

A Focus on Consciously Constructive Efforts

Students in the School are asked to make it a habit to focus on *consciously* constructive efforts being made in the world on behalf of humanity (this could include efforts to benefit the lower kingdoms as well) and report on it monthly. This task has proven to be a difficult challenge for many students who are not used to focusing their mental bodies in this way. Why is it so important to recognize the consciously constructive efforts of others, and why do we emphasize the word “consciously”?

When a student enters the School they are told that esotericism is not just a course of study, but that it must become a way of life. Furthermore, in order to insure a continuous and normal expansion of consciousness, training in the esoteric sciences must include three interdependent elements: meditation, study and service. Meditation enables one to control the mind and make it receptive to Soul impression. Study orients the mind toward spiritual principles and equips it to understand spiritual laws and their application to daily living. Service provides an essential constructive outlet for the safe utilization of the energies evoked through meditation and study. *Service is the keynote of the life of discipleship.*

Thus focusing on consciously constructive efforts being made by other servers in the world teaches the student to recognize what service is all about, to realize that there are many ways to serve and to become conscious of the extent of goodwill at work in the world. This exercise also leads the student to focus less on themselves and their own development within their own environment and helps them gain a greater sense of group consciousness and group work by linking up with the larger world of group service.¹ An added benefit of this linking up with the service work of others is that “energy follows thought.” By focusing on specific construc-

tive efforts, one’s energy flows toward that effort, thereby lending that effort additional support. In this way the student is already beginning to serve.

For maximum effect, students are asked to select just one individual, group or organization per month and describe in detail the service being performed. Such specificity is important because vague statements like, “I have noticed that there is a trend toward more international cooperation,” will not be very instructive for the student, nor will it have any impact. Essentially, no linkage is made with the New Group of World Servers, and the energy generated will be diffuse and will disperse immediately.

The second part of this exercise in recognizing consciously constructive efforts is to learn to go beyond appearances and find a depth of meaning. After pinpointing a particular person or group and describing the specific effort being made, the next question is, “What spiritual impulse or energy might this person or group be expressing or attempting to manifest?” This question should lead the student to think about energies and forces. All *consciously* constructive actions in the world are motivated by Soul impulses and focused according to the ray energies that condition our makeup. These energies are marshaled and focused via an act of the will into a thoughtform of some specific service. So in the second part of this exercise the student must ask, “What is the Soul impulse at the heart of this constructive effort?”

Some examples might be: to bring harmony out of conflict, to teach others how to love, to be in right relationship, to bring enlightened order to a chaotic situation. There are many such spiritual impulses behind the constructive efforts being made, and learning to see them helps to develop the eye of spiritual discernment, a valuable asset in this work.

Once one is able to discern the spiritual impulses behind the service activities being performed in the outer world, it becomes much easier to discover the spiritual impulses that arise within oneself and to find a way to express them via one's own personal form of service in the immediate environment. We each incarnate with a particular Soul purpose, and this exercise can help us discover that

purpose as well as provide support to other world servers in restoring the Plan on Earth.

¹ A useful tool for helping students to identify and link to world servers is the Internet. One site: www.servicegrowth.net, provides links to hundreds of groups, initiatives and resources in support of spiritual growth and development.

Entering the New Group of World Servers

A Student

Introduction

One of the most interesting concepts presented by AAB/the Tibetan was the formulation of the New Group of World Servers (NGWS). A work in progress on a worldwide level, it stands out because of its immediate practical implications: for the first time in recent history a concrete aspect of the Plan was revealed to humanity in practical terms, at the exact time when humanity was preparing for a great evolutionary step. This article tries, first of all, to shed light on some of the most important characteristics of the NGWS. The discussion is mainly based on passages about the NGWS contained in four books of AAB/the Tibetan – *Esoteric Psychology, Volumes 1 and 2, A Treatise on White Magic and Glamour: A World Problem*. A secondary objective of this article is to provide an introductory understanding of the functioning of the NGWS, linking it with some ideas in contemporary research in psychology (transpersonal psychology and Psychosynthesis) and social theory (Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari). To do so, the article briefly explores the meaning of integration (personal and group), and applies the Deleuzian concept of rhizomes to the organization of the NGWS.

Objectives of the NGWS

We are told that there are three immediate objectives for the New Group of World Servers (NGWS):

1. To raise the level of human consciousness, so that spiritual reality can be introduced into world affairs.
2. The clarification of the international situation. This requires that each nation put its house in order and then accept its

responsibility to all members of the human family.

