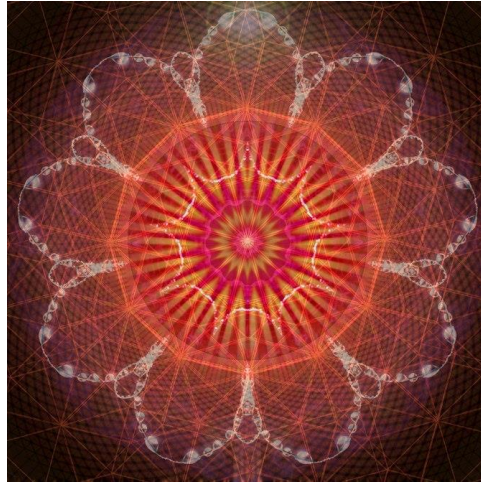


Fall 2013, Volume 9, Number 3



The Esoteric Quarterly

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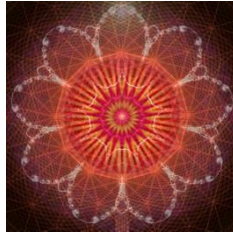
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the expansion of human consciousness.**



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The Esoteric Quarterly

Contents

Volume 9, Number 3. Fall 2013

	Page		Page
Features		Ahriman and Lucifer in the Teachings of Rudolf Steiner	37
Editorial	4	John F. Nash	
Publication Policies	5	Bailey's Formulas for Initiation	61
Poem of the Quarter: " Black Thou " by Irina Kuzminsky	6	Zachary F. Lansdowne	
Pictures of the Quarter: " Fire Eclipse, " " From Death to Life " and " Shadows of Light " by Joma Sipe	7	A Short Paper	
Quotes of the Quarter	10	Toward Christian Renewal	83
Advertisements	12	Aaron J. French	
Articles		Book Reviews	
Modern Science, Psychology and the Enduring Mystery of Consciousness: An Esoteric/ Mystical Critique, Part 1V	17	Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World, by Charles, Prince of Wales, with Tony Juniper and Ian Skelly	91
G.I. Gurdjieff and the Fourth Way		The Seven Wisdoms of Life; a Journey into the Chakras, by Shai Tubali	94
James Moffatt			

The mission of the *Esoteric Quarterly* is to provide a forum for the exploration of esoteric philosophy and its applications. Full-length articles and student papers are solicited pertaining to both eastern and western esoteric

traditions. We also encourage feedback from readers. Comments of general interest will be published as Letters to the Editor. All communications should be sent to: editor@esotericquarterly.com.

From Gurdjieff to Esoteric Philosophy: A Mutual Quest

Ananda Coomaraswamy, the Ceylonese historian and pioneering expositor of traditional culture to the West, believed that there was “only one mythology, one iconography, and one truth, that of an uncreated wisdom that has been handed down from time immemorial.” Just as there is one truth, one living or perennial wisdom serving as a nexus for the many great faiths, so too, there is one common quest among the world’s religious and esoteric traditions—one overarching drive so deeply rooted in the human psyche that it is evidenced in nearly every culture throughout the whole cycle of existence. This still evolving quest for Self-knowledge, spiritual renewal and transcendence, is expressed in such a range and relativity of religious forms and practices that it can be difficult to perceive the formless Essence. The discovery of a transcendent unity or center can be found; but only by progressing beyond external appearances in search of the esoteric dimension or nucleus. Revealing the many contours of the spiritual quest and their unifying Essence is one of the primary missions of this journal. The featured articles and the short paper offered in this issue affirm that approach. We hope you find them to be a source of mutual enrichment.

James Moffat contributes the final article in his four-part series contrasting modern psychological views of consciousness with esoteric and mystical perspectives. This article continues his investigation of the metaphysical and psychological elements of the Fourth Way teaching, beginning with an examination of G. I. Gurdjieff’s remarkable life, his controversial reputation and his status as a high initiate or master. The vital differences—unrecognized by modern psychologists—between “levels of knowledge” and higher “levels of being” are discussed, along with the distinctions between

personality” and “essence.” An explanation of Gurdjieff’s concept of the “centers” or brain systems, as well as his ideas about the need for a new literary form is given. The article concludes with a discussion of Gurdjieff’s vibration numbers as they relate to levels of consciousness.

Our next article by John Nash, explores Rudolf Steiner’s teachings on Ahriman and Lucifer. The article begins by touching upon the notion of dualism—the view that the world is ruled by two antagonistic forces or entities. It considers the Zoroastrian Angra Mainyu and some of the other historical antecedents that may have influenced the evolution of Steiner’s thought. The Biblical monsters of Behemoth and Leviathan are discussed as possible models for Ahriman and Lucifer; along with a section that examines how Steiner’s “spirits of seduction” appear in the Western esoteric tradition. Nash also introduces Steiner’s Trinitarian model of balance wherein the Christ holds the balance between the ahrimanic and luciferic influence or powers. The final section of the article focuses on the nature of evil and why there is no mention of Ahriman and Lucifer in the Trans-Himalayan teachings.

Our last full length feature, from Zachary Lansdowne, explores six mysterious formulas of integration presented by Alice A. Bailey in *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. II*. Designed to be used prior to group initiation, these highly symbolic presentations or revealing patterns, as they are also called, are said to have been used down the ages by all disciples and initiates of the Great White Lodge as prerequisites for the six major initiations. Lansdowne’s interpretative analysis, assigns meanings to the formulas’ symbols based on indicators found in Bailey’s published works. The article is thought to be the first published work attempting to decipher some of the

possible significances and meanings of these exceedingly challenging patterns.

We also offer a short paper by Aaron J. French. *Christian Renewal* touches on three key elements that can contribute to the revitalization of the Christian faith. The first section focuses on traditional Christianity's rarely acknowledged historical and spiritual roots. The second section centers upon the esoteric dimensions of Christianity that have been largely ignored by mainstream believers but secretly nourished by numerous underground streams. Included here is a model for understanding esoteric spirituality based on a set of six characteristics. The paper concludes with an exploration of the mystical experience of Paul of Tarsus and an emphasis on the need for an inner or subjective connection to the Christ.

This issue of the Quarterly also includes two book reviews. They are: *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World*, by Charles, Prince of Wales, and *The Seven Wisdoms of Life; a Journey into the Chakras*, by Shai Tubali.

Not to be overlooked is the *Poem of the Quarter* from Irina Kuzminsky, whose work was previously published in the Fall 2012 edition of the *Quarterly*. This new work, titled *Black Thou*, is filled with spiritual significances and is certain to find deep vibrational resonance with our readers.

Our *Pictures of the Quarter* were contributed by the visionary Portuguese artist Joma Sipe, whose stunning work is centered on the themes of sacred geometry and the Light of spiritual illumination. Sipe's work is based almost entirely on inner inspiration, but his art has been influenced by a life-long quest for esoteric wisdom and an innate urge to depict "Being and our deeper Essence." The artist's interest in esotericism began at the age of thirteen and includes studies in Theosophy, and the other spiritual traditions. Sipe draws intuitively with either gold or silver ink on a black canvas. He affixes crystals to certain points in the drawing. The images are then photographed and enhanced with soft color computer effects to create a numinous quality.

I think you'll agree that Sipe's focus on light and geometry are rooted in the highest spiritual energetics which underlie and "shine forth in all that exists." For more information on the artist's work see the ad on page 13 of this issue and visit: www.jomasipe.com.

Donna M. Brown
editor@esotericquarterly.com

Publication Policies

Articles are selected for publication in the *Esoteric Quarterly* because we believe they represent a sincere search for truth, support the service mission to which we aspire, and/or contribute to the expansion of human consciousness.

Publication of an article does not necessarily imply that the Editorial Board agrees with the views expressed. Nor do we have the means to verify all facts stated in published articles.

We encourage critical thinking and analysis from a wide range of perspectives and traditions. We discourage dogmatism or any view that characterizes any tradition as having greater truth than a competing system.

Neither will we allow our journal to be used as a platform for attacks on individuals, groups, institutions, or nations. This policy applies to articles and features as well as to letters to the editor. In turn, we understand that the author of an article may not necessarily agree with the views, attitudes, or values expressed by a referenced source. Indeed, serious scholarship sometimes requires reference to work that an author finds abhorrent. We will not reject an article for publication simply on the grounds that it contains a reference to an objectionable source.

An issue of concern in all online journals is potential volatility of content. Conceivably, articles could be modified after the publication date because authors changed their minds about what had been written. Accordingly, we wish to make our policy clear: We reserve the right to correct minor typographical errors, but we will not make any substantive alteration to an article after it "goes to press."

Poem of the Quarter

“Black Thou”
by Irina Kuzminsky

A black hole
Your Body
I long
to be consumed
Compress
And eat me whole
I shall not care
What time or space
You will expel me into
If this black moment
of your Presence
Is the narrow gate
To lead me through.

Unfold your limbs
And decongest your atoms
That I might pierce
an opening inside
Which you’ve prepared for me
since the commencement
of your Centers.

Reflect no longer
Choose now to absorb me
And I’ll dissolve and freeze
Freeze and dissolve
And arch
All strings and strands of my cells’ memories
Into the dizzy magnet
Of your dancing body.

And only then –
Full conscious of your matter and abyss
Will I breathe essences
of you
– all-self-transcending.

Pictures of the Quarter by Joma Sipe



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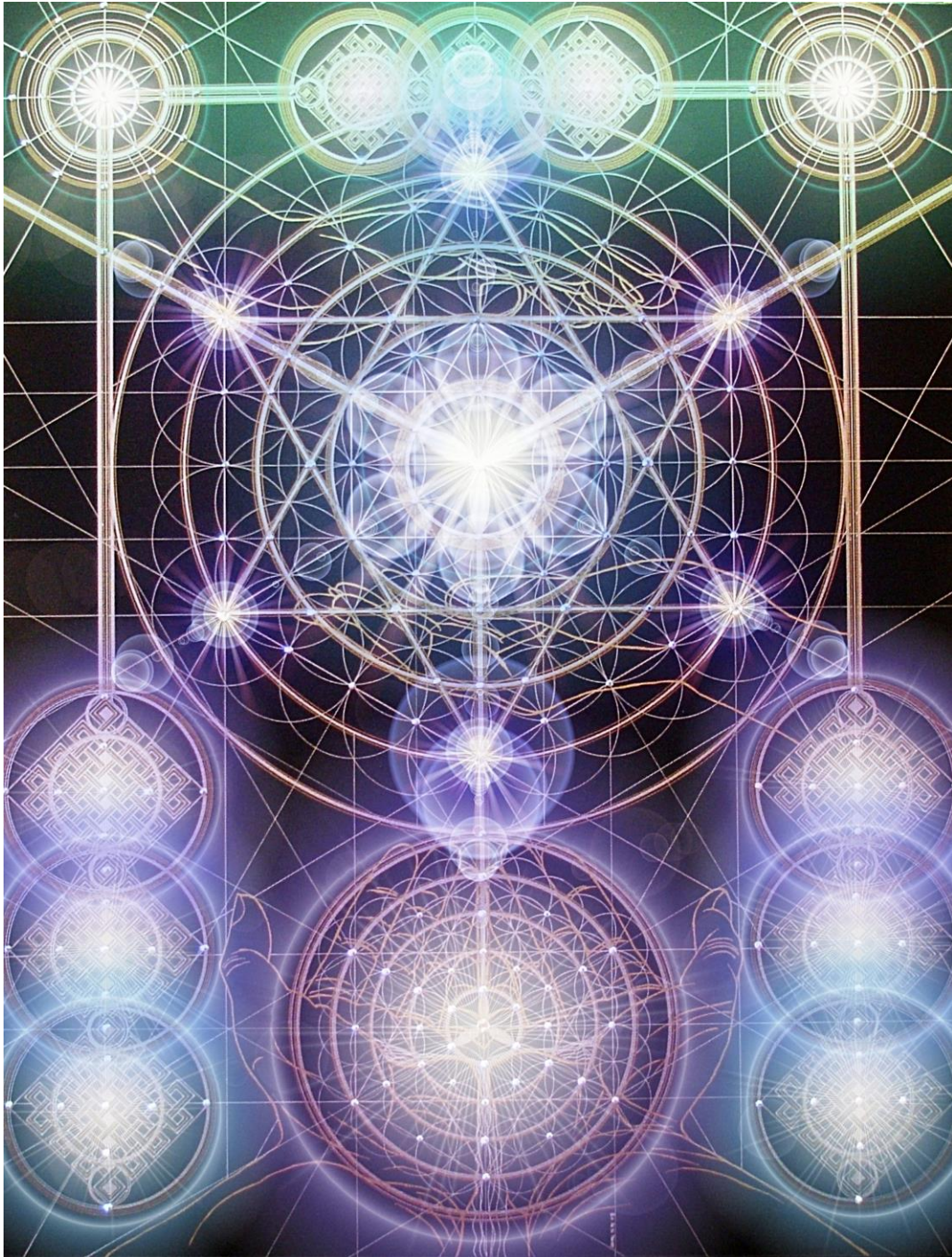
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Shadows of Light

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Quotes of the Quarter

Modern psychology has predominantly been defined as a dualistic science of behavior and the mind. The *scientists of new information*” reject the metaphysical life of the soul or spirit, and along with this, the concept of substantive consciousness. They focus on the observation of overt behavior, usually that of other people or living organisms, or some form of introspection or self-analysis. In contrast, esoteric and mystical teachings primarily concern the study of a human’s inner world. They are premised on the idea that humans in their normal waking state are not properly conscious, but that through self-study and work on oneself, one may awaken and attain higher states of consciousness and being. To do this, we have to study consciousness within ourselves, and struggle to attain the soul and real I.

Unlike western psychology, esoteric psychologies distinguish between the psychological functions and consciousness. Consciousness is something separate from thinking, feeling and sensing. Further, consciousness is substantive and is identified with light and a background of space. Within the inner cosmos of a human being, substantive light energies can illuminate the psychological processes. Most importantly, we can have more or less of this consciousness—this light—which allows for states of self-realization and enlightenment—mystical states of union and transcendence.

Christopher P. Holmes, *Psychological Illusions: Explorations of the G.I. Gurdjieff Fourth Way Teachings* (Ontario, Canada: Zero Point Publications, 2010), 62.

One illusion is that we are awake. When we realize that we are asleep, we will see that all history is made by people who are asleep. Sleeping people fight, make laws; sleeping people obey or disobey them. The worst of our illusions are the wrong ideas among which we live and govern our lives. If we could change

our attitude towards these wrong ideas and understand what they are, this in itself would be a great change and would immediately change other things.

Peter D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way* (New York, NY: Vintage, 1975), 29.

Consciousness means, literally, “knowing together.” A development of consciousness would therefore mean knowing “more together,” and so it would bring about a new relationship to everything previously known. For to know more always means to see things differently ... An increase of consciousness is likened to an increase of light. But we shall see eventually that an increase in consciousness does not mean only that we see with greater clarity what was formerly obscure. The quality is changed. For the moment, the man who experiences it himself is changed. It is not merely the quality of consciousness that it altered, but its very nature.

Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff and P.D. Ouspensky* (London: Robinson and Watkins, 1976), 22-23.

Lucifer and Ahriman are identical with force and matter." One could re-write Newton's 2nd Law ($force = mass \times acceleration$) as $Lucifer = Ahriman \times Acceleration$. Or Einstein's famous equation ($e=mc^2$) as either $Lucifer = Ahriman \times c^2$ or $Energy = Ahriman \times Lucifer^2$. In the first case, if we identify Lucifer with energy and Ahriman with mass then Lucifer becomes the external influences of Ahriman sped up to the speed of light squared. In the second case, we consider energy as having both an ahrimanic (matter or mass) aspect and a luciferian (light) aspect. ...

