceeds as diverging (contrasting) elements are properly resolved. The Logos actually creates difference (the differentiated universe) to the widest possible extent, and completes itself through the resolution of diversity and contrast. Differentiation can be viewed as a breathing forth of a tremendous energy-field, and as the field reaches its greatest expanse, it interacts with itself in a dynamic, creative way, resolving all differences through integration, ultimately returning to its original, unified state, greatly enhanced in experience (quality)(potency). The original sending forth is a birthing process, while its fulfilment (fruition) (return) is a process of maturity.

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

No. 259 - AUTISM

The problem of autism is one of misunderstanding. Though orthodox medical science is filled with good intentions and a thorough understanding of physical phenomena (effects), there remains a considerable lack of knowledge and understanding when it comes to causes (and purpose). Consequently, in dealing with effects, medical science often overlooks the inner causes and intentions, and bases treatment on invalid assumptions and values. Such is the case with autism.

Autism is considered by medical science to be a severe mental disorder that impairs the victim's ability to adapt to his (objective) environment and relate to other people. The supposed disorder is characterized by an apparently day-dreaming, self-involved personality that is virtually oblivious to its surroundings. Autistic children are identified and treated in an attempt to bring them into normal society and objective, extroverted experience.

From a metaphysical perspective, autism is in no sense a disorder or illness. Autism is a natural, intentional condition which occurs in the case of certain souls who experience transition into the alien world of ordinary, objective human experience. Guardians (devas)(angelic beings) on subtle levels are assigned to autistic children for protection, to help each individual to maintain the intended subjective rapport while each very gradually adapts to the objective world. The object is to cushion the shock of the objective world, giving the individual (soul) sufficient time to adjust, without losing the subjective (and particularly meaningful (valuable)) contacts. The guardians are devas of a fairly high order who work directly with the aura of the autistic individual, seeking to maintain the natural harmony of subjective awareness. But so often, well-meaning humans interfere in that natural process and actually cause serious problems in their attempts to force their values on the newcomers.

Highly sensitive souls (in the mature, subjective sense) have a great difficulty finding suitable parents, especially where those souls have little or no human experience and consequently where those souls have virtually no karma in human terms. Thus, many of these individuals are forced to incarnate into families where misunderstanding (of subtle matters) prevails. The orthodox (personality-centered) human presence (of the spiritually insensitive individual) is usually so strong (extroverted)(obnoxious)(with respect to the peace of spiritual existence) that the devas guarding the autistic children are literally driven away, leaving the children to face a difficult situation with only limited subjective contacts. This happens because the devas are relatively passive beings, and these deva-guardians in particular are only potent on subtle levels, and unable to deal with the objective intensity of the ordinary self-centered human.

Autistic children should be respected (accepted) and allowed the peace and serenity of their own, natural, subjective environment. In their own time-frame, as they become more accustomed to human experience, they will adjust and accomplish the transition in accordance with their own needs and intentions. But some of these children are forced to transition prematurely, albeit by well-meaning (insensitive)(ignorant) human beings. Where this occurs, the experience may be needlessly painful; the spiritual integrity (potency) of the children is compromised (impaired); and the incarnation may be far less useful than intended.

Though these children may appear incommunicable and without self-identity, they are nevertheless very active (potent)(creative)(communicable) on subjective levels. The natural responsiveness of these (true, autistic) children to inner impression is normally considerable, and this provides the real potency of their incarnation (and their gifts to humanity).

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

### No. 260 - GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS

Group consciousness in the higher sense (in contrast with mass consciousness) can only be experienced through the soul, and consequently requires that the student achieve a considerable degree of self-consciousness (in the higher sense of soul consciousness). Due to the continuity factor in human evolution (where levels of consciousness overlap to a certain extent), the student who can achieve some degree of alignment with the overshadowing (indwelling) soul can also experience a certain degree of group consciousness.

Like soul consciousness, group consciousness is not objective; it is highly subjective and requires the involvement (participation) of both the abstract mind and the intuition (buddhi). Group consciousness is actually a function of realization (understanding) on group levels, where individual thought-forms cannot exist. In a sense, group consciousness is the exercise of a group mind (a group mental organism), except that it does not function on concrete (objective) levels. Only subjective energies (abstract mental impressions complemented with buddhi) can exist within the group consciousness. Those impressions are actually energies (ideas) unresolved into thought-forms. However, the group can precipitate concrete (massive) thought-forms on objective levels, provided the group alignment persists on subjective levels. The group can be highly evocative (creative) in providing needed energies for humanity. Group meditation (on concrete mental levels) provides a stepping-stone (training ground) for the participants and simultaneously provides an important link in the energy chain.

Group consciousness depends on the intelligence and individual capabilities of all the members (of the aligned group) and it depends markedly on the ability of the members to pass beyond their individualities into the deeper union of the group. It also requires a natural harmony (relatedness, energy-wise) so that the group can function as a single entity (subjectively) without impairment. The group consciousness can be characterized as an interdependence of the group mind-soul and the various (blended) participants. The participants remain independent in the sense that each member can function as a localized (individual) consciousness (on group (abstract)(soul) levels), but they are dependent in the sense that each member contributes to the group effort (alignment, energy-wise) and actually merges with it and draws energy from it. Thus the enlightened individual who experiences group consciousness can be fully aware on both individual and group levels simultaneously; but individual thought-forms cannot be created or related to simultaneously with group consciousness, for that would quite necessarily separate the individual from the group alignment and drop the individual focus of consciousness down onto concrete mental levels (where subjective group alignment (and soul consciousness) is impossible).

With ordinary human consciousness, the individual is absorbed in the mass (mundane) consciousness. With some degree of mental self-mastery, the student can intelligently interact with the mass consciousness, but with soul consciousness and group consciousness (in the higher sense), the assembled (abstract, esoteric) group can evoke a considerable (constructive)(creative) energy flow with respect to the mass (human) consciousness. Group consciousness can also be extended to an alignment with greater group lives and so even broader (universal) rapport is possible. Furthermore, once the esoteric student has learned to achieve group alignment on subjective levels, he can guide the (resident) group potency in any meaningful (compatible) application (realization). Thus the group energy serves as a considerable and potent reservoir that the esoteric student can draw upon and contribute to (ever impersonally) in his spiritual efforts.