3. The growth of the group idea, so that group good, group understanding, group interrelations and group goodwill replace limited, self-centered objectives.¹

The third of these objectives suggests the need to shift from the personal self to the transpersonal or spiritual self, which is, by definition, group-oriented. However, shifting from individual consciousness to transpersonal, group consciousness is an ongoing evolutionary step for the human species that necessarily takes time and effort. We do not know where it might take us, what the world will be like, or how we will function.

The NGWS can help us make this transition as it encourages humanity to cultivate the values of responsibility, social justice, truth and simplicity. As an increasing number of individuals become intelligent, loving servers, working hand in hand with others in all spheres of human endeavor, a critical mass will emerge, and the group will achieve a momentum that is self-sustaining and self-empowered,² based entirely on the attractive power of love. The Tibetan clarifies that:

Love is not a sentiment. Love is the great principle of attraction, of desire, of magnetic pull, and (within our solar system) that principle demonstrates as the attraction and the interplay between the pairs of opposites.³

As we will explore below, some of the most salient characteristics of this group include the facts that it belongs to no one and has no fixed location; it challenges our archaic ideas of hierarchical leadership, and it belongs to the whole of humanity. In fact, one can be part of the NGWS without having ever heard

of its existence! When we hear about the idea of developing group-consciousness, achieving planetary responsibility, transforming the sciences into human endeavors, humanizing business, student-centered education, or interfaith churches, we are witnessing different grassroots applications of the NGWS. Indeed, we are told that members of the NGWS:

are emerging out of every group and church and party, and will therefore be truly representative.... They are of all races; they speak all languages; they embrace all religions, all sciences and all philosophies. Their characteristics are synthesis, inclusiveness, intellectuality and fine mental development.... They recognise no authority, save that of their own souls, and no Master save the group they seek to serve, and humanity whom they deeply love. They have no barriers set up around themselves, but are governed by a wide tolerance, and a sane mentality and sense of proportion. They look with open eyes upon the world of men and recognise those whom they can lift and to whom they can stand as the Great Ones stand—lifting, teaching and helping... They see their group members in all fields—political, scientific, religious, and economic—and give to them the sign of recognition and the hand of a brother.⁴

Characterizing the NGWS

While all world religions are characterized by group work and an organization of religious orders (monasteries in Christianity and Buddhism, for instance), it was the development of the mystical inner life of the disciple that has most often been stressed or conveyed to the masses of all spiritual traditions. We have been presented with images of saints and monks living in isolation and undergoing intense suffering. These groups presented some characteristics typical of the Piscean age: they were often mystical in nature, many lived far removed from everyday life, some orders were for men only, and so on. Perhaps this kind of Piscean, devotional

discipline was necessary and played a fundamental role in preparing the path for the next stage. Indeed, the word “monasticism” derives from the Greek word *μοναχός* (monachos), meaning alone. Monasticism is still today a religious lifestyle based on “renouncing worldly pursuits to fully devote oneself to spiritual work.”⁵

In contrast, the NGWS presents some distinct Aquarian features that, in spite of the fact that it was first conceived of some 600 years ago and enunciated only some 60 years ago, give us a clue as to what living under the aegis of the Seventh Ray will be like. Some outstanding characteristics of the NGWS are:

1. **Universalism and Diversity:** The NGWS nurtures human diversity. Within the group, each member is respected in his or her singular being. Everybody can take part in a service group, and many already are, even if they might never have heard of the NGWS. The NGWS is not an esoteric group. Actually, the Tibetan says that the true esotericist is rarely found!
2. **Practicality:** it emphasizes the practical implications of service. “This is no idle or mystical, impractical program. *It undermines and attacks no authority or government. It is not interested in the overthrow of rulers or the downfall of any political or national party.* It calls for intelligent and practical effort. It will call for the cooperation of many types of mind and many trained executives. The men of goodwill in every country must be discovered, and all who respond to these ideals must be gathered together through mailing lists. Their cooperation must be sought and systematised. This program will call, eventually, for the assistance of many lecturers and writers, who will work along the same idealistic lines but with differing methods. Through their knowledge of their own country, and of the best way to bring these basic truths home to their own nationals, they must be left free to work as they see best for their particular nation.”⁶