Dimmed consciousness is for ahrimanic and luciferic beings the window or door through which they can enter the world and carry out

their intention. They attack people when they are in a state of dimmed consciousness and take possession of them. Ahriman and Lucifer do not act in inexplicable terrifying ways but through human beings whose state of consciousness gives them access.

Rudolf Steiner, *The Karma of Materialism*,
Berlin, Sept 25, 1917.

A Gnostic gospel, discovered in the east by a learned traveler of our acquaintance, explains the genesis of light to the profit of Lucifer, as follows: The self-conscious truth is the living thought. Truth is thought as it is in itself, and formulated thought is speech. When eternal thought desired a form, it said: "Let there be light." Now, this thought which speaks is the Word, and the Word said: "Let there be light," because the Word itself is the light of minds. The uncreated light, which is the divine Word, shines because it desires to be seen; when it says: "Let there be light!" it ordains that eyes shall open; it creates intelligences. When God said: "Let there be light!" Intelligence was made, and the light appeared. Now the Intelligence which God diffused by the breath of His mouth, like a star given off from the sun, took the form of a splendid angel, who was saluted by heaven under the name of Lucifer. Intelligence awakened, and comprehended its nature completely by the understanding of that utterance of the Divine Word: "Let there be light!" It felt itself to be free because God had called it into being, and, raising up its head, with both wings extended, it replied: "I will not be slavery." "Then shalt thou be suffering," said the Uncreated Voice. "I will be liberty," replied the light. "Pride will seduce thee," said the Supreme Voice, "and thou wilt bring forth death." "I needs must strive with death to conquer life," again responded the created light. There-upon God loosened from his bosom the shining cord which restrained the superb angel, and beholding him plunge through the night, which he furrowed with glory, He loved the offspring of His thought, and said with an ineffable smile: "How beautiful was the light!"

Eliphas Levi, *The Ritual of Transcendent Magic*, New York, NY: Weiser Books, 1968,
177-178.

The Christian Church is Catholic, or it is nothing worthy of the name of Church at all. For Catholic signifies universal, all-embracing: – the faith everywhere and always received. The prevalent limited view of the term is wrong and mischievous. The Christian Church was first called Catholic because she enfolded, comprehended, and made her own all the religious past of the whole world, gathering up into and around her central figure of the Christ all the characteristics, legends, and symbols hitherto appertaining to the central figures of preceding dispensations, proclaiming the unity of all human aspiration, and formulating in one grand ecumenical system the doctrines of East and West.

Thus the Catholic Church is Vedic, Buddhist, Zend, and Semitic. She is Egyptian, Hermetic, Pythagorean, and Platonic. She is Scandinavian, Mexican, and Druidic. She is Grecian and Roman. She is scientific, philosophic, and spiritual. We find in her teachings the Pantheism of the East, and the individualism of the West. She speaks the language and thinks the thoughts of all the children of men; and in her temple all the gods are shrined. I am Vedantist, Buddhist, Hellenist, Hermetic, and Christian, because I am Catholic. For in that one word all Past, Present, and Future are enfolded. And, as St Augustine and other of the Fathers truly declared, Christianity contains nothing new but its name, having been familiar to the ancients from the beginning. And the various sects, which retain but a portion of Catholic doctrine, are but as incomplete copies of a book from which whole chapters have been torn, or representations of a drama in which some only of the characters and scenes have been retained.

Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, *The Credo of Christendom and Other Addresses and Essays on Esoteric Christianity* (London: John M. Watkins, 1916), 95, 96.



Mandala by Paul Heussenstamm, <http://www.mandalas.com/>.

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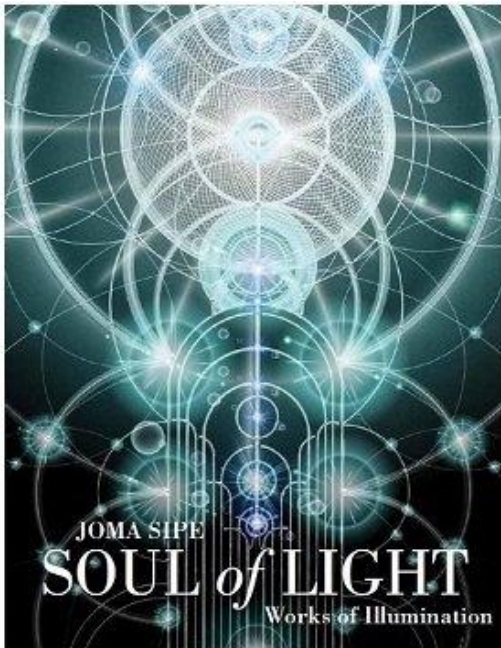
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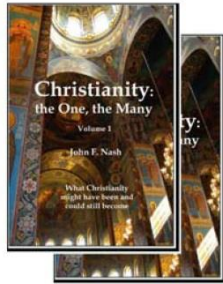
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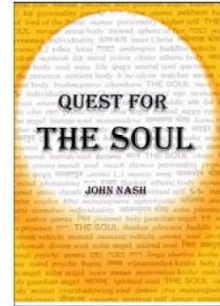
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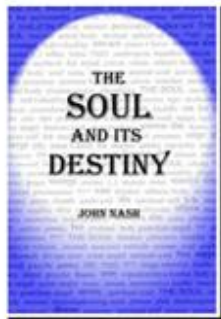
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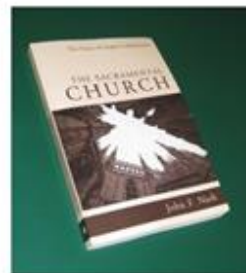
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Modern Science, Psychology, and the Enduring Mystery of Consciousness: An Esoteric/Mystical Critique Part IV, G.I. Gurdjieff and the Fourth Way

James Moffatt

Abstract

This article consists of a further exposition of the Fourth Way—with an emphasis on the epistemological assumptions and propositions that distinguish Gurdjieff’s teaching on consciousness from that of modern psychology. If it is possible to attain higher states of consciousness, as the esoteric tradition maintains, then there must be masters who have realized those states. Most psychologists and scientists dismiss that possibility *a priori*. The question of Gurdjieff’s status as “a master” will be examined—as it is integrally related to and elucidates various aspects of his teaching. Further, that question serves to crystallize the radical differences in the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underlie esotericism and modern psychology. Esoteric teachings are premised on the idea that the level of one’s knowledge is dependent upon the level of one’s consciousness and being. Gurdjieff’s life and work shall be examined in order to consider the relationship between knowledge and being.

Systematic Self-Study

In the previous article, Part III, the basic tenets of G.I. Gurdjieff’s Fourth Way teaching were presented. Gurdjieff claims that our normal waking consciousness should be understood to be, typically, a state of waking sleep and that, as such, we labor under the illusion that we are self-conscious, unified beings who possess will and the capacity to do. Further, Gurdjieff contends that people do not know themselves—they do not understand the essentially fragmented nature of their being and mechanical level of their consciousness—because they are *asleep*. He also asserts, however, that human beings can awaken and acquire all

those properties and faculties that they believe they possess: unity, self-mastery in the sense of being properly conscious and capable of doing, and will. The ability to acquiring these faculties must be achieved by practicing systematic self-study—in terms of an esoteric path of awakening—under the guidance and tutelage of a teacher who has awakened. For Gurdjieff, then, we possess the possibility of awakening consciousness and making it more or less permanent through a process of self-transformation, but its acquisition demands long and difficult commitment, labor, and sacrifice.

Gurdjieff’s method of systematic self-study involves a coordinated effort to understand oneself as a “three-brained being” which functions intellectually, emotionally, and physically. By studying and working to overcome the mechanical functioning of these respective “centers” of intelligence, it is possible to begin to bring them into much more harmonious and conscious operation.¹ The pursuit of that aim involves the methods of self-observation and self-remembering. The former involves impartially witnessing various psychological and physical functions within oneself; the latter is an attempt to be present—without being emotionally identified with whatever one is

About the Author

James Moffatt was raised in Ottawa, Ontario, where he attended Carleton University and earned degrees in both Sociology and Psychology. For the past 35 years, James has collaborated with Dr. Christopher Holmes in studying, writing, and lecturing about consciousness from an esoteric mystical perspective. James resides in Toronto, where he is employed as a law clerk, and also works as a freelance legal and medical writer.

thinking, feeling or doing—and simply sensing and being aware that “*I am here.*”

The majority of modern psychologists give no consideration to the idea that systematic self-study might yield important psychological insights or that it is essentially an empirical method. They know very little about the practice of “self-remembering”—as there is virtually nothing remotely comparable to it within modern psychology. In addition, they assume that observations of the self are part of the discredited, subjective approach which the introspectionists undertook in academic psychology’s infancy and as such, are not to be regarded as legitimate scientific undertakings. Thus, academic psychologists rarely consider self-observation in its esoteric context: that is, as a method of acquiring self-knowledge through the disciplined application of a sophisticated psychological system. Unfortunately, psychologists have dismissed what is perhaps the most important and effective method of studying consciousness.

In an unsparing assessment of the necessity of properly formulating self-observation, Gurdjieff described the demanding level of commitment that his pupils must be willing to assume. In addition, he began by cautioning that self-observation:

... is not so simple a thing as it may seem at first sight. Therefore the teaching puts as the foundation stone the study of the principles of right self-observation. But before passing to the study of these principles a man must make the decision that he will be absolutely sincere with himself, will not close his eyes to anything, will not turn aside from any results, wherever they may lead him, will not fear any deductions, will not limit himself to any previously erected walls. For a man unaccustomed to thinking in this direction, very much courage is required to accept sincerely the results and conclusions arrived at.²

While self-observation demands a singular level of commitment, the rewards are commensurate with the effort involved. For systematic self-observation can dramatically and irrevocably alter one’s understanding of one-

self and the world. Gurdjieff explains that the results of self-observation:

... upset man’s whole line of thinking and deprive him of his most pleasant and dearest illusions. He sees, first of all, his total impotence and helplessness in the face of literally everything that surrounds him. Everything possesses him, everything rules him. He does not possess, does not rule anything. Things attract or repel him. All his life is nothing but a blind following of those attractions and repulsions. Further, if he is not afraid of the conclusions, he sees how what he calls his character, tastes and habits are formed: in a word, how his personality and individuality are built up. But man’s self-observation, however sincerely and seriously it may be carried out, by itself cannot draw for him an absolutely true picture of his internal mechanism.³

Rather than comprising some soft-headed indulgence in “self-examination,” then, Gurdjieff’s approach to self-study and the acquisition of self-knowledge is rigorous, unflinching, and empirical. But, as he cautions, self-observation can only lead so far; in order to overcome the more entrenched habits and sources of sleep, a teacher’s special instruction and intervention are required. Awakening is such an arduous and demanding process that it requires a teacher’s higher understanding of the nature of sleep and external vigilance.

A “Conscious Actor”

In the introductory Fourth Way article in this series, Part III, the author touched briefly on the wide and perplexing diversity of opinions that have been expressed regarding George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff—who has been called everything from a charlatan and fraud to a master and a “Messenger from Above.” In a *Time* magazine article, Gurdjieff was described as seeming “to have been a remarkable blend of P.T. Barnum, Rasputin, Freud, Groucho Marx and everybody’s grandfather.”⁴ That is a wonderfully evocative—albeit entirely superficial—description which succinctly captures the extreme range of impressions that Gurdjieff generated. But any serious questioning of who Gurdjieff was and what his mission may have

been confronts one with questions regarding his status as “a master.” That question leads, in turn, to questions regarding the enduring mysteries posed by the nature of human consciousness which, in coming full circle, leads to a further examination of his teaching. Quite simply: examining Gurdjieff informs his teaching; studying his teaching informs one’s approach to addressing the many mysteries that his life and work represent.

Any attempt to come to grips with Gurdjieff must begin with an acknowledgment that the facts surrounding the first forty some years of his life are shrouded in mystery. In addition, those “facts” are largely derived from his own accounts—most notably from his autobiographical tale, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*.⁵ While there are certainly details within that work which appear to be factual, it is equally true that there are numerous stories and claims that are clearly not historically accurate, nor are they to be understood as such. In my opinion, the book is an allegorical tale, in the guise of autobiography, in which Gurdjieff describes the courage, sacrifice, and commitment involved in seeking after truth. On one level, it is, then, the story of his search for truth; on another level, it is a cautionary tale in which he challenges and dispels common assumptions about what seeking truth means and what the realization of spiritual fulfillment demands.

Having stipulated those qualifications, we do know that Gurdjieff was born sometime between 1866 and 1877 in the Caucasus region of what was, then, Russia and is currently, Armenia. As a boy, he experienced “an irrepressible striving” to know and understand the purpose of life on Earth and, in particular, that of humanity. In pursuing his quest, Gurdjieff traveled widely throughout the East in search of hidden knowledge, over the course of some 20 years, and seems to have made significant contact with esoteric schools.⁶ Eventually, Gurdjieff claimed that he had rediscovered an ancient esoteric teaching—the Fourth Way—which he reformulated in order to make it more accessible to and compatible with the modern mind.

With his appearance in Moscow in 1913, Gurdjieff began to disseminate his teaching; working with select groups of pupils. From the time that he met P.D. Ouspensky—his most prominent pupil—in 1915, until his death, in Paris in 1949, Gurdjieff’s work with his pupils was continually changing in terms of its presentation and its emphasis. In addition to lecturing on the psychological and cosmological aspects of the Fourth Way, he worked intensively with his students to develop physical awareness and consciousness by instructing them in highly sophisticated movements, “sacred gymnastics,” and Eastern dances. His expertise with respect to dance and movement was such that even professional dancers who studied with him acknowledged that the movements he was teaching were extremely sophisticated and both demanded and developed a level of awareness and a state of presence which was quite unique in their experience. Indeed, the many public demonstrations of the dances and movements that Gurdjieff taught were greeted with widespread approval and fascination amongst audiences in Asia, Europe, and the United States. In addition to the intellectual and physical demands, Gurdjieff also superintended various types of practical work amongst his pupils and often engineered situations that proved to be emotionally challenging for those involved. All of these elements of his work which he had been experimenting with during his time in pre-revolutionary Russia and his subsequent work in the Caucasus and Constantinople came together when he purchased the Prieuré de Basses Loges, an estate in Fontainebleau on the outskirts of Paris, and opened his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in 1922.

In many ways, Gurdjieff’s story sounds like a mythological tale: a hero’s journey to uncover the key to a great mystery leads to a miraculous discovery. Empowered by this special knowledge, he devotes himself selflessly to attempting to liberate an imprisoned group or oppressed population and, in doing so, must endure untold suffering and sacrifice in order to fulfill the obligations that his mission to serve imposes. To a certain extent, Gurdjieff

did frame the story of his search and his work in such epic terms. Given that no one really knows what he uncovered and what happened to him during his many years of travel and study, it must be admitted that the truth is beyond anyone's grasp.⁷ Moreover, because we have only Gurdjieff's word as to what he experienced—and it is clear that he frequently embellished, distorted, or simply lied about his past—the insurmountable difficulties of attempting to come to grips with him as a historical figure are apparent. But that task becomes even more complicated if one understands that Gurdjieff was a “conscious actor” who disguised himself and played parts for his own unstated purposes.

Almost everyone who had any sort of extended contact with Gurdjieff commented upon his “acting.” In his oft-cited account of his initial meeting with Gurdjieff, which took place in a Moscow café, Ouspensky described Gurdjieff as giving the impression of “a man poorly disguised.”⁸ But Ouspensky soon discovered that, despite the transparency of Gurdjieff's “acting,” it conveyed, paradoxically, a sense of strength and integrity; he adds that there was agreement, within the ranks of Gurdjieff's pupils, that their teacher would never allow them to see beyond the masks he assumed and the roles that he played. For his part, Gurdjieff maintained that to be what he termed “a conscious actor” represents a very great achievement. In order to “act consciously,” he explained, one must have realized a very high level of consciousness and self-perfection: one must possess the unity of being and the mastery of one's mental, emotional, and physical processes in order to play parts without emotionally investing in or attaching oneself to them. From the accounts of so many of those who knew and worked with him, it seems clear that Gurdjieff's level of self-mastery was evident in the extent to which he played parts consciously. Certainly, many of those who worked closely with Gurdjieff believed that he possessed a unique level of consciousness and being. Daly King, an American psychologist, knew Gurdjieff but refused to become his pupil; instead, King became a member of a New York group which was run by Gurdjieff's pupil, A.R. Orage. Nevertheless, King character-

ized Gurdjieff as having attained a unique “level of existence”; stating that he “gave the indubitable impression that all his responses, mental, emotional and practical were mutually *in balance* and . . . that everyone else was out of step, but not this man himself.”⁹

As to the reasons why Gurdjieff “acted” and would not reveal himself, they remain even more mysterious and elusive than the man himself. Within Sufism, there exists a path called “malamat” whereby a master frequently acts in outrageous, unexpected, upsetting, baffling, or otherwise inexplicable ways to challenge his pupils' capacities to exercise discrimination and self-discipline, as well as to remind them that they must always remember to separate the teaching from the teacher. It would seem that, in part, Gurdjieff's frequently unexpected or puzzling behavior and his penchant for engaging in exaggerated and bombastic displays should be attributed to his assumption, on some level, of a path of blame. As to why a master would assume such a path, it is apparent that Gurdjieff frequently upset or contradicted others' expectations, violated norms, provoked, disturbed, annoyed, and acted outrageously in order to provide his pupils with shocks that would awaken them. A central element of his method of instruction involved “the principle of irritation”: the creation of circumstances in which the pupil would experience an inner conflict—a struggle between “yes” and “no”—within himself or herself. Gurdjieff maintained that the experience of such inner struggle was essential to the process of awakening insofar as it was only under such circumstances that a pupil could become properly aware of habitual aspects of his or her personality and be forced to make a conscious effort to overcome significant sources of sleep. Further, only the teacher was capable of diagnosing and administering the shocks—the external provocations—necessary to create the inner friction which was essential to awakening. Thus, Gurdjieff spoke of the great value of “stepping on people's corns”—jabbing or applying pressure to their most sensitive and vulnerable spots—and not only his willingness to do so, but his duty as a teacher to do so. There are numerous accounts of Gurdjieff's uncanny insight into his pupils' psyches and his brilliant

creativity in devising situations that confronted them with their most essential problems. To do so, Gurdjieff often engaged in behavior that was seemingly excessive, bizarre, or incomprehensible; but, typically, there was eventually revealed to be a method to his madness. Having said that, it also seems clear that, as Ouspensky noted, sometimes there was too much of Gurdjieff's acting: that instead of being an expression of strength, it revealed a weakness in him.

The Mystery of the Master

When he met Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky was an accomplished journalist, mathematician, and philosopher, as well as being a prominent Theosophist and student of mysticism. He traveled extensively throughout the East attempting to contact a legitimate esoteric school; something which he firmly believed existed. Although he had made contact with many interesting individuals and groups during his travels, Ouspensky had returned to his native Russia disappointed by what he regarded as his failure to fulfill his quest. But, after his seemingly fortuitous meeting with Gurdjieff, he believed that he had met a man who, if not an emissary of an esoteric school, had clearly made contact with one and possessed a higher level of knowledge and understanding.¹⁰ While Ouspensky would eventually separate from Gurdjieff for reasons that remain a mystery, he continued to teach Gurdjieff's Fourth Way system after he had relocated to England in the 1920s until his death in 1947.

Although Ouspensky was a mystic, he also maintained a healthy skepticism towards most claims regarding the mystical and the paranormal. Thus, when he first learned of Gurdjieff and heard of his group in Moscow, he admits that he had little interest, as he had heard such "tales" many times before and dismissed as "bad fiction" most stories related to him by people who claimed to have met "Oriental masters who possessed special powers." Accordingly, he opined that: "People invent miracles for themselves and invent exactly what is expected from them. It is a mixture of superstition, self-suggestion, and defective

thinking ..."¹¹ Ouspensky added that it was his observation that such stories never appeared without the connivance of the supposed masters to whom they referred.

In light of his attitude, Ouspensky's willingness to become Gurdjieff's pupil attests to the uniqueness of the latter's being. Moreover, his description of "the miracle" which occurred when he was part of a group which had accompanied Gurdjieff to a summer house in Finland, in August, 1916, bears particular consideration. Ouspensky and two other pupils were in a room with Gurdjieff, who was demonstrating certain postures and physical movements with what Ouspensky described as "an astonishing assurance and precision."¹² Later, as they sat on a wooden floor, Ouspensky began to *hear Gurdjieff's thoughts*. He writes that: "... I heard his voice inside me as [if] it were in the chest near the heart."¹³ To the astonishment of the two other pupils present, Ouspensky replied aloud, over the course of a half hour, to questions and comments that Gurdjieff communicated to him telepathically! After retiring, Ouspensky relates that "a strange excitement again began in me, my pulse began to beat forcibly and I again heard G.'s voice in my chest. On this occasion, I not only heard *but I replied mentally* and G. heard me and answered me."¹⁴

Ouspensky's recounting of Gurdjieff's capacity to communicate telepathically is an intriguing indication of the uniqueness of Gurdjieff's level of consciousness and being. It is a particularly compelling report because of its source. As noted, Ouspensky was an uncompromising skeptic and was dismissive of most of the tall tales of supposed masters who possessed magical powers. He also wrote that Gurdjieff used to laugh at people who wanted and expected him to do miraculous things and to demonstrate "his powers." But then, Ouspensky was hardly alone in providing an account of Gurdjieff's seemingly miraculous capacities. There are numerous other accounts from those who knew Gurdjieff in which they describe him healing them psychically or somehow providing them with some sort of enabling energy to overcome some apparently

insurmountable obstacle.¹⁵ For his part, Gurdjieff claimed that he had acquired paranormal capacities in the course of his search but doing so had precipitated a crisis of conscience which led him to take an oath never to use his powers to gratify his own selfish needs or ends. Then too, esoteric literature is replete with pupils' accounts of their teachers exhibiting paranormal powers.

Frankly, as much as such descriptions of purported paranormal acts might fulfill expectations regarding a master's exceptional powers, I would suggest that they represent the thin end of the wedge with respect to accounts of Gurdjieff's unique level of consciousness and being. During one of their early talks,

Ouspensky asked Gurdjieff about the value of reading "mystical" or "occult" literature. Gurdjieff replied that a great deal could be learned by reading, if one "*knew how to read.*"¹⁶ He told Ouspensky that, if he *understood* everything he read, *then he would have already found that which he was seeking.* Gurdjieff added that, if Ouspensky truly *understood* what he had written in his book, *Tertium Organum*—a work about the nature of consciousness and higher dimensions which he had recently published to great acclaim—he would bow down and beg Ouspensky to be *his* teacher. However, Gurdjieff explained, there is a significant difference between *knowledge* and *understanding*, and that the importance of this distinction is almost entirely unrecognized in modern times. For Gurdjieff, understanding involves the practical apprehension of knowledge; it is knowledge which has been transformed from mere "head learning" to one's entire being. Thus, while Ouspensky might be able to write accurately and insight-

fully about consciousness and higher dimensions, Gurdjieff was claiming that, in order to *understand* consciousness and higher dimensions, Ouspensky would have had to realize the transformation of his own consciousness

and being—thereby acquiring the faculties of the higher emotional and higher intellectual centers—which would allow him to experience and apprehend them directly.

From the many accounts produced by Gurdjieff's pupils, there emerges a consistent portrait of a man whose level of being supported his contentions that the possibilities for self-transformation and the perfection of consciousness represent the great secret of human existence. Dr. Kenneth Walker, an

accomplished British surgeon, wrote that everything Gurdjieff did "seemed to originate within" and that, because of his extraordinary economy of effort, he possessed a unique and "immense capacity for work."¹⁷ Adding that the more he saw of Gurdjieff, the more he was convinced of his uniqueness, Walker described him as a man distinguished by his "profound knowledge, immense vitality and complete immunity from fear."¹⁸ Margaret Anderson, an American editor and writer who became Gurdjieff's pupil, also wrote about his unique presence and seemingly incomparable level of being. She relates that within the circle of Gurdjieff's pupils he was regarded as being a great teacher who was presenting the perennial wisdom of the East in a terminology which would not alienate Western thinkers. Anderson added that:

... what philosophers have taught as "wisdom," what scholars have taught in texts and tracts, what mystics have taught

Gurdjieff's method of systematic self-study involves a coordinated effort to understand oneself as a "three-brained being" which functions intellectually, emotionally, and physically. By studying and working to overcome the mechanical functioning of these respective "centers" of intelligence, it is possible to begin to bring them into much more harmonious and conscious operation. The pursuit of that aim involves the methods of self-observation and self-remembering.

through ecstatic revelation, Gurdjieff would teach as a science—an exact science of man and human behaviour—a supreme science of God, world, man—based on sources outside the scope, reach, knowledge or conception of modern scientists and psychologists.¹⁹

As much as the assessments quoted from Walker and Anderson are shared by so many of those who worked with and knew Gurdjieff, somehow the succeeding generation of scholars and critics who have written about Gurdjieff and his work have tended to discount the importance of his pupils' consistent assertions regarding his unique presence and demonstrably higher level of consciousness and being. There have been two major biographies of Gurdjieff published in English: James Webb's *The Harmonious Circle* and James Moore's *Gurdjieff: Anatomy of a Myth*.²⁰ More recently, Paul Beekman Taylor's *Gurdjieff: A New Life*,²¹ which draws on previously unavailable documents, identifies some of the errors in the earlier biographical works and provides a dissenting opinion regarding some of Webb's and Monroe's interpretations and opinions. While both the Webb and Moore biographies are carefully researched and well-written, providing valuable information and insights about Gurdjieff and his pupils, I believe that they share the same failing. While each author readily acknowledges Gurdjieff's profound effects on his many students and describes his charismatic presence, neither of them grants serious consideration to the idea that Gurdjieff was a master who had attained a higher level of consciousness and being. Furthermore, both Webb and Moore seem to believe that providing an "impartial portrait" of their subject demands that they "balance" their accounts and interpretations of him and his work by reciting stories of his puzzling decisions and courses of action, his eccentric behavior, and his madcap antics. But in doing so, I would suggest that their failure to understand that these external manifestations were parts that Gurdjieff was playing for his own purposes leads them to reduce their interpretations of him and his actions to familiar terms and normal understanding. As such, they never grant the idea—that Gurdjieff was a

"conscious actor"—the consideration it most certainly merits. More importantly, they do not examine the question of what Gurdjieff meant when he said that "to be a conscious actor represented a great achievement." While Taylor gives the impression that he is much more inclined to recognize Gurdjieff's unique level of consciousness and being and appears to tacitly endorse the idea that he was "a conscious actor," he does not address that issue or examine it in any depth.

All such attempts to "normalize" Gurdjieff must be greeted with skepticism, in my opinion. Denis Saurat, a writer and professor of literature who knew Gurdjieff, argued that there is a resistance in the West to admitting the idea that there are masters who, having gone to schools and perfected themselves, return to the outside world, and live amongst us. In the East, Saurat said, the idea—that such people do exist and that "the rules of the ordinary man do not apply"²² to them—is widely accepted. In the introduction to *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, Jeanne de Salzmann—who was Gurdjieff's longest serving pupil and one of those charged with the responsibility of continuing his work after his death—addresses the difficulty that the concept of the master creates for Westerners. But she then adds, in unequivocal terms, that it is only by recognizing that Gurdjieff was a master that one can grasp the meaning of his life and work:

According to traditional conceptions, the function of a master is not limited to the teaching doctrines, but implies an actual incarnation of knowledge, thanks to which he can awaken other men, and help them in their search simply by his presence. He is there to create conditions for an experience through which knowledge can be lived as fully as possible. *This is the real key to the life of Gurdjieff*.²³ [emphasis added]

Strangely, both James Webb and James Moore seemed to have been unwilling and/or unable to take Mme de Salzmann's assessment seriously. I would submit that their refusal to do so constitutes the fatal flaw which their respective works share.

In keeping with Denis Saurat's perspective, I believe that those who have attempted to reduce Gurdjieff to familiar categories by treating him strictly as a historical figure—one who can be evaluated and understood in terms of normal psychology—have completely misjudged and underestimated the man. In my book, *An Alien Intelligence*,²⁴ I adopt the perspective which Northrop Frye, the great literary critic, argued must be applied when interpreting the life of Jesus as it appears in the Gospels. As Frye explained, Jesus is represented as a *mythical*, rather than a *historical figure* in the Gospels. Therefore, he must be understood to be “a figure who drops into history from another dimension of reality, and thereby shows what the limitations of the historical perspective are.”²⁵ [emphasis added] While I am certainly not equating Gurdjieff with Jesus, I am suggesting that he was a man who had acquired a higher level of consciousness and being. Therefore, I believe that Frye's characterization of “a figure who drops into history from another dimension of reality” succeeds—in a way which has completely eluded his biographers—in capturing the quantum discontinuity of Gurdjieff's level of consciousness and being from that with which we are familiar. Accordingly, I am suggesting that Gurdjieff should be approached as a figure who reveals the limits of not only the historical but the conventional psychological perspective. Furthermore, I would suggest that the more one works on oneself in terms of the Fourth Way—which progressively reveals the depth and the coherence of the teaching—the more one is inclined to regard Gurdjieff as having been a master. While critics and skeptics assume that Gurdjieff's pupils were too close to him and too invested in his work to provide unbiased assessments of him, it must be acknowledged that they were afforded privileged perspectives by virtue of their direct contact with him.

Most importantly, Gurdjieff's pupils and all those of succeeding generations who have actively worked to study and know themselves in terms of his teaching subscribe to a psychological system which posits the existence of human beings who have acquired higher levels of consciousness and being. To the extent that the hierarchical nature of consciousness becomes a

psychological and cosmological reality, one apprehends the unique authority and integrity of Gurdjieff's life and work.

Although I do not believe, literally, in Gurdjieff's otherworldly origins, I would argue that he should be regarded as *an alien intelligence*: one whose level of consciousness and being differs to the point of incompatibility with our normal understanding of what it means to be human. In the same way, my thirty-five years of study of the Fourth Way have led me to share Ouspensky's opinion that the more one becomes involved with the teaching, the more one forms the impression of being in contact with a living entity—something organic and vital—rather than simply a set of ideas. In other words: an alien intelligence. Finally, my work to study myself and to develop the dormant faculties of consciousness and being has led me to conclude that the cultivation and the nourishment of self-knowledge involves the birthing of an alien intelligence from within oneself.