3. Non-dogmatic, non-sectarian, non-religious and non-political. It works, basically, as an extended, plural, open family.
4. Mental in focus: the mystical path blends with the esoteric path. The development of the mind is stressed.
5. Cooperative: it stresses the need to work together, to cooperate, to become international in approach.
6. Soul-centered: it moves from the personality to the Soul as the center of service.
7. Non-dualistic: it frees us from the great illusion of dualisms such as wrong/right or left/right.
8. Empowering: the group operates all around the world, whether or not its members are aware or not at a concrete mind level of their belonging to the group. The members are linked at the level of the Higher Mind and work through the power of intuition.
9. Non-topological: the NGWS has no external organization, no hierarchical organization, no established leader; it is purely a formal construction with no definite *topos*. It has, one might say, no beginning and no end, just as the Möbius topological band. Rather, it is an informal network of energies, a network that is continuously being remade. The focal points of the network act under the power of recognition. It is the Soul that recognizes the group members. Its influence is (if this word has any meaning today) telepathically transmitted. It has, therefore, no center and, for this reason, it cannot be traced or destroyed. In this lies its power.
10. Rhizomatic: because of its non-topological nature, the NGWS is a network of connections similar to the ones we see happening in nature. Rhizomes are non-linear models of growth whereby species are connected, where there is no specific end and no beginning; it works from beneath the surface, and from there

it can influence the whole world of affairs. Some examples of rhizomatic work that we can see in the non-political, non-violent humanitarian efforts in the world are the work of Greenpeace, Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, or the Argentinean solidarity movements during the crisis of 2001. Two French philosophers, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, have used this concept in modern social theory. For them a rhizome “allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points, works with horizontal and trans-species connections...” It is a “wide array of attractions and influences with no specific origin or genesis, for a ‘rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, inter-being, intermezzo.’ The planar movement of the rhizome resists chronology and organization, instead favoring a nomadic system of growth and propagation.”⁷

Integration into the NGWS

Integration into the NGWS occurs naturally as we become less personality-centered and more service-oriented. This is one consequence of Soul alignment. The personality or lower-self bears little interest for the Soul until personality begins to reorient itself toward the Soul and becomes more group conscious. It is only through and in groups that we can effect changes in the world. Paradoxically, however, this cannot occur without the individual being affected by the Soul. One would say, therefore, that the energy of the group impels us to change and grow in awareness and beauty. It is the group that awakens us to the Soul. Without the group, there is no individual. At the same time, as we grow and actualize our potential, we begin to serve the group. The group and the individual are hence not opposites, but complementary. Integration means exactly this: becoming more unique as individuals. The more unique we become, the more responsibility we develop and hence the more group conscious we are, for we are less dependent on others' views (narcissists, who secretly depends on others' views, fear the group be-

cause they don't know what they can truly offer). The more contact with the Soul, the more unique we become, and hence we realize what we can contribute or share with the group.

In addition, although integration into the NGWS happens naturally, it is not compulsory. This means that there is actually an important component of will involved in the process of becoming part of the NGWS. This relates to the choices we make in life and how we reorient ourselves regarding certain spiritual values. Values like social justice, truth, non-discrimination, harmlessness and beauty are among some of the many we must cultivate to become integrated into the NGWS. These values may at present sound like ideals, yet they represent, together, the vision of a fair world that each day thousands of us try to build inside ourselves and in our lives. It is the will to move toward this vision that keeps us going and that will lead us to success. It is the deep, inner recognition that together we stand and that nothing will ever make us go astray. This is not a theoretical concept but an experience that all truly inspired human beings have had. It is an inner sense of direction and of connection with something bigger than ourselves that is real and actuating in the world, and a recognition that we are a family working together to end suffering and misery.

From self-centered to group-centered

Groups and societies have always existed, both in the natural and human worlds. What appears to be *new* about the NGWS is that, contrary to prior forms of socialization, this group aims at preserving and actually enhancing individuality while completely transforming it. In other words, it seems that

from animal societies with no self-representation, we have evolved into self-centered human societies, and seem to be moving toward group-centered societies that

will preserve yet change the individual dramatically. Changes in human society such as technological developments and global migrations are already affecting the way we communicate and construct our identities. New discoveries in science are making us quickly aware that the physical world is based on interdependence. Astronomy continues to unveil the many faces of an expanding, evolving universe. It seems that on

many fronts we are learning the lesson that we are not separate.