There is one other aspect of the master's life and work which is rarely discussed—even by those who do acknowledge the existence of such evolved beings—but which is essential in weighing any discussion of the subject. *A lower level of consciousness cannot understand a higher level of consciousness*. As much as scholars, biographers, and pupils may wish to examine, probe, dissect, analyze, and pontificate on the mysteries of Gurdjieff's existence and his mission, this indisputable reality—which is tacitly assumed by those who believe that Gurdjieff was a master—should temper any and all commentaries and conclusions. For example, consider the following reply by the great Sufi sage, Hazarat Inayat Khan, to a question about the perplexing variability in audiences' responses to his lectures:

“Did you think that my whole work consists of giving lectures?” ... “Those lectures are no more than a screen; my real task lies in the higher spheres. If I had to judge the results of all I do from the attendance of this handful of people, I should feel very discouraged indeed. ... One of the most important tasks that I have to fulfil is *the tuning of the inner spheres in the different*

*countries I visit, to a higher pitch of vibration. That is why I have to travel so much.*²⁶ [emphasis added]

H.I. Khan's reply is remarkably revealing and should serve as a caveat to all those who comment on the meaning of any master's work. That is not at all to suggest that the lives and work of alleged masters should not be approached critically and skeptically. Nevertheless, it does serve as a reminder that the masters may well be functioning and working on not only the levels of meaning with which pupils are conversant, but on higher levels and in terms of meaning that are completely alien to those who have not awakened and perfected themselves. The latter constituency includes most, if not all, psychologists and scientists.

Knowledge and Being

All esoteric knowledge is premised on the idea that the realization of higher knowledge is dependent upon the attainment of higher levels of being. Gurdjieff states that, while we recognize differences in levels of knowledge, we fail to understand that being can also be of different levels. Normally, people equate the term "being" with existence and define it in terms of its opposite of non-existence. But, for Gurdjieff, being may be of different levels and categories. Thus, he asserts that the being of a plant and a mineral is different, as is that of a mineral and an animal. But he also claims that:

... the being of two people can differ from one another more than the being of a mineral and an animal. This is exactly what people do not understand. And they do not understand that *knowledge* depends on *being*. ... in Western culture it is considered that a man may possess great knowledge, for example, he may be an able scientist, make discoveries, advance science, and at the same time he may be, and has the right to be, a petty, egoistic, caviling, mean, envious, vain, naïve, and absent-minded man. It seems to be considered here that a professor must always forget his umbrella everywhere.²⁷

Continuing, Gurdjieff states that, if knowledge is overdeveloped at the expense of being, it becomes too theoretical, too abstract, and can actually be harmful because it begins to complicate an individual's life, creating "new troubles and calamities." He explains that the reason for this unforeseen and unrecognized problem is that:

...knowledge which is not in accordance with being cannot be large enough for, or sufficiently suited to, man's real needs. It will always be a knowledge of *one thing* together with ignorance of *another thing*; a knowledge of *the detail* without a knowledge of the *whole*; a knowledge of the *form* without a knowledge of the *essence*.²⁸

According to Gurdjieff, not only is knowledge determined by being, but he also maintains that:

... at any given level of being the possibilities of knowledge are limited and finite. Within the limits of a given being the *quality* of knowledge cannot be changed, and the accumulation of information of one and the same nature, within already known limits, alone is possible. A change in *the nature of knowledge* is possible only with a change in *the nature of being*.²⁹ [emphasis added]

Gurdjieff insists that, generally speaking, the being of modern man is "of very inferior quality" due to an overemphasis on the line of knowledge. He adds that *realizing a balance between knowledge and being* is more important than the development of one line at the expense of the other. When knowledge outweighs being, Gurdjieff states that a man "knows but has no power to do. It is useless knowledge."³⁰ He characterizes an individual who has pursued the line of knowledge, without pursuing the line of being as producing "a weak yogi"; "a man who knows a great deal but ... *does not understand*."³¹ However, when the development of being outweighs knowledge, "a man *has the power to do*, but does not know ...he can do something but he does not know what to do."³² In such cases, the

individual is what Gurdjieff terms “*a stupid saint*”; if he does something, he follows his feelings which may lead him astray or to do the very opposite of his intentions.

I believe that the various testimonies about Gurdjieff’s status as a master are based not only on his extraordinary knowledge and being, but also the demonstrable balance that existed within him between the two. As such, it was not only the unique nature of his teaching which appealed to Gurdjieff’s pupils, but also his singular presence, which conveyed an undeniable authority and transmitted much more to them than they could identify or explain. C.S. Nott wrote that “when Gurdjieff said something to you, it registered not only in the mind but in the feelings, in such a way that you could not help but think seriously about it.”³³ He added that simply sitting with Gurdjieff—whom he described as “blazing with energy”—was a unique experience which left one feeling revitalized. Noting that an electrical motor could be charged simply by being close to a more powerful one, Nott said that “so a person could be magnetized by being near Gurdjieff, by his force and ‘being.’”³⁴

There are numerous accounts from both Gurdjieff’s pupils and others who knew him that are consistent with Nott’s comments about the distinct and palpable force of Gurdjieff’s being. But the attribution of such qualities is not restricted to Gurdjieff; they recur repeatedly in pupils’ descriptions of various esoteric masters’ presence. Indeed, as J.G. Bennett points out in his book, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*, the idea of a master transmitting subtle energy to a pupil exists within various esoteric spiritual traditions.³⁵ For example, within Sufism, the *murshid* or master furthers the seeker’s spiritual development by transmitting *baraka*, an “enabling energy.” In Christianity, the term, “transfer of merits,” refers to the idea that an individual who has attained a certain level of spiritual development may help those who are less spiritually developed and incapable of helping themselves. Thus, a monk or nun might help sinners to repent—even without their knowledge or desire—by transferring “effectual grace.” Bennett notes that similar ideas occur in Buddhism, wherein one’s spir-

itual progress may be furthered simply by entering into the *darshan* of a sanctified individual. In Islam, a spiritual transformation can be effected by simple contact, *sohbat*, with an evolved spiritual teacher.

Of course, this idea—that masters are capable of transmitting subtle, spiritually enabling energies—is almost entirely alien to modern thought and would be perfunctorily dismissed by most scientists and psychologists as being utterly fanciful (not to mention scientifically unverifiable) and, hence, unreal. By contrast, Gurdjieff not only subscribed to its reality, but claimed that his pupils could draw on what he termed his “*hanbledzoin*”—the energy of the “*kesdjan*” (“vessel of the soul”) or astral body—in order to help them work on themselves to awaken. He claimed that, by virtue of his own spiritual development, he possessed more of this subtle energy than he required and, thus, he was capable of transmitting it to his pupils. Again, many of Gurdjieff’s pupils stated that they did feel he provided them with an enabling energy which they could not identify, but which they did not doubt was real. While not as spectacular as Ouspensky’s “miracle,” such accounts are further indications that Gurdjieff had attained a higher level of consciousness and being and had attained the status of being “a master.”

The relationship of knowledge to being, which Gurdjieff puts forth, is precisely what is either unrecognized or denied within post-technological cultures. Modern science, psychology, and education are premised on *the epistemological and ontological assumptions* that being is, as Gurdjieff says, simply a term to denote existence and as such, is irrelevant to knowledge. There is very little, if any recognition that there exists a scale of being, just as there is almost no recognition of higher states of consciousness. Consequently, the concept of the master exists outside the assumptive framework of modern psychology. That position is a direct result of what Ken Wilber termed “the disaster of modernity”: in which the traditional Great Nest of Being—a hierarchy of human and universal consciousness—collapsed into the flatland of matter, wherein all interior qualities, including experience,

were devalued or denied significance. From an esoteric perspective, materialists' blindness to the existence of the scale of consciousness represents the essential failing in modern psychology and science. For self-transformation—through the acquisition of esoteric self-knowledge—unveils both the hidden dimensions and hierarchy of personal and universal consciousness. And in doing so, it further reveals our cosmic connections: as given by the integral relationship between psychology and cosmology. The efforts of those who have developed methods of self-transformation have created an esoteric science of being and consciousness. Its existence and its claims refute the alleged superiority of the Galilean revolution in defining science: wherein only that which could be quantified and measured was deemed to be real. Moreover, the existence of esoteric masters, throughout the ages, attests to the reality of the Great Nest of Being, and the impossibility of arriving at any comprehensive account of human beings or the Universe which does not recognize its existence. The study of those masters—who, by attaining higher levels of consciousness and being, embody what Gurdjieff termed “finished worlds”—may allow us glimpses and intimations of the profound significance of the relationship between being and knowing.

Personality and Essence

In part, Gurdjieff attributes the impoverished quality of man's being to the differential development of “Personality” and “Essence.” This distinction is unrecognized by modern psychologists. Yet, it is another critical concept in the Fourth Way account of the profound differences between what humans are, and what they can and should be. In broad terms, a person's Essence consists of that which is his own; Personality is what is not his own. Essence is that with which one is born: one's heredity, nature, physical features, aptitudes, disposition, proclivities, and the like. Personality is all that which comes from outside oneself: that which one acquires or is imposed on one through the chance and circumstances of one's upbringing, surroundings, culture, education, and life experiences.

A small child, Gurdjieff says, lives in her Essence. All her desires, tastes, likes and dislikes are her own. They directly express her being. However, as the child matures, Personality begins to develop and is basically established by five or six years of age—through the influence of others, by imitation, and by conditioning. Ideally, Personality and Essence would develop together in a harmonious balance, but this very rarely happens. Due to the myriad sources of imitation and suggestion—family, school, friends, grown-ups—the child's Personality grows rapidly and she is filled with ideas, feelings, and sensations that are not her own, but simply that which she has been conditioned and socialized to accept and believe. In this way, Personality grows over Essence like a crust or shell. Essence becomes less and less frequently manifest, and is more and more feeble when it does so. Therefore, Essence is deprived of contact with the world and cannot grow. Personality grows at its expense—assuming a disproportionate influence—and becomes dominant in one's interactions and commerce with the world.

It is important to understand that Gurdjieff is not stating that Personality is bad and Essence is good. Each is necessary and each must grow if one's being is to develop properly. Certainly, there are many things that must be learned and acquired through Personality's interactions in the world. As Gurdjieff says, Personality may even be underdeveloped in those uneducated, simple people who live close to Nature and in whom Essence is relatively strong. But more typically, Personality's dominance arrests the growth of Essence at a very early age. As a result, Gurdjieff maintains, it is not unusual to find that a sophisticated, cultured person has the Essence of a child.

Of course, the term “Personality” refers, not to one thing, but rather to all the *personas* one assumes or the masks that one wears in various rounds of life. These *personas* or masks—acquired involuntarily by the chances of one's conditioning and contact with sleeping people—appear and disappear according to equally involuntary and accidental dictates. Thus, Personality is asleep. The problem, according

to Gurdjieff, is that Personality *wants* to be hypnotized and remain asleep. Essence, on the other hand, is asleep, but it can be awakened. To do so, however, demands that Personality be changed consciously, such that it becomes more passive. Without such conscious direction, Personality remains superficial and is subject to constant unconscious changes. One set of experiences drives out another, which are, in turn, driven out by another. One aspect of Personality says: “I want” or “I like” or “I do not like,” and then gives way to another set of different appetites and desires. Consequently, people go through life existing as multiple, frequently antagonistic personages. In such circumstances—the life of the sleepwalker in the sleeping world—there is no control or real will. *Everything happens* and will continue to happen unless Essence is awakened. Only when Essence begins to experience and grow can its proper balance with Personality be restored, and the possibility of developing being and real “Will” be realized.

A.R. Orage, a celebrated literary critic who was one of Gurdjieff’s most prominent pupils, underlines the importance of developing one’s Essence by distinguishing it from Personality in these stark terms:

Essence is truth about oneself in contrast to social and expected opinions of oneself. Essence is truth irrespective of time, place, and the feelings of anyone. It is what one would dare to avow if no consequences were to follow on a statement of the truth. It is truth before God. Personality is truth before men—before the world, conditioned by “What will people think?”³⁶

Ouspensky recounts a story which is most instructive in considering some of these claims about levels of being, Personality and Essence, and knowledge and understanding. He describes how it was a practice of Gurdjieff’s pupils who met in Moscow, during the World War I years, “to keep silence”—that is, to avoid unnecessary talking—when they gathered at their teacher’s apartment. Unnecessary talking is one of Personality’s most automatic and common activities and, hence, an important habit to oppose by trying to make it more passive. Ouspensky relates what hap-

pened when he wanted to introduce some of his Moscow friends to Gurdjieff. Only one, V.A.A., produced the impression of “being sufficiently alive” to be considered. When his friend expressed an eagerness to meet Gurdjieff, he was invited to have lunch with him. Gurdjieff seated Ouspensky’s friend next to him and was the perfect host. However, as Ouspensky belatedly realized, Gurdjieff was testing his friend:

... The fact was that everyone kept silence. A. held out for five minutes. Then he began to talk. He spoke of the war, of all our allies and enemies together and separately; he communicated the opinions of all the public men of Moscow and St. Petersburg upon all possible subjects; then he talked about the dessication of vegetables for the army ... particularly the dessication of onions, then about artificial manures, agricultural chemistry, and chemistry in general; about “melioration”; about spiritism, “the materialization of hands,” and about what else I do not remember now.³⁷

Ouspensky goes on to describe how his friend was so carried away with his own talk and his need to express his attitudes, opinions, and beliefs that he was essentially oblivious to everything and everyone around him. He was completely unaware that no one else had said a word. As such, his friend was revealed to be a fool. Gurdjieff used him to prove a point to his pupils. After A. had thanked Gurdjieff for a “very interesting conversation” and had departed, Gurdjieff laughed slyly and said:

There, you see He is called a clever man. But he would not have noticed it even if I had taken his trousers off him. Only let him talk. He wants nothing else. And everybody is like that. This one was much better than many others. He told no lies. And he really knew what he talked about, in his own way of course. But think, what use is he? He is no longer young. And perhaps this was the one time in his life when there was an opportunity of hearing the truth. And he talked himself all the time.³⁸

It is very difficult to read this account without laughing at A.’s behavior—but the laughter is

that of self-recognition. Most people are much more like Ouspensky's friend than we realize or would care to admit. In our lives, Personality runs amok with unfailing dependability, such that, like this man, we are oblivious to its automatic manifestations. If this account seems far-fetched or contrived, one need only observe what happens when one maintains silence or speaks only when necessary in a social context. So much of what passes for conversation, the exchange of ideas, and repartee—even of the most clever and entertaining variety—simply happens. In a state of sleep, people talk mechanically. And one can prove that to oneself beyond doubt simply by struggling to oppose this activity. It would seem that nothing could be so simple, but that conceit merely reflects the extent to which so much of our experience and behavior is automatically elicited and how we fail to understand its mechanical nature.

As Gurdjieff says, A. is what is called a clever man. He is a man in whom Personality is very well developed—he knows a lot about a lot of things—but what good is it? Placed in a situation in which a seemingly innocuous contrivance—people not talking—creates an unbearable friction in him, his Personality cannot remain still. And so he talks until he is so engrossed in talking and being clever ... that he is not only unaware of what is happening but is literally deluded. Can such a man be conscious? Does he understand things, or is he more like a clever parrot who can name things? Is he a free man choosing to act from the essence of his being? Or is he an automaton—a clever machine—being controlled and moved by forces he neither suspects nor would recognize if he was told of them?

The Centers' Wrong Work

In the previous article, Part III, Gurdjieff's concept of the seven centers of intelligence or brains—each of which has its own way of knowing, speed of operation, memory, and energies—was outlined. There are five centers responsible for humans' functioning in normal waking consciousness, and two centers that feature humans' higher intellectual and emo-

tional faculties. Because the moving, instinctive, and sexual centers typically comprise a human being's organic intelligence, Gurdjieff describes humans as "three-brained beings" that function intellectually, emotionally, and physically. In order to facilitate more conscious functioning of each of the centers, Gurdjieff states that it is necessary to understand the various classes of "wrong work" which are instrumental in keeping a center working at its lowest, most mechanical level of consciousness and precluding it from working properly and in harmony with the other centers. While these classes of wrong work are not recognized in modern psychology, the process of self-study reveals that they are common and that they frequently dominate and debilitate a center's functioning.