How does this realization articulate with the individual life of each of us? In terms of psychosynthesis and transpersonal psychology, we could pose the hypothesis that at the level of the individual, as a certain degree of attunement with the transpersonal will is reached, the level of inner conflict weakens; our personality functions and structures (or vehicles) are better coordinated to the extent that we can operate as more integrated human beings rather than merely survive on a day-to-day basis. Integration of the personality vehicles and integration with the transpersonal self are two instances of a long, redemptive process. As we purify and heal our physical, emotional and mental bodies, we are also working toward fusion with the transpersonal self, for this can only express fully when a certain degree of integration has been achieved at personality level. We could say that the *process* of achieving integration matters more than the result itself, as demonstrated in the way that the Soul becomes the center of our lives. In *A Treatise on White Magic* we read:

[S]ome of the most salient characteristics of [the NGWS] include the facts that it belongs to no one and has no fixed location; it challenges our archaic ideas of hierarchical leadership, and it belongs to the whole of humanity. In fact, one can be part of the NGWS without having ever heard of its existence!

The first centre which the aspirant seeks consciously to energize and on which he concentrates during the early stages of his novitiate, is the heart centre. He has to learn to be group conscious, to be sensitive to group ideals, and to be inclusive in his plans and concepts; he has to learn to love collectively and purely, and not be actuated by personality attraction, and the motive of reward. Until there is this awakening in the heart, he cannot be trusted to wield the creative powers of the throat centre, for they would be subordinated to self-aggrandizement and ambitions of various kinds.⁸

The more integrated and healed we are, the more group conscious we become. This expresses as being more conscious of our relationships, taking active responsibility for the groups we belong to, accepting new responsibilities, nurturing the good, the beauty and the truth in everybody we encounter along the path of our lives. It also manifests in being able to listen more attentively to our friends and relatives without judging them. It shows in new, increased abilities and skills that relate to all the kingdoms of nature. We develop a sense of responsibility for the lower kingdoms, or establish new associations with neighbors in an attempt to improve our communities. We might be inclined to joyfully appreciate artistic works, or we may be interested in charitable or volunteer work. Some of us may not even leave home at all, but we may spend time praying or meditating for others and their causes—an incredibly serviceable subjective occupation indeed!

What matters here is not the specific way our new sense of direction manifests. Rather, it is the qualitative transformation of the human consciousness that counts, a move from being self-centered to being group-centered or, in psychological terms, a development from personal realms to transpersonal values such as inclusiveness, non-dualism, openness, and responsibility.⁹ Hence, once integration begins, it multiplies or becomes rhizome-like. We have first of all the intra-individual integration of sub-personalities, of emotional states and thoughtforms. Second, we achieve

interpersonal integration with other individuals and groups. Third, we experience a transpersonal integration with the Soul and higher realms. Integration is an open-ended endeavor, the constant enlargement of our circle of awareness. At each step we help our circle of awareness move beyond its limit.

From the individual to the NGWS, via synthesis

One of the main roles of the NGWS is “to bring about the eventual synthesis and unification of the [people] of goodwill and of understanding into one coherent body ... thus made to realize their essential unity.”¹⁰ To effectuate a work of synthesis means maintaining the attitude of the observer, seeking to love, eliminating criticism and redeeming the world with positive, constructive thoughts.

While this is no easy task, many individuals might be able to think of personal circumstances in which their consciousness was expanded, either by developing awareness of spiritual dimensions within, by entering into contact with an inspiring person, by acts of heroism and selfless love, by reaching out and helping someone in need, or by deepening their sense of connection. We can also find examples of the current stage of planetary awareness. We could mention, for instance, the growing number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that raise funds to fight disease and poverty. International trade alliances such as NAFTA (North American Free Trade Association) and MERCOSUR (Mercado Común del Sur) on the American Continent have fostered the economic wellbeing of their regions. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) allow people from all over the world to get in touch with their families, friends and associates at low cost. Professional associations in all fields and international bodies guarantee ethical standards and share knowledge. The examples are endless and they are all evidence of a change in human consciousness. It seems that we are learning a fundamental lesson, that we are not separate individuals living inside societies. Rather, we

are social beings in a live organism, operating as individuals. And we are not human beings seeking the Soul; instead, we are Souls temporarily living as human beings.

Clearly, we should not expect these spiritual endeavors to work perfectly all the time. Just as individual integration can be characterized as a lifelong project, group endeavors are open-ended, experimental service ventures. It is the constant effort toward the ultimate goal of synthesis that should keep us going, not the results as seen by an outsider. Synthesis defines inclusive love, as we can read in the following excerpt.