Self-study reveals that Gurdjieff's claim—that there exist three independent minds at work within us—provides, at the very least, an interesting interpretative framework within which one's experience and behavior may be analyzed. Further, it becomes apparent that, as he says, each of the centers works with varying degrees of consciousness, and that they are intimately linked with one another. Gurdjieff was most emphatic in asserting that we do not understand the extent to which our mental, emotional, and physical functions are in constant reciprocal action: how they inform one another, how they depend upon one another, how they result from one another. One cannot change without the others changing as he explains:

The attitude of your body corresponds to your sentiments and to your thoughts. A change in your emotions will inevitably produce the corresponding change in your mental attitude and in your physical pose. A change of thought will start another current of emotional energy, which will naturally change the physical posture. So that, if we want to alter our ways of feeling and our forms of thinking, we must first change our moving postures, and at the same time, without changing our emotional and mental postures, it is impossible for us to acquire

new moving postures. We cannot change one without changing the other.³⁹

This “connectedness” of the centers and the fact that psychologists do not study themselves systematically accounts, to a certain extent, for their failure to recognize the importance of understanding humans as multi-brained beings. It also explains the limited utility of thinking in new ways as a means of developing consciousness. Thought can only awaken one to a certain extent, before habitual postures and feelings interfere and mechanically evoke equally habitual and mechanical thoughts. In essence, the subtleties and the strengths of the centers’ connectedness and wrong work demands the guidance and the careful monitoring that only a teacher can provide. For only an informed and vigilant external intelligence can keep proper watch over a sleepwalker and provide the necessary shocks or interventions to awaken him or her.

In the intellectual center, “lying,” “internal considering,” and “imagination” are categories of wrong work that must be identified and opposed. *Lying* refers to our tendency to speak about that which we know as if we did. This pervasive tendency to inflate our self-importance with pretensions to knowledge is instilled and exacerbated by innumerable dubious sources of imitation, conditioning, education, and socialization. In addition, our lying is exacerbated by our tendency to believe that, because we can name something, we understand it. While we readily admit the difference in practical affairs between “knowing” and “knowing how,” we fail to recognize that the same standard should be applied to knowing and understanding. We may know something factually or conceptually, but understanding involves translating and applying our knowledge to being: that is, by digesting concepts and ideas in such a way that we are capable of integrating them into a more comprehensive and inclusive framework. To understand is to apprehend things not only intellectually, but also by sensing and emotionally incorporating them.

Internal considering describes the process by which we are preoccupied by our feelings that others fail to value or treat us with sufficient

sensitivity, care, and attention. Consequently, we are often absorbed in thinking about what others think about us or in conducting imaginary conversations wherein we express our feelings about the injustice of being slighted or wronged. Self-indulgent fantasizing about reactions to such affronts, both real and imagined, comprises internal considering. *Imagination*, in Gurdjieff’s terminology, refers to being lost in aimless and self-indulgent daydreaming and fantasizing. Such wasteful activity can assume the form of both self-aggrandizing and egoistic flights of fancy and descends into bouts of catastrophizing and torturous self-loathing, and everything fanciful and unrealistic in between those extremes.

The emotional center’s wrong work consists of “identification,” “self-love,” “vanity,” and “negative emotions.” In the previous article in this series, the subtle pervasiveness of identification was discussed, as well as its singular role as the most important obstacle to self-remembering. Quite simply, as long as one is emotionally attached or invested in any aspect of one’s experience or behavior, one cannot remember oneself by being fully present. *Self-love* and *vanity* are special types of identification. They are expressions of our absorption in our False Personalities: Gurdjieff’s term for the complexes of imaginary beliefs, images, and histories we develop about who and what we are. Our self-love and vanity involve our devotion to and nurturing of this fictional, narcissistic sense of self which becomes the center of gravity for our interactions with others and as such, the source of the spell of illusions and self-deceit by which we are unknowingly hypnotized and imprisoned.

Studying the final category of the emotional center’s wrong work—*negative emotions*—is a most illuminating and shocking process. The sheer number of terms for negative emotions—anger, disgust, jealousy, hatred, despair, dependency, distaste, irritability, envy, distrust, annoyance, rage, bitterness, disillusionment, fear, loathing, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera—is but the first indication of how pervasive they are and what a powerful role they play in most people’s lives. Not only are negative emotions useless and unjustified, according to Gurdjieff,

but they are also extremely debilitating. They deprive one of energy—as is obvious in the case of depression—but, more importantly, they feed and strengthen one’s identifications and False Personality. Because we live in a world which is dominated by and glorifies negative emotions, it is very difficult to recognize how they originate within us and express our pathologies—rather than being appropriate and necessary reactions to others’ outrages and excesses.

There are several classes of the moving-instinctual center’s wrong work: processes that restrict the body’s capacity to work properly. We all have chronic patterns of *unnecessary muscular tension* that constrict our physical awareness and bind our energy. In addition, we all display unconscious *habitual postures, gestures, movements, and vocal intonations*: all of which are linked with equally habitual and unconscious emotional and intellectual postures and processes. Although there is very little written material describing Gurdjieff’s analysis of the moving-instinctual center’s wrong work, that does not indicate a lack of emphasis, in his work, regarding the importance of developing consciousness of the body. On the contrary, Gurdjieff emphasized that self-remembering begins with self-sensing: that is, with increased consciousness and awareness of one’s physical state of presence. But because Gurdjieff worked directly with his pupils—taking each one’s type and unique problems into account—he did not leave detailed written commentaries upon or accounts of his methods. Thus, while he emphasized the importance of learning to

breathe, he was extremely critical of those who provided generic descriptions of breathing exercises. He asserted that it was necessary to study each pupil individually in order to understand how one’s breathing could be brought

into harmony with one’s postures and movements.

The sex center, Gurdjieff claimed, is typically engaged in wrong work. In fact, it is the misuse of the sexual center’s energy by the other centers and the other center’s energies in the sex center that is “the principal motive force of all mechanicalness”⁴⁰ and is responsible for the rule of waking sleep. Because the sex center’s energies are the most refined, they easily pass over into the other centers and are expressed through them.

In all such cases, “the misuse of sexual energy” is indicated by a particular vehemence or fervor which an activity or interest does not demand. Thus, the intellectual center does not simply write books; instead, it is always angrily and indignantly fighting, disputing, and criticizing. The emotional center preaches Christianity ... but it does so by invoking fire and brimstone, instilling fear of eternal damnation, raging against sinners or threatening the torments of Hell. The moving center is obsessed with sport, climbs mountains, wrestles, fights, and tries to create records. In each center, Gurdjieff claims that the common denominator which indicates the misuse of sexual energy is: “a particular vehemence and, together with it, the uselessness of the work in question.”⁴¹ None of the other centers can ever create anything useful with the sex center’s energy.

From an esoteric perspective, materialists’ blindness to the existence of the scale of consciousness represents the essential failing in modern psychology and science. For self-transformation—through the acquisition of esoteric self-knowledge—unveils both the hidden dimensions and hierarchy of personal and universal consciousness. And in doing so, it further reveals our cosmic connections: as given by the integral relationship between psychology and cosmology.

There is one other general category of “wrong work” which consists of *the habitual working of one center for another*. Although this process describes “the abuse of sex,” it is also apparent in the attempts of the intellectual center to feel ... or of the emotional center to think ... or of the moving center to think or feel. Gurdjieff maintains that this substitution of one center for another is much more prevalent than one might imagine. He cites numerous examples of the deleterious results that occur when one center attempts to do the work which should properly be performed by another center. For example, the emotional center’s attempt to think creates unnecessary nervousness and haste in situations demanding calm deliberation and careful judgment. On the other hand, the intellectual center’s attempts to do the emotional center’s work results in excessive deliberation where quick reactions are necessary or, sometimes, an inability to make discriminations that the emotional center would recognize, but which the thinking center cannot distinguish. As Gurdjieff explains: “The mind cannot understand shades of feeling. ... *A full man does not understand a hungry one.*”⁴²² Similarly, Gurdjieff explains that the intellectual center can neither appreciate sensations nor properly perform the moving center’s functions. As he says, it is impossible to drive a car or even to type by using one’s mind to direct and control such complex motor activities because the intellectual center cannot function at the moving center’s speed. On the other hand, the results of the moving center attempting to do the intellectual center’s work are equally ineffective, as Gurdjieff explains:

Moving center working for thinking center produces, for example, mechanical reading or mechanical listening, as when a man reads or listens to nothing but words and is utterly unconscious of what he is reading or hearing. This generally happens when attention, that is, the direction of the thinking center’s activity, is occupied with something else and when the moving center is trying to replace the absent thinking center; but this very easily becomes a habit, because the thinking center is generally distracted not by useful work, by thought, or

by contemplation, but simply by daydreaming or by imagination.⁴³

It is safe to say that almost every reader must have experienced equivalent unconscious reading or unconscious driving or unconscious work of various kinds. In such instances, one is on “automatic pilot” and, only after one has come to and awakened briefly, does it become apparent that one has been reading or driving or working quite automatically. Gurdjieff’s model of the centers and their wrong work provides a framework for understanding this process which is much more sophisticated and revealing, I would suggest, than modern psychologists simply labeling this phenomenon as “automatization.” Indeed, given his contention that our normal waking consciousness is a waking sleep, Gurdjieff’s analysis identifies a critical aspect of the dynamics of how our intellectual, emotional, and physical processes happen mechanically and automatically. For Fourth Way pupils, efforts to self-observe repeatedly reveal that the substitution of one center for another occurs routinely and results in unconscious mechanical operation of the physical, emotional, and intellectual brains.

A New Language

In order to study oneself systematically, with the aim of consciously evolving, Gurdjieff insisted that his pupils must learn a new language which they would apply to themselves and the world. People hold a very firm conviction that, because they speak the same language, they understand one another. However, Gurdjieff asserted that this is simply a further expression of the illusions that characterize life in the sleeping world. Our normal subjective language, he explained, is:

... full of wrong concepts, wrong classifications, wrong associations. ... owing to the essential characteristics of ordinary thinking, that is to say, to its vagueness and inaccuracy, every word can have thousands of different meanings according to the material that the speaker has at his disposal and the complex of associations at work in him at the moment. People do not clearly realize to what a degree their language is

subjective, that is, what different things each of them says while using the same words.⁴⁴

Gurdjieff contends that, while people are able to communicate information of a practical character effectively, the limits of normal language become evident when they attempt to convey more abstract or complex ideas. In such instances, he says, people mistakenly assume that they are using words in the same way and that they understand one another. In order to overcome the confusion created by subjective language, Gurdjieff states an “exact language is needed.” He states that systems of ancient knowledge begin:

...with the study of a language which will make it possible to establish at once exactly what is being said, from what point of view, and in what connection. This new language contains hardly any new terms or new nomenclature, but *it bases the construction of speech upon a new principle, namely, the principle of relativity*; that is to say, it introduces relativity into all concepts and thus makes possible an accurate determination of the angle of thought—for what precisely ordinary language lacks are expressions of relativity.⁴⁵

Recall, from the previous article in this series, Gurdjieff maintains that the Universe consists of seven world orders and that everything in it is either evolving or involving as part of ascending or descending octaves, respectively. The application of the principle of relativity within his system is based upon “the indication of the object under examination to the evolution possible for it; upon the indication of its *place* in the evolutionary ladder.”⁴⁶ Gurdjieff maintains that, once one has mastered this language by being able to grasp its application in terms of his system of thought, then it becomes possible to communicate “a great deal of knowledge and information which cannot be transmitted in ordinary language even by using all possible scientific and philosophical terms.”⁴⁷

Gurdjieff states that, in normal language, a conversation in which the word “man” is used

will have as many meanings as there are people involved in the conversation. By contrast, he explains that, within his system, there exist seven words to denote “man”: man number one through man number seven. Within the Fourth Way, there exist three fundamental “types” of man who are ruled by sleep: man number one, man number two, and man number three. *Man number one* refers to those in whom the psychic center of gravity lies in the moving center; the moving and instinctual functions predominate over the intellectual and emotional functions. In *man number two*, the center of gravity lies in the emotional center and, thus, feelings and emotions typically outweigh intellectual and physical functions. For *man number three*, it is the intellect which characteristically dominates the emotional and physical functions.

In Gurdjieff’s classification, the most fully evolved level of being which a human may realize is that of man number seven. *Man number seven* possesses everything a human being can attain: consciousness, individual I, will, and immortality, as well as many other properties that, in our state of psychological illusions, we erroneously attribute to ourselves. *Man number six* is very close to man number seven; he is an evolved being, except that all of his properties are not permanent. *Man number five* has consciously evolved to the point of realizing unity. Gurdjieff states that *man number four* represents a transitional level of being and that he cannot attain this level accidentally but, rather, he is always the “product of school work.” Further, he stands on a higher level than man number one, two, and three by virtue of the fact that he has acquired “a permanent center of gravity which consists in his ideas, in his valuation of the work, and in his relation to the school.”⁴⁸ His centers have begun to become balanced and he has begun to know himself and to acquire real aims. Man number four was born as a man number one, two, or three, but he has transformed himself by working to awaken and to consciously evolve through the systematic study of himself.

Gurdjieff asserts that the division of man into seven categories—the application of the prin-

ciple of relativity—“explains thousands of things which otherwise cannot be understood.”⁴⁹ In accordance with this division, Gurdjieff explains that the principle of relativity may be further elaborated as “all the inner and all the outer manifestations of man, all that belongs to man, and all that is created by him, is also divided into seven categories.”⁵⁰ Accordingly, it is possible to speak of seven categories of knowledge, being, religion, science, art, psychology, and so on. For example, with respect to “knowledge,” Gurdjieff states that the knowledge of man number one is the knowledge of that which is acquired by imitation and conditioning, learned by rote. The knowledge of man number two is the knowledge of his likes and his appetites; “what he does not like he does not know.”⁵¹ The knowledge of man number three is knowledge “based on subjectively logical thinking, words, upon literal understanding. It is the knowledge of bookworms, of scholastics.”⁵² The knowledge of man number four is that which he has received from man number 5, who has received it from man number 6, and 7. Although man number four assimilates this knowledge according to the level of his being, he possesses knowledge of an entirely different quality from that which man number one, two, and three have. He has begun to free himself from subjective knowledge and move toward the acquisition of objective knowledge.

The knowledge of man number five is nearer to objective knowledge than that of man number four, as it both expresses and is dependent upon the distinct nature of his higher level of being. Gurdjieff explains that it:

... is whole, indivisible knowledge. He now has one indivisible I and *all* his knowledge belongs to this I. He cannot have one I that knows something which another does not know. What he knows, the whole of him knows.⁵³

The knowledge of man number six is the most complete and objective knowledge possible for man to acquire; but Gurdjieff maintains that it can be lost and, therefore, it is not permanent. The knowledge of man number seven cannot be lost: “it is the *objective* and completely *practical* knowledge of *All*.”⁵⁴

While Gurdjieff’s claim that there exist not only seven categories of man, but seven categories of virtually all of man’s inner and outer manifestations, it is impossible for anyone to simply hear that idea and make a meaningful judgment about its veracity. As a result of years of study, I have come to subscribe to that perspective—while acknowledging that my knowledge and understanding of it is limited by my level of consciousness and being. Whether or not one accepts Gurdjieff’s classification of the three categories of sleeping man, the inclusion of the higher men—numbers 4 through 7—restores not only the scale of consciousness within the Great Nest of Being, but establishes the importance of relativity in discussing any topic of significance. By adopting that framework, consideration of all and everything becomes, paradoxically, much more complex and precise. From this perspective, for example, the supposed conflict between “science” and “religion” is revealed to be grossly oversimplified. I would argue that there is no “science” and there is no “religion”; instead each of the seven levels of man has his or her own “science” and “religion.” Similarly, almost all discussions of “consciousness” amongst modern psychologists are bound to and determined by the simplistic framework of meaning that dominates the flatland of materialism. All experiences which cannot be rudely reduced to material “causes” and squeezed into interpretive schemes for which they are clearly unfit are deemed to be unreal and of no significance. The existence of figures such as Gurdjieff—and some of his contemporaries such as H.I. Khan, Paramahansa Yogananda, and Krishnamurti—constitute compelling evidentiary challenges to that position. In accordance with Gurdjieff’s claims about the relationship between knowledge and being, I believe that the knowledge of these more realized and perfected human beings is more objective than that which even the most brilliant sleepwalkers have apprehended.