The first of the factors revealing the divine nature and the first of the great psychological aspects of God is *the tendency to synthesis*. This tendency runs through all nature, all consciousness, and is life itself. The motivating urge of God, His outstanding desire, is towards union and at-one-ment. It was this tendency or quality which Christ sought both to reveal and to dramatize for humanity.¹¹

Accordingly, synthesis is one of the keynotes of all who identify with the aims of the NGWS. Actually, the Tibetan's work suggests that integration into the NGWS is the natural next step for any disciple who is achieving a certain degree of integration and fusion with the Soul.

Love is not a sentiment or an emotion, nor is it desire or a selfish motive for right action in daily life. Love is the wielding of the force which guides the worlds and which leads to the integration, unity and inclusiveness which impels Deity itself to action.¹²

Love ... is not affectionate sentiment, or the possession of a loving disposition; these two later aspects are incidental and sequential. When the intuition is developed, both affection and the possession of a spirit of loving outgo will, necessarily, in their pure form, be demonstrated, but that which produces these is something much more deep and comprehensive. It is that synthetic, inclusive grasp

of the life and needs of all beings (I have chosen these two words with intent!) which it is the high prerogative of a divine Son of God to operate. It negates all that builds barriers, makes criticism, and produces separation. It sees no distinction, even when it appreciates *need*, and it produces in one who loves as a soul immediate identification with that which is loved.¹³

Synthesis, which is the inner recognition of the unity of all life forms, is the force that will keep us going in times of despair. The current state of crisis and despair will but accelerate the integration of many of us into the NGWS as there is today, more than any other time in recent history, a recognition that things cannot go on like this. This fact will make our voice one and our invocative appeal stronger. In all departments of life, men and women of goodwill are standing for the rights that the rich, the despotic powers, and the materialistic minds want to deny humanity. We are reclaiming the values we innately recognize as true and good. The NGWS represents our chance to make this world a better place to live.

Note: References to the Alice Bailey books below refer to the online edition published by Lucis Trust. Accordingly, the references appear as indicated by the online edition reference list.

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 - ² [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_mass_\(sociodynamics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_mass_(sociodynamics))
 - ³ Bailey, A., *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. I*, Section 2, Chapter 3, The Rays and Man /2. the ray of the planet-earth. Online Edition. Lucis Trust.
 - ⁴ Bailey, A., *A Treatise on White Magic*, Rule Ten, The New Group of World Servers. Online Edition. Lucis Trust.
 - ⁵ Retrieved August 8th, 2010 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/monasticism>
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Book Reviews

***The Heart Doctrine: Mystical Views of the Origin and Nature of Human Consciousness*, by Christopher P. Holmes.** Ontario, Canada: Zero Point Publications, 2010. Paperback, 294 pages.

The field of consciousness exploration—“the last great mystery”—is one of the fastest growing fields of scientific inquiry. Theories examining the roots, nature and role of human consciousness abound. At present, there are at least twelve competing theories. Many modern scientific theories rely on the materialist argument that depicts consciousness and mind as an emergent phenomenon or emergent property of the brain. Yet, as Dr. Christopher Holmes points out again and again in this book, no definitive scientific theory on the origin and nature of consciousness exists and any real understanding of consciousness remains elusive. Science rejects the idea of any supernatural or non-physical explanation, but provides “no account of what consciousness is, whether or not it is substantive, or where it originates.”

Despite the widespread confusion and misunderstanding regarding the nature of consciousness and the narrow, form-based, technologically driven investigation into the material, neurological and informational processes of the brain, the *head doctrine*, as Helena Blavatsky once termed it, has become “the most commonly accepted Western scientific and psychological model of consciousness.”

Holmes examines the modern “head doctrine” of psychology, philosophy and science. He acknowledges the contributions that modern science has made, particularly in its understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the brain. However, he challenges its assumptive and speculative framework along with the biases of researchers and theorists who “see no way for consciousness to emerge or be generated apart

from a functioning brain.” Holmes addresses the multiple questions concerning consciousness in psychology, physics, cosmology, biology and medicine that science has either ignored or left unanswered. His critique reveals a science that generalizes its knowledge of the part as if it were a knowledge of the whole—a science that is ill-informed about other dimensions of reality and cut off from its inner core.