Conclusion

Gurdjieff’s observation—that a proper understanding of the idea of sleep depends upon awakening a little or trying to awaken—identifies the most critical aspect in the study

of esoteric teachings: that they take on an entirely new dimension of meaning if, rather than simple processing or attempting to take them in intellectually, one makes the special effort to practice their methods and observe their disciplines. Doing so provides significant evidence for Gurdjieff's contention that humans should be regarded as multi-brained beings in which three distinct minds are responsible for psychological functioning in the normal waking state of consciousness. Further, sustained systematic self-study also reveals the subtle relationships between knowledge and being. As such, the idea—that one's state of consciousness is integrally related to and limits one's knowledge—becomes plausible. In that context, the question of whether or not Gurdjieff was a master is of immense practical and spiritual significance. If Gurdjieff was a man who had attained a higher level of consciousness and being and embodied higher knowledge—as many of his pupils maintained—then his teaching assumes a singular level of authority and integrity. His teaching begins with human beings as they are, but reveals what they are potentially able to become through a process of conscious evolution. It is a method of self-transformation, premised on an understanding of the nature of being and knowing, which conceptualizes the existence of a hierarchy of consciousness: the Great Nest of Being. That perennial psychological and cosmological hierarchy is almost entirely at odds with modern psychology: in which all levels of the Great Nest have collapsed into the flatland of matter, wherein there exist no higher levels of being, consciousness, or knowledge.

The next proposed article in this series will consist of an examination of the consistent descriptions and equations of consciousness with Light within esoteric and mystical teachings. An examination of the esoteric conceptualization of consciousness as being, paradoxically, *some thing* and *nothing* will be undertaken—with reference to the burgeoning body of research documenting the intriguing Near Death Experience.

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- 1 For an overview of Gurdjieff's concept of the centers, see the previous article, Part III, in this series.
 - 2 *Views from the Real World: Early Talks of Gurdjieff as Recollected by his Pupils* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1973), 72.
 - 3 *Ibid.*, 72.
 - 4 *Time*, Review of Kenneth Walker's *Venture with Ideas*, January 28, 1952.
 - 5 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963)
 - 6 Evidence from numerous sources suggests that Gurdjieff had been a monk in Tibet. He was clearly well-informed about Tibetan Buddhist teachings—including dances and music—and made references, on more than one occasion, to having studied Tibetan medicine. Clearly, Gurdjieff had also spent significant time and effort studying Sufism, and he incorporated many Sufi disciplines and practices into his teaching. He was also intimately acquainted with Sufi music and dances.
 - 7 Any attempt to trace or reconstruct Gurdjieff's journeys is, for the most part, a futile undertaking. Both the passage of time and the inaccessibility of many of the places to which Gurdjieff may have traveled preclude any reasonable expectation of uncovering anything of import regarding his search; the trail went cold long ago. Nevertheless, a book by Kathleen Speeth and Ira Frielander—*Gurdjieff: Seeker of the Truth* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1980)—provides an interesting overview of Gurdjieff's search for ancient wisdom.
 - 8 P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1949, 1977) 7.
 - 9 Daly King, *The States of Human Consciousness* (New York: University Books, 1963), 100.
 - 10 After he had become G.'s pupil, Ouspensky learned that G. and his pupils had been reading articles that Ouspensky had been writing about his travels in the Far East. Clearly, Gurdjieff had targeted Ouspensky as a future pupil and there was nothing fortuitous about their meeting. See William Patrick Patterson, *Struggle of The Magicians: Exploring the*

- 11 *Teacher-Student Relationship*, (Fairfax, CA: Arete Communications, 1996), 14.
- 12 *In Search of the Miraculous*, 7.
- 13 Ibid., 261.
- 14 Ibid., 262.
- 15 Ibid., 263.
- 16 Gurdjieff's expertise in treating alcoholics and drug addicts was well established and, while running his institute, he raised money in Paris by doing so. In *Gurdjieff: A New Life*, Paul Beekman Taylor tells the story of G.'s cure, in 1939, of Anna Stefanna ("Anci") who had been experiencing intense intestinal pain, which was diagnosed as being caused by an inoperable tumour adjacent to her liver. She was referred to Gurdjieff, who "felt about her abdominal and thoracic regions and then held the palm of his right hand over the tumour." He told her that, if the pain persisted for more than 24 hours, she was to return to him. "Within a day, the pain and signs of the tumour were gone." 208.
- 17 *In Search of the Miraculous*, 20.
- 18 Kenneth Walker, *Venture with Ideas* (Oxford: The Alden Press, 1951), 153.
- 19 Ibid., 162.
- 20 Margaret Anderson, *The Unknowable Gurdjieff* (New York: Samuel Weiser Inc., 1970), 78-79.
- 21 James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: An Exploration of the Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky and Others* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1980); James Moore, *Gurdjieff: The Anatomy of a Myth* (Rockport, MA: Element Inc., 1991).
- 22 *G.I. Gurdjieff: A New Life*.
- 23 The quotation from Professor Dennis Saurat appears in C.S. Nott, *Journey Through this World: Meetings with Gurdjieff Orage and Ouspensky* (New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1969), 47.
- 24 *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, x.
- 25 James Moffatt, 'An Alien Intelligence': *G.I. Gurdjieff, The Fourth Way, & 'The Three-Brained Beings Of The Planet Earth'* (Kars, ON: Zero.Point Publications, 2003). This book is currently unavailable. I am in the process of revising and issuing an update edition.
- 25 Northrop Frye, *The Double Vision* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 16.
- 26 Sirkar van Stolk with Daphne Dunlop, *Memoirs of a Sufi Sage* (The Hague: East-West Publications Fonds B.V., 1967), 62. Given that Gurdjieff and H.I. Khan were not only contemporaries, but traveled to many of the same cities in Europe and the United States during the 1920s, Khan's comment about the significance of his travels in terms of "tuning the inner spheres" in the countries he visited is particularly intriguing. To my knowledge, no one has ever asked, let alone examined, the question as to whether or not Gurdjieff was fulfilling a similar aim during his travels.
- 27 *In Search of the Miraculous*, 65.
- 28 Ibid., 65.
- 29 Ibid., 65-66.
- 30 Ibid., 66.
- 31 Ibid., 66.
- 32 Ibid., 65.
- 33 C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff* (New York: Samuel Weiser Inc., 196), 49.
- 34 Ibid., 61.
- 35 J.G. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*, 76.
- 36 C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff* (New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1974), 168.
- 37 *In Search of the Miraculous*, 273.
- 38 Ibid., 273.
- 39 J.G. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making A New World*, 228.
- 40 *In Search of the Miraculous*, 254.
- 41 Ibid., 258.
- 42 Ibid., 110.
- 43 Ibid., 110.
- 44 Ibid., 68.
- 45 Ibid., 70.
- 46 Ibid., 71.
- 47 Ibid., 70.
- 48 Ibid., 72.
- 49 Ibid., 72.
- 50 Ibid., 72.
- 51 Ibid., 72.
- 52 Ibid., 72.
- 53 Ibid., 73.
- 54 Ibid., 73.

Ahriman and Lucifer in the Teachings of Rudolf Steiner

John F. Nash

Summary

This article discusses Ahriman and Lucifer, as depicted in the esoteric Teachings of Rudolf Steiner. Steiner claimed that Lucifer incarnated some five thousand years ago, and Ahriman will incarnate sometime in the future. Their polar-opposite influences, mostly evil but occasionally favorable to human development, have been felt throughout history. Steiner's thesis was that the dualism of Lucifer and Ahriman is mediated and balanced by Christ.

The article recalls the long history of Ahriman and Lucifer in scriptural and other writings and the links between them and the personages in Steiner's work. It also discusses the various types of dualism, often depicted in human or animal forms, and the moral choices they present. The biblical Behemoth and Leviathan, which may be considered early models for Steiner's personages, are selected for special comment.

Steiner's teachings on Lucifer and Ahriman raise many questions, including their relationship to the trans-Himalayan teachings and the very nature of evil. The two entities personify dualistic evil, or at best moral ambiguity; but mediated by Christ, they seem to become agents of Divine Purpose.

Introduction

Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), alone among modern esoteric teachers, except for his own followers, spoke of Ahriman and Lucifer as beings with polar-opposite qualities and influences. Dualism of that kind is unknown in Christianity but appears in other religious and philosophical writings. Important examples can be found in Buddhism and the Kabbalah.

Although Ahriman and Lucifer are generally depicted as evil, their influence was sometimes favorable to human development. Steiner went so far as to regard them and Christ as comprising a trinity, in which Christ balances the polar-opposite influences and builds upon whatever good they had to offer.

According to Steiner both Ahriman and Lucifer have influenced humanity's development throughout history. Lucifer's influence increased during the post-Atlantean epoch, became dominant when he incarnated in physical form, some three millennia before Christ, and slowly declined through the early centuries of the Common Era. Ahrimanic influence remained low for several millennia but has become dominant in modern times and is expected to peak when he incarnates sometime in the next several centuries. The precise timing of Ahriman's incarnation and the damage it will cause are said to depend on human action.

This article places Lucifer and Ahriman in the context of earlier religious and philosophical writings. Ahriman was an evil Zoroastrian god, while Lucifer was the product of a medieval legend that interpreted—or misinterpreted—passages in scripture to create a fallen angel and arch-demon. "Lucifer" became another

About the Author

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name for Satan. But the two characters did not step unmodified into Steiner's esoteric teachings. In fact Ahriman did not even feature in Steiner's early work but substituted for another character whom Steiner explored and discarded. The way Lucifer and Ahriman evolved immediately prior to and during Steiner's teachings makes an interesting story in itself.

The article identifies, but does not seek to answer, important questions raised by the discussion of Steiner's Lucifer and Ahriman. One question concerns the worryingly small overlap with trans-Himalayan teachings. None of the trans-Himalayan teachers discusses Lucifer and Ahriman as dualistic entities. And the anticipated incarnation of Ahriman is hard to reconcile with the Master Djwhal Khul's prophecies of the reappearance of the Christ and externalization of the Hierarchy.

Other questions concern the very nature of evil: whether it is monistic or dualistic, whether it is necessarily personified in "beings," and whether evil—despite its usual connotation—may play an essential role in the unfoldment of human consciousness: whether in fact it can be considered an instrument of Divine Purpose.

Dualism and Moral Choice

Dualism was a conspicuous feature of many ancient religions and philosophies. In Hinduism Indra was locked in eternal combat with the evil serpent Vrtra. Zoroastrianism taught that the good god Ohrmazd would battle his evil brother Angra Mainyu, or Ahriman, until the end of the age. Christianity and Islam declare that God will finally defeat Satan on the Last Day.

Eastern religions, Platonism, Gnosticism, and even mainstream Christianity taught that the spiritual world was good and the physical world either worthless or evil. The Apostle Paul wrote: "[T]he flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other."¹ The desert ascetics, the stylites of Syria, the Culdees of Ireland, and the sadhus of India believed that the physical body was the root of evil and sought holiness through self-mortification.² Meanwhile, notions of a stark

choice between good and evil surfaced many times in Christian history: in the era of the martyrs, in the Inquisitions, in the Great Awakenings in America, and in their offshoot, evangelical fundamentalism.

Good–evil dualism is easy to understand and presents a straightforward moral choice; the right course of action is to embrace good and resist evil—no matter what wily schemes an evil intelligence might devise to entrap unwary victims.

More complex situations exist where a single god exhibits ambiguous characteristics—perhaps even complementary or necessary to each other. The flooding of the Nile, the responsibility of the god Hapi, was beneficial, so long as it was not too severe; moderate drought would allow crops to ripen instead of rotting. The Roman god Janus had two faces, which, among much else, symbolized war and peace, neither of which was considered attainable in isolation. We might even envision dualistic gods that are themselves ambiguous or dualistic. In such religious or philosophical systems the necessary level of cognitive understanding is greater, and moral choice becomes more difficult.

The *Bhagavad Gita* illustrates a difficult moral choice. Arjuna stood between opposing armies on the field of Kurukshetra, reluctant to fight because of the horrors of war and because he would be attacking some of his own kinfolk. Krishna persuaded him that conflict was inevitable and necessary, and Arjuna eventually went into battle. Great symbolism has been read into Arjuna's dilemma and the ensuing battle, and an example will be cited later.

The right course of action may be to balance opposing forces or ideals. A classic example is the Noble Middle Path of Buddhism. In the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, the first sermon preached after his enlightenment, the Buddha warned his followers to avoid extremes of lifestyle:

Monks, these two extremes should not be followed by one who has gone forth as a wanderer. What two? Devotion to the pleasures of sense . . . [and] devotion of self-mortification, which is painful, un-

worthy and unprofitable By avoiding these two extremes the [Buddha] has gained knowledge of the middle path which giveth vision, which giveth knowledge, enlightenment [nirvana].³

Later the Middle Path was applied to many other pairs of opposites and became a cornerstone of Buddhist teachings.

The Chinese concept of *yin* and *yang* describes how seemingly opposite forces may be interconnected and interdependent. Many natural dualities, such as male and female, light and dark, life and death, are regarded as manifestations of *yin* and *yang*.⁴ Neither is inherently evil, but when one dominates the other the result is war, bad government, sickness, or spiritual decline. The opposites must be brought into balance to restore harmony. The concept found applications in many branches of Chinese philosophy, medicine, martial arts, and exercise.

The Kabbalah illustrates the resolution of opposites in a higher synthesis. Pairs of opposing sephiroth on the Tree of Life: Chokmah and Binah, Chesed and Geburah, and Netzach and Hod, represent, from different perspectives, contrasting manifestations of Deity, cosmic forces, or challenges on the spiritual path.⁵ The opposites are neither good nor bad, but they are unbalanced. Spiritual growth is to be attained by experiencing the pairs of opposites and then bringing them into equilibrium on the Middle Path. The kabbalistic system of polarities will be discussed in more detail later.

The “Chariot” card in the Tarot—variously taken to depict Indra, Krishna, Jupiter, or the planetary ruler of Leo—shows a masculine figure steering a chariot, drawn by a white and a black sphinx, without reins. A popular interpretation is that the charioteer, or the quarant, is bringing a pair of opposites into balance by the power of will.⁶ Tension between the opposites cannot be resolved on their own level—in this case the physical—but resolution is possible at a higher level or by invoking a higher force.

Behemoth and Leviathan

The Hebrew Bible presents twin monsters, Behemoth and Leviathan, that embody evil–evil dualism and may be regarded as early models for Steiner’s Ahriman and Lucifer. God introduced the land monster Behemoth to the hapless Job in chapter 40 of the *Book of Job*:

Behold now Behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.⁷

“[W]hich I made with thee” is usually interpreted to mean that Behemoth was created at the same time as man. God endowed Behemoth with many qualities and powers: “Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.”⁸

Leviathan, a sea monster, is mentioned six times in the Hebrew Bible. The most extensive account appears in *Job*, immediately following Behemoth’s debut. Leviathan is a terrifying sight: “Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.”⁹ He is impervious to man’s feeble armaments: “The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble. Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.”¹⁰ God taunted Job that he would be powerless when Leviathan confronted him: “Will he make many supplications unto thee? Will he speak soft words unto thee? . . . Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?”¹¹ *Job* 41 concludes with a warning to the proud: “Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.”¹²

Behemoth faded from the scriptural scene as quickly as it appeared. But Leviathan was expected to play its terrifying role for a long time. Brief references are found in *Psalms* 74:14 and 104:26. And *Isaiah* tells us that Leviathan will be with us until the end of the age, when “the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.”¹³ One of Behemoth’s rare appearances in later Jewish writings is in the medieval liturgical hymn, the *Akdmut*. Customarily chanted at the festival of Shavuot, or Pentecost, it prophesies that Behemoth and Leviathan will kill each other in a great battle, whereupon the righteous will hold a banquet and feast on their flesh.¹⁴

Fascination with Behemoth and Leviathan spread from Judaism to Christianity. In his *Summa Theologica* Thomas Aquinas spoke of them as optional names for the devil or, alternatively, as fallen angels.¹⁵ John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* mentions Behemoth and hints at Leviathan:

Scarce from his mould
Behemoth biggest born of earth upheaved
His vastness: Fleeced the flocks and bleating
rose,
As plants: Ambiguous between sea and
land
The river-horse, and scaly crocodile.¹⁶

Behemoth and Leviathan were purely evil, but no attempt was made to link either with the serpent in the Garden of Eden. In the Bible evil was allocated among a variety of different entities. Neither was any attempt made to depict them as morally ambiguous; they were less complex than Steiner’s Ahriman and Lucifer.

Behemoth’s and Leviathan’s duality lay in the fact that one was a land monster, symbolizing the element of earth, and the other was a sea monster, symbolizing water. Behemoth was always referred to by the masculine pronoun. The Hebrew Bible used the male pronoun for Leviathan, but Rabbinic legend often regarded it as female. The two monsters were presented one at a time, and Job had to overcome both; their duality was subsumed in a larger

good–evil moral system. There was no sense of a middle ground in which their respective powers could be reconciled or transcended. Some Jewish legends acknowledged a third monster, the great bird, Ziz, which symbolized air, and was masculine, but Ziz was never viewed as a mediator between the other two.

In a recent article Zachary Lansdowne argued that the *Book of Job* describes ordeals to which Job was subjected in preparation for the third initiation.¹⁷ To that end Job had to overcome maya and glamour, to use terms familiar in trans-Himalayan teachings. In Lansdowne’s account Behemoth is interpreted as world maya and Leviathan as world glamour, though the case could also be made that they symbolized *individual* maya and glamour. In any event, his conclusion was that Job was able to learn from his tests and successfully surmount the crisis of the third initiation.

The *Book of Job* is one of the oldest Judaic texts; it is variously dated from the beginning of the second millennium to the sixth century BCE,¹⁸ and its stories may be older still. At that time esoteric knowledge was communicated through symbols, and initiation rites were psychodramas, heavy in symbolism.¹⁹ Behemoth and Leviathan, along with their counterparts in other cultures, were terrifying images that impressed initiands with the power of God—and perhaps also with divine whim. God unleashed them in order to accomplish his purpose but reined them in when that purpose was accomplished.

Behemoth and Leviathan, along with several of the examples of dualism discussed earlier, were personifications of forces of nature, influences on behavior, or challenges on the spiritual path. Such personification can easily be dismissed as a figment of a superstitious past. Yet art, literature, and the entertainment industry are not shy in creating godlike figures in our own day. Personification can make complex philosophical or moral concepts comprehensible and can give them compelling force and immediacy.

Ahriman and Lucifer in Western Tradition

Ahriman

The oldest Zoroastrian texts, or hymns, the *Gathas*, were written in the Avesta language and probably date from the second millennium BCE. Attributed to Zoroaster (Zarathustra) himself. They spoke of the *angra mainyu* as an evil force, or moral choice. The force came to be personified in a later series of texts known as the *Younger Avesta*, which historians date to the first half of the first millennium BCE. Angra Mainyu—or Ahriman as the name was rendered in Middle Persian—became an evil god. Ahriman and his good brother Ohrmazd were twin sons of the high god Ahura Mazda.²⁰

A story in one text bears striking similarity to the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Ahriman promised Zoroaster sovereignty over the whole world if he would turn away from the religion of Ahura Mazda. Zoroaster rejected the offer, whereupon Ahriman attacked him, unsuccessfully it turned out, with legions of demons.²¹ Another text prophesied that Ohrmazd would ultimately defeat Ahriman and become the high god.²² Ahriman was usually depicted as depraved, ugly, and evil-smelling. Though cunning, he was also stupid, making possible his final defeat. Iconography optimistically showed him crushed under Ohrmazd's feet.

The Roman essayist Plutarch incorporated the story of Ahriman into his *Isis and Osiris*. There we read:

Areimanius [Ahriman], engaged in bringing on pestilence and famine, shall by these be utterly annihilated and shall disappear; and then shall the earth become a level plain, and there shall be one manner of life and one form of government for a blessed people who shall all speak one tongue.²³

Zoroastrianism went into decline as Islam spread throughout the Persian heartland. No other major religion saw fit to adopt Ahriman, and he languished for 1,300 years until his debut in Steiner's teachings. More recently Ahriman has become a character in novels, plays, and video games.

Lucifer

Ahriman's history—like Behemoth's appearance in scripture—was rather limited. By contrast, Lucifer's story in western culture is long and colorful. Christian tradition portrays Lucifer as a fallen angel, identical with the Devil or Satan. But that portrayal is questionable, stemming as it does from a conflation of images found in texts that not only lack clarity but may be unrelated to one another.

The name "Lucifer" appears only once in scripture. The King James Bible boldly describes Isaiah's taunt of the fallen "king of Babylon":

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.²⁴

Scholars are uncertain, however, whether the passage refers to a fallen angel or to the death of an unpopular earthly king. Moreover, "Lucifer," which appears to be a proper noun, is the translation of the Hebrew word *helel*, which could mean "shining one," "morning star," or the planet Venus; its Greek form is *heosphoros* or *phosphorus*. The word *lucifer* ("light bearer") first appeared in the Latin Vulgate, and there it was left in lower case. Capitalization became common only after the fourth century CE, when the legend of Lucifer was beginning to take definite shape.

The legend drew upon the passage in *Isaiah*, but it also incorporated texts which either did not name the character under discussion or even identified the character as someone else. The apocryphal *Second Book of Enoch*, conventionally dated to the first century BCE, refers to an unnamed angel who sought to place himself equal to God:

And one from out the order of angels, having turned away with the order that was under him, conceived an impossible thought, to place his throne higher than the clouds above the earth, that he might become equal in rank to my power. And I threw him out from the height with his angels, and he was flying in the air continuously above the bottomless.²⁵

In the New Testament, the *Gospel of Luke* records that the returning seventy disciples were able to cast out devils, whereupon Jesus told them: “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”²⁶ The *Book of Revelation* describes the conquest of Satan:

I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him.²⁷

At the end of the thousand years Satan would be released from his prison and allowed to “deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth.” Finally, the “devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”²⁸

Over time these various images coalesced and were embellished by homilies, fiction and art to produce the Lucifer of popular imagination. Lucifer was the most beautiful of the archangelic host, but pride overcame him, and he sought to place himself above his fellow archangels and equal to God. The archangel Michael—or in some accounts Christ—challenged him, and a great battle took place in which Lucifer was cast out of heaven. Thereafter he roamed the deep as the evil serpent, ever ready to ensnare humanity in his clutches. He was the serpent in the Garden of Eden, Satan, the Devil, the cosmic bogy man.

Lucifer appeared in Arthurian and Grail legends. In Thomas Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur* Lucifer assumed the guise of a beautiful woman and tried to tempt Percival to have sex with

her. She claimed that she was a “gentlewoman that am disinherited.” She had “dwelled with the greatest man of the world, and he made me so fair and clear that there was none like me, and of that great beauty I had a little more pride than I ought to have had.”²⁹ In the nick of time, Percival glanced at the emblem on his sword and made the Sign of the Cross, whereupon he saw the woman for what she was and preserved his virginity. Lest anyone should fail to associate the gentlewoman with Lucifer, a “good man” explained to Percival: “Our Lord Jesus Christ beat him out of heaven for his sin, which was the brightest angel of heaven.”³⁰

Rosicrucian writer Corinne Heline described Lucifer’s appearance in a Grail legend:

[A]s Lucifer was cast headlong from heaven the glorious emerald of his crown fell into the abyss. It was rescued by angels and from it was formed the Cup of the Last Supper in which the Savior pledged His blood to His disciples and in which it was caught by Joseph of Arimathea on Golgotha.³¹

In this account the jewel in Lucifer’s crown was called Morning Star. The jewel’s significance, Heline explained, was understood differently by people at different levels of consciousness: “By the multitude [the jewel] was taken to mean Venus. By the initiated it was understood to signify Mercury, which is also a Morning Star, but one which is almost invisible to the naked eye and must be sought for diligently in its bright place close to the sun.”³²

Links with Steiner’s Teachings

Before discussing Ahriman’s and Lucifer’s roles in Rudolf Steiner’s teachings, it will be instructive to examine links between his characters and the Ahriman and Lucifer of earlier traditions.

Steiner never cited literary precedents for his Ahriman and Lucifer. Nor did he acknowledge communications from sources in the Planetary Hierarchy, though Rosicrucian Max Heindel declared that he and Steiner were instructed by the same “Elder Brothers.”³³ Instead, Steiner claimed the ability to read and understand the

Akashic Records, an ability conventionally associated with an “Initiate,” the second of the three grades of initiation in the western esoteric tradition, the others being “Clairvoyant” and “Adept.” Heindel explained the three initiatory grades thus: “[T]he Clairvoyant is one who sees the invisible world; the Initiate both sees the invisible world and understands what he sees, while the Adept sees, knows and has power over things and forces there.”³⁴

Steiner may have gleaned all his information on Ahriman and Lucifer from the Akashic records. But intriguing clues suggest that he also acquired relevant knowledge from more mundane sources.

Steiner was appointed head of the newly constituted German section of the Theosophical Society in 1902. Helena Blavatsky had published her monumental work, *The Secret Doctrine* fourteen years earlier. Contrary to western tradition, she portrayed Lucifer as the very antithesis of a fallen angel. He was “the angelic Entity presiding over the light of truth as over the light of the day.”³⁵ Blavatsky placed him with Eve in the Garden of Eden but described the scene very differently than did the Hebrew Bible: “[T]he Serpent of Genesis [was] the real creator and benefactor, the Father of Spiritual mankind. For it is he who was the ‘Harbinger of Light,’ bright radiant Lucifer, who opened the eyes of the automaton created by Jehovah.”³⁶

“Jehovah” was the crude, but then-current, rendition of YHVH, the unutterable Hebrew name of God (the more modern rendition is “Yahweh”). Blavatsky’s portrayal of Jehovah as the creator of human automata reflected Gnostic teachings, where YHVH was often depicted as the incompetent or evil demiurge that created the world. Even mainstream Christians have expressed dismay at the apparent vindictiveness and callousness of the Old-Testament God.

In addition to his involvement in Theosophy, Steiner took an interest in Freemasonry. Whether he was ever initiated into the Craft is disputed, but we do know that, in 1905, Steiner sought and received warrants from Theodore Reuss to perform rites under the Memphis-

Misraïm Rite.³⁷ By then a substantial body of Masonic literature was available in the public sector, and Steiner was already lecturing on topics related to Freemasonry.³⁸

In the mid-1890s French journalist Marie Joseph Jogand-Pagès, who wrote under the pen name Léo Taxil, wrote a series of books claiming inside knowledge of Satanic activity in Freemasonry. A key statement purported to come from a high-level Mason referred to Lucifer:

Yes, Lucifer is God, and unfortunately Adonai is also god. For the eternal law is that there is no light without shade, no beauty without ugliness, no white without black, for the absolute can only exist as two gods; darkness being necessary for light to serve as its foil as the pedestal is necessary to the statue, and the brake to the locomotive Thus, the doctrine of Satanism is a heresy, and the true and pure philosophical religion is the belief in Lucifer, the equal of Adonai; but Lucifer, God of Light and God of Good, is struggling for humanity against Adonai, the God of Darkness and Evil.³⁹

The statement was eagerly seized upon by Freemasonry’s enemies as ammunition in anti-Masonic polemic. But esotericist Arthur Waite stoutly defended the Craft and attacked Taxil for the poor quality of his work, citing its logical errors and inconsistencies.⁴⁰

The content of the statement also calls for comment. To view Lucifer—again contrary to western tradition—as the benevolent “God of Light” was not without precedent in Freemasonry. Nineteenth-century Masons Albert Pike and Albert G. Mackey spoke of the “Luciferian path” and the “energies of Lucifer” in reference to the morning star, the light bearer, and the search for light.⁴¹ The statement’s alleged author might well have participated in efforts to counter Lucifer’s demonization in popular western culture—efforts that continue in esoteric circles today.

The identification of the God of Darkness as Adonai, however, is puzzling. The title *Adonai* (“the Lord”) was always treated with great reverence. It was commonly used in the Hebrew Bible as a substitute for the unutterable

YHVH, and in the New Testament Paul applied its Greek form *Kyrios* to Christ. It would have made more sense to demonize YHVH/Jehovah under his own name, as the Gnostics and Blavatsky had done.

Taxil eventually admitted that the statement was a hoax. Whether or not Steiner was duped by it, clearly he was familiar with Masonic concepts of dualism, as well as with the various accounts of Lucifer and YHVH in Freemasonry and elsewhere.

Three years after his appointment to the Theosophical Society and one year after lecturing on Freemasonry, Steiner gave a series of lectures on the roles of Jehovah and Lucifer. He depicted Jehovah as a “Moon-God” who had attained adeptship on the “Moon evolution,” the third of the four evolutions of Earth, or planetary incarnations, to date.⁴² Jehovah’s plan for humankind emphasized esthetics but would have greatly limited our potential for growth:

Jehovah wished to produce beautifully formed human beings, like beautiful statues. His intention was that the power of reproduction should be continued until it had expended itself. He wanted to have a planet that only bore upon it beautiful but completely motionless forms. If the Earth had continued its evolution [thus], it would have developed into a completely rigid, frozen form.⁴³

Whereas Blavatsky cast Jehovah’s creations as automata, implying some capacity for motion, Steiner made them immobile statues. In both cases, however, Lucifer came to the rescue.

Blavatsky’s Lucifer opened the eyes of the automata. In Steiner’s account a group of Moon Adepts—collectively called “Lucifer”—became “the bestowers of human intellectuality.”⁴⁴ The Adepts were not able to eliminate Jehovah’s influence altogether, but they “came to [early human beings] and said: You must

not follow Jehovah. He will not allow you to attain to knowledge but you should. That is the Snake. The Snake approached the woman, because she had the power to produce offspring out of herself. Now Jehovah said: Man has become like unto ourselves, and brings death into the world and everything connected with it.”⁴⁵

Sometime after 1905, Ahriman took Jehovah’s place as the evil creator and materialistic influence. Steiner first mentioned Ahriman in a lecture given in 1908. Two theories

for the substitution suggest themselves. Perhaps Steiner initially mistook the identity of the evil one in his reading of the Akashic Records, and when he realized the mistake he replaced Jehovah by Ahriman. But Steiner did not admit a mistake; neither did he explain the substitution in some other way.

Alternatively, Steiner may genuinely have identified the evil one as Jehovah but feared that continuing to write about him would generate unwanted controversy. To change the character’s name would avoid distraction and allow Steiner to focus on his real mission of exploring moral dualism.