With over thirty-five years of study in the area of consciousness, psychology, modern physics and metaphysics to draw upon, Dr. Holmes provides an alternative higher dimensional model of consciousness that is in sharp contrast to the reductionist paradigm. At the center of his research is the enigmatic concept of the “zero point,” a term used by Helena Blavatsky (and recently documented in physics) to represent “a point source of unfolding wherein the finite Kosmos emerged from the Infinite at the beginning of time.” These zero points or true atoms—which the Gods and other invisible powers use to clothe themselves—occur “at the level of the Planckian unit in physics, beyond the level of material differentiation, but “existent in all living beings—including ourselves.”

The author elaborates and expands upon Blavatsky’s initial concept in this important work and throughout the entire *Within-Without Zero Point Series*. In *The Heart Doctrine*—the first book in the series—we learn that “the zero point is not a ‘thing’ in itself, as much as it is a condition or a place at which certain processes occur”... “The zero point is a ‘point particle’ ...a monad in hyperspace, or a portal or transitional point between dimensions.” According to Holmes, zero points are present throughout creation. They exist “at the heart of a universe, a galaxy, a sun, a quantum or a human being.” Thus, he concludes, “life within a living being originates within/without out of the higher space dimensions of a multidimensional heart!”

Holmes furthers this hypothesis by explaining how the essential point source of individual light consciousness—the *God spark* or quantum Self—is brought down through the various planes where it is embodied as a Soul and as the electromagnetic center within the physical heart. He describes a process whereby the presence of the Self within the heart initiates the heartbeat and diffuses the light of consciousness, which the mind reflects, to both the psyche and body. “Consciousness,” as the zero point theory maintains, “does not arise from within the brain... the brain merely mirrors the light from within the spiritual heart and space.”

The zero point hypothesis serves as a lens or vehicle through which the author considers a wide range of literature from the sacred wisdom teachings and contemplative traditions. These sacred teachings, which have developed their own rigorous methods for exploring the origins and potential of consciousness, emphasize the *heart doctrine* and the view that the heart and physical consciousness are inextricably related. A verse from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad illustrates:

The self-luminous being who dwells within the lotus of the heart, surrounded by the senses and sense organs, and who is the light of intellect, is that Self.

Another verse from the Chandogya Upanishad is placed within the context of heart’s innate ability to reflect the holographic dimensions of the universe:

As large as the universe outside, even so large is the universe within the lotus of the heart. Within it are heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, the lightning, and all the stars. What is in the macrocosm is in the microcosm...All things that exist...are in the city of Brahman.

Elsewhere, the author draws upon the teachings of Jesus Christ, Saint Francis de Sales, Father Louis Massignon, Father Merton and oth-

ers to reveal that both the heart doctrine and the zero point teachings are inherent to Christianity. We learn, for example, that many Christian thinkers and mystics view the parable of the mustard seed as a metaphor for the zero point, the virgin point or central point of the Soul. “Christian literature” also “depicts the heart as the bridal chamber, wherein the soul is healed and wedded to the Lord.” The heart, as one Christian mystic explains, refers to the “interior star,” “the one pearl,” or the “single eye.” These many names represent the different attributes of the Central Point of the Soul within the cave of the heart from which the “Self” or “I” derives.

Holmes’ insightful commentaries and inspired treatment of the mystical and esoteric literature found in the Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Jewish, Christian and Theosophical traditions, leads the reader into the enduring, universal currents of truth and beauty regarding life, the heart, consciousness, and the cosmos. His integrated overview of sacred teachings serves to illuminate their inner nexus and expose their deeper significances.

Furthermore, the author demonstrates the value of esoteric and occult teachings in a profoundly new relationship to science. “Spiritual teachings,” as *The Heart Doctrine* states, “do not necessarily contradict the findings of science. They simply provide a new holistic way of interpreting the facts of science itself.”

In comparing the unifying teachings on the heart and consciousness with the ground state or zero point of quantum physics, Christopher Holmes makes a central contribution to consciousness research—a contribution with practical applications for awakening the Soul or the Self.

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Positive Harmlessness in Practice, by Dorothy I. Riddle. Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2010. Paperback, 288 pages.

This is the second volume in Dorothy Riddle's trilogy, *Enough for Us All*. Here she tackles the difficult concept of harmlessness, a concept mandated by every spiritual tradition. As Dr. Riddle notes in the Preface, "exploring the concept of harmlessness makes it clear that we have no collective experience of harmlessness because our habits of harm are so pervasive." Consequently, the thoughtform of harmlessness is underdeveloped and is widely regarded as equivalent to powerlessness. So the author undertakes the task of educating the reader as to the real meaning of harmlessness, which she wisely terms "positive harmlessness," and of presenting a program to enable us to build our "harmlessness muscle."

Part One, consisting of three chapters, presents a carefully thought out explanation of harm (the pervasiveness of harm, the international understanding of harm, harming by commission, harming by omission, healing the effects of harm) and of harmlessness (definition of harmlessness, harmlessness in thought, in word, in action). Dr. Riddle also relates harmlessness to the Seven Principles of Abundance, which is the topic of the first book in the series. These principles are, in brief:

- Interconnectivity
- Participation
- Nonlinearity
- Nonduality
- Interdependence
- Adaptability
- Cooperation

For a short discussion of these principles, see the review in the Summer 2010 issue of *The Esoteric Quarterly*—or, better yet, read the book.

Part Two, consisting of six chapters, details how we can create a "harmlessness mini-immersion" experience on a daily basis in order to bring about a "Butterfly Shift." (Butterfly Shift refers to the ripple effect of our thoughts, feelings and actions, such as a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil causing a tor-

nado in Texas.) There are three steps in the daily Butterfly Shift practice:

- Step One: Notice the Shift Potential
- Step Two: Feel the Shift Potential
- Step Three: Act on the Shift Potential

This involves all personality vehicles: mental, astral and physical.

These techniques can be applied to each of three types of Butterfly Shifts:

1. The Compassionate Shift
2. The Grateful Shift
3. The Joyous Shift

Part Three then turns to the larger topic of the changes that are needed globally in order to anchor harmlessness as a societal norm. This requires the transformation of our worldview from harm and violence as inevitable to harmlessness as our chosen ethic.

Dr. Riddle deals extensively with the process of maturing as a precondition to effectively practice positive harmlessness. Most interestingly, she presents seven Maturational Dimensions, each of which in turn corresponds to the seven Principles listed above:

- Self-discipline
- Responsibility
- Decision making
- Complexity
- Nurturance
- Goodwill
- Compassion

The reader of this article might want to consider whether the Principle of Interconnectivity might correspond to the Motivational Dimension of Self-discipline (that is, one must be mature in self-discipline before one can experience and express the Principle of Interconnectivity). Then proceed down the list. Some correspondences may seem obvious; others might remain elusive. The recommended solution is to read Chapter 11, in which there is a short section on each Maturational Dimension and the corresponding Principle.

The final chapter, "Developing an Ethic of Harmlessness," bridges the gap between theory and practice. Dr. Riddle presents a "Harmless-

ness Scale” that she has devised, which lists eight attitudes ranging from the extreme of Brutality to the proactive attitude of Advocacy. The point of this, as she explains, is that we not only need to be aware of different attitudes toward harmlessness, we also need to understand where we are personally starting from so that we can identify the changes we want to make. Among the Appendices is a detailed questionnaire for those readers who are serious about determining their starting point and further developing their positive harmlessness.

This reference to the Appendices brings us to our final comments regarding the resources Dr. Riddle supplies, which are scattered through the text and in the end material.

As in Volume One, Dr. Riddle inserts exercises here and there in the text—68 in all and an Index of them at the end of the book. There are helpful tables to give a broader perspective, such as the one in connection with the Golden Rule. Here nine great spiritual traditions are listed, with the sentence cited from the scripture of each that corresponds to Christianity’s version (Matthew 7:12). Among the Appendices can be found the U.N. Universal Declara-

tion of Human Rights, which is referred to in the text. She also includes excerpts from a U.N. document, “Ending Violence Against Women: From Words to Action,” which ties into a powerful section in the final chapter—“Gender Harmlessness as a Litmus Test”—that is horrifying to read about, but necessary to be aware of.

There were several passages in the book that were of great importance to this reviewer. We will close with one that unites the esoteric, or cosmic, dimension with our responsibility as incarnate beings:

Harmlessness requires practice and maturity in how we focus and use the energy that flows among us as part of our interconnected cosmic energy field... If we accept, at least as a working hypothesis, the concept of continuity of consciousness,... surely we can build a “harmlessness muscle” over our lifetimes that allows us to be positively and proactively harmless. (pp. 203-204)

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