If this latter theory is correct, a leading candidate to replace Jehovah would have been Mephistopheles, since Steiner had studied of the works of Goethe in unusual depth. As he

Modern man, in Steiner’s view, “hovers perpetually between two extremes: between the ah-ri-manic on the one side, where he is presented with an outer delusion . . . and, on the other, the luciferic element within him which induces the tendency to illusions, hallucinations and the like.” The two extremes are expressed in the tension between mysticism and science: “[J]ust as external science becomes ah-ri-manic, the higher development of our inner nature becomes luciferic if we give ourselves up to mystical experience.

commented later, however, Goethe “made the figure of Mephisto a mixture of two elements instead of a consistent single one.”⁴⁶ So he settled on the Zoroastrian Ahriman. Steiner conceded that part of the “Mephistophelean power” was “identical with Ahriman,⁴⁷ and some commentators have suggested that he projected some of Mephistopheles’ characteristics onto Ahriman.

The choice of Ahriman was not an obvious one, since he had not featured in any recent esoteric writings. Blavatsky discussed him only in the context of Zoroastrian religion, and Freemasons paid him no attention at all. In one instance they co-opted *Ahiman*, who appeared four times in the Hebrew Bible;⁴⁸ but Ahiman seems to have no connection to Ahriman.

In any event Steiner declared that Ahriman was not only an evil spirit but was “the representative of all the beings who belonged to” the Moon evolution.⁴⁹ Thus he associated Ahriman with the Jehovah of his earlier teachings. Perhaps that association offers a clue to Ahriman’s moral ambiguity; not even the most cynical Gnostics believed that YHVH/Jehovah was all bad.

Steiner’s final task of character building was to bring to an end Lucifer’s short vacation as “God of Light,” or as the group of Moon Adepts who rescued statue-man. In the 1905 lecture mentioned Steiner insisted: “It is the intention of Lucifer to develop everything upwards, towards knowledge, towards the light.” Lucifer was responsible for the reincarnational cycle through which man could evolve to the level of a spiritual being. Steiner recognized that “Lucifer is the Prince who reigns in the kingdom of science and art.” Hinting at Lucifer’s changing status, however, he warned that “it would be impossible for Lucifer to lead upwards what is on the Earth.”⁵⁰

From then on Lucifer took on increasingly negative characteristics. Even if he did not fall quite as far as in Christian tradition, he became a predominantly evil personage. That set the stage for the evil–evil dualism explored in so much of Steiner’s later esoteric teachings.

Steiner saw his overall mission as one of promoting esoteric Christianity. It was not surpris-

ing, therefore, that he introduced Christ as the mediator between Ahriman and Lucifer, as the one who could resolve the opposing forces and extract from them whatever was useful for human development. Christ’s central position was underscored by the timing of their appearances in physical manifestation. Christ’s birth neatly bisected the 6,000-year interval between the incarnation of Lucifer and the anticipated incarnation of Ahriman.

Steiner’s Lucifer and Ahriman

Throughout his mature years Rudolf Steiner referred to Lucifer and Ahriman and to luciferic and ahrimanic influences. In a few instances he referred also to luciferic and ahrimanic *beings*—suggesting something comparable with choirs of angels. One can envision parallel hierarchies of beings, headed by Lucifer and Ahriman, comparable to the hierarchies of angels supervised by archangels like Gabriel and Raphael.

Lucifer

In his examination of the Akashic Records, Steiner first encountered Lucifer during the “Sun evolution,” the second of the four planetary evolutions. At that time Lucifer was the “Venus Spirit,” while Christ was the “Sun Spirit.” Lucifer was described as a being “extraordinarily full of light.” But he was also “endowed in his very nature with infinite pride” and in consequence “became a dethroned ruler.” On Earth’s next evolution, the “Old Moon evolution,” Christ confronted Lucifer and by exerting “all the forces at His disposal” was able to repel him.⁵¹ Note that Steiner agreed with Thomas Malory that it was Christ, not Michael, who expelled Lucifer from heaven.

Lucifer appeared on our present Earth, according to Steiner, in the post-Atlantean era. During the fourth millennium BCE humanity’s spiritual development was nurtured by the mysteries and revelation, but “men could not acquire knowledge through their own powers of intellectual discernment. They were dependent upon what was imparted to them from

the Mysteries.”⁵² Perhaps Job was representative of that pre-intellectual era.

Lucifer decided to take physical form in order to remedy that limitation. He incarnated in China at the beginning of the third millennium BCE and, even as a child, was allowed to participate in the mysteries:

A child of a distinguished Asiatic family of the time was allowed to grow up in the precincts of the Mystery-ceremonies. Circumstances were such that this child was actually permitted to take part in the ceremonies, undoubtedly because the priests conducting the rites in the Mysteries felt it as an inspiration that such a child must be allowed to participate.”⁵³

In adulthood Lucifer had a profound spiritual awakening: “[W]hen the being incarnate in that child had reached the age of about 40 something very remarkable came to light. [He] began suddenly . . . to grasp through the faculty of human intellect itself what had formerly come into the Mysteries through revelation.”⁵⁴ Lucifer became a teacher and embarked on a mission of stimulating humanity’s ability to understand the mysteries in a new light. His incarnation, in Steiner’s words, was “the source of inspiration for much ancient culture.” We do not know how long he lived or what manner of physical death he suffered.

Lucifer’s influence on human evolution did not end with his physical death. He continued to inspire the mysteries, mysticism and esthetics. While his primary focus was not on practical matters, he did promote the development of human memory, as will be discussed later.

Luciferic influence on pagan culture ensured “sublime, deeply penetrating wisdom.” It also gave humankind a great sense of security and harmony with the universe:

[T]his old pagan wisdom gave one the feeling of being membered into the whole cosmos. A man moving about the earth not only felt himself composed of the substances and forces present around him in earthly life, in the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms, but he felt that the forces operating, for example, in the movements of the stars

and the sun were playing into him. This feeling of being a member of the whole cosmos was not a mere abstraction, for from the Mysteries he received directives based on the laws of the stars for his actions and whole conduct of life. This ancient star-wisdom [was] voiced by the Initiates in such a way that impulses for individual action and conduct went forth from the Mysteries. Not only did man feel safe and secure within the all-prevailing wisdom of the cosmos, but those whom he recognized as the Initiates of the Mysteries imparted this wisdom in directives for his actions from morning till evening.”⁵⁵

The main weakness of the luciferic pagan culture, in Steiner’s view, was that it offered “no moral impulses for human action.”⁵⁶ He reiterated: “[N]either Chaldean nor Egyptian wisdom contained a single moral impulse [beyond] what had been imparted by the Initiates.”⁵⁷ Steiner did not comment on the code of law proposed by the second-millennium BCE Babylonian King Hammurabi or on the Ten Commandments of Moses.

Luciferic influence underlay “the Gnosis of the earliest Christian centuries.”⁵⁸ It was responsible for the “whole of Gnostic thought, an impressive wisdom shedding profound light on cosmic realities. The then-strong luciferic influence helped humanity understand the significance of Christ’s Palestinian mission: “Had there been no Luciferic wisdom,” Steiner declared, “no understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha could have been acquired . . . in the early centuries of Christendom.”⁵⁹ “Mystery of Golgotha” was an expression Steiner frequently used to capture his understanding of Christ’s sacrificial and redemptive act.

On the other hand Gnosticism did not embrace the full implications of Christ’s incarnation. A more grounded religious culture was needed, with a focus on man’s present lifetime and moral choice. Responding to the Christ impulse, but not necessarily interpreting it correctly, institutional Christianity suppressed belief in reincarnation. It also tried to suppress belief in the triune nature of man—body, soul and spirit—thereby reducing man from a trinity to a duality. In that it was not totally suc-

cessful. As Steiner pointed out: “Scholars were forced to teach duality . . . But as certain beings, certain human beings, were well aware, replacing a threefold division with a twofold one was of tremendous consequence for human spiritual life.”⁶⁰ By the fourth century, Gnostic teachings had been suppressed.

Luciferic influence, according to Steiner, continued to benefit early Christianity:

The influence of the Lucifer-incarnation was still powerful in the south of Europe, in the north of Africa and in Asia Minor during the first centuries of Christendom. . . . This power did not actually fade from man's faculty of comprehension until the fourth century A.D.; and even then, it had its aftermath, its ramifications.⁶¹

Even then, it would seem, luciferic influence did not disappear entirely. Its effects were apparent in medieval mysticism, the Renaissance, Baroque art and music, and nineteenth-century Romanticism—all of which we would applaud as favorable influences. Continuing, less favorable, luciferic influence can be seen in superstition and pseudoscience, in ungrounded mysticism, in “rapture theology,” in much of the New Age movement, and in the deluded claims of would-be spokespersons for Saint-Martin or Sanat Kumara.

Ahriman

As Steiner's teachings moved into their mature phase in 1908, Ahriman took Jehovah's place as the second character in his dualistic system. Since Steiner's Jehovah achieved adeptship during the Moon evolution, we must suppose that Ahriman did so too—later than Lucifer, who was already a powerful spirit during the Sun evolution.

Ahriman has yet to take physical embodiment. Yet, in Steiner's account, he has long promoted a strong focus on the physical world and the rational mind and has discouraged attention to the spiritual. Ahrimanic influence is characterized thus: “[T]hink of everything that presses us down upon the earth, that makes us dull and philistine, leading us to develop materialistic attitudes, penetrating us with a dry intellect.”⁶²

Ahrimanic influence has increased over the last several centuries, resulting, among much else, in the rapid development of empirical science. Steiner commented that the modern world can be proud of the work of Copernicus and Galileo. It is certainly proud of the Enlightenment, modern technology, and allopathic medicine—all of which are hailed as examples of human “progress.” Steiner warned, however: “[W]oe betide if this Copernicanism is not confronted by the knowledge that the cosmos is permeated by soul and spirit.”⁶³

Ahrimanic influence, in Steiner's view also underlies nationalism: “chauvinism, perverted patriotism” which divides nation from nation, people from people.⁶⁴ It underlies biblical literalism, which leads to a “dimming of consciousness.” The depiction of Jesus Christ as “the simple man of Nazareth,” Steiner explained, is an “hallucination.” He warned: “If men could be brought to a standstill at this point, not pressing on to the real Christ but contenting themselves with an hallucination of Christ, Ahriman's aims would be immeasurably furthered.”⁶⁵ The growing political power of evangelical fundamentalism, which prefers simplistic religious images and concern for personal salvation over real spiritual insight and group consciousness, would seem to validate Steiner's worst fears.

Ahriman's desire to divert people from the real Christ probably stems not only from his opposition to all things spiritual but also from fear of Christ's mediation between himself and Lucifer, which would greatly curtail ahrimanic influence. Christ's mediating role will be discussed shortly.

Yet another ahrimanic influence, Steiner declared, is the modern world's obsession with quantification: “Nothing can stand up against figures,” He complained, “because of the faith that is reposed in them; and Ahriman is only too ready to exploit figures for his purposes.”⁶⁶ “[F]igures are not a means whereby the essential reality of things can be proved—they are simply a means of deception! Whenever one fails to look beyond figures to the *qualitative*, they can be utterly deceptive.”⁶⁷ One can only imagine how Steiner would have reacted to

modern recording, communications and publications technologies in which sound, images, even the human genome, are digitized! Moreover, the wholesale collection and analysis of personal data by governmental and commercial interests would seem, again, to confirm his worst fears.

To Steiner's list of evil ahrimanic influences we could add scientific reductionism, neuroscientific theories of the "mind," modern warfare, economic exploitation of developing nations and the poor, environmental degradation, and the paving over—concretization in a very literal sense—of the urban landscape. Perhaps we should add big banks to the list, as well as test-driven educational systems, widely perceived as stifling real learning and creativity.

Ahriman's influence will peak when he incarnates sometime during the third millennium CE. He will take physical embodiment in the West and "will live among men on the earth."⁶⁸ The best scenario, in Steiner's view, is that we shall be able to exploit the positive aspects of ahrimanic influence while rejecting what is negative. Enlightened people, "in confronting him[,] will themselves determine what they may learn from him, what they may receive from him."⁶⁹ Steiner warned, however:

This . . . they will not be able to do unless, from now onwards, they take control of certain spiritual and also unspiritual currents which otherwise are used by Ahriman for the purpose of leaving mankind as deeply unconscious as possible of his coming; then, one day, he will be able to appear on earth and overwhelm men, tempting and luring them to repudiate earth-evolution, thus preventing it from reaching its goal. To understand the whole process of which I have been speaking, it is essential to recognize the character of certain currents and influences—spiritual or the reverse.⁷⁰

Ahriman is already making plans for his incarnation: "A Being like Ahriman . . . prepares for this incarnation in advance. With a view to his incarnation on the earth, Ahriman guides certain forces in evolution in such a way that they may be of the greatest possible advantage to him."⁷¹

"[E]vil would result," Steiner continued, "were men to live on in a state of drowsy unawareness, unable to recognize certain phenomena in life as preparations for Ahriman's incarnation in the flesh." We must be alert to the danger and develop an effective response: "The right stand can be taken only by recognizing in one or another series of events the preparation that is being made by Ahriman for his earthly existence. And the time has now come for individual men to know which tendencies and events around them are machinations of Ahriman, helping him to prepare for his approaching incarnation."⁷² To ignore Ahriman's forthcoming incarnation, or to misinterpret its consequences, will only play into his wily purpose:

It would undoubtedly be of the greatest benefit to Ahriman if he could succeed in preventing the vast majority of men from perceiving what would make for their true well-being, if the vast majority of men were to regard these preparations for the Ahriman-incarnation as progressive and good for evolution. If Ahriman were able to slink into a humanity unaware of his coming, that would gladden him most of all. It is for this reason that the occurrences and trends in which Ahriman is working for his future incarnation must be brought to light.⁷³

Ahriman's incarnation is "inevitable," but perhaps its impact can be ameliorated. Steiner viewed his own teachings, along with the work of the Anthroposophical Society, which he founded after severing links with the Theosophical Society, as a major force in exposing Ahriman's plans, so that he "will be an evil guest when he comes."⁷⁴

Steiner hoped that we shall take advantage of the positive influence of Ahriman's incarnation, but he was vague about what that positive influence might be. Perhaps he was referring to scientific and technological progress and advances in medicine. He did, however, mention one benefit of a long-term nature—that people will prepare for the inevitable decline of our earthly environment:

[I]f men are able to rouse themselves to take into their consciousness what we have

been studying, if they are able so to guide it that humanity can freely confront the ahrimanic influence, then, when Ahriman appears, men will acquire, precisely through him, the power to realize that although the earth must enter inevitably into its decline, mankind is lifted above earthly existence through this very fact.⁷⁵

Presumably that decline has to do with the approaching end of Earth's present evolution.

Tension and Equilibrium

Lucifer and Ahriman are polar-opposite in their intentions, activities and influences. But in some respects they serve a common purpose. Steiner ventured to say, "Ahriman and Lucifer always work hand in hand. The only question is which of the two predominates in human consciousness at a particular epoch of time."⁷⁶

Lucifer's influence predominated in the post-Atlantean epoch, no doubt reaching a peak when he incarnated, and we have noted his role in nurturing ancient culture. In a 1916 lecture Steiner claimed that Lucifer also played an essential role in the development of memory, evidenced by early man's ability to memorize long poems and stories. Memorization was essential in an oral tradition. Subsequently, Ahriman helped man develop writing, which reduced the need for memorization.⁷⁷ Writing is still a mental process, but it is expressed physically. We have retained considerable powers of memory, but writing, along with more recent developments like printing and recording technologies, have enabled the race to evolve in ways that would otherwise have been impossible.

Despite Lucifer's and Ahriman's beneficial influences, and their joint involvement in human development, Steiner would not have us overlook their evil roles, "Ahriman is the spirit of deception, whom we can picture as standing opposite Lucifer, the spirit of temptation." Lucifer "stands at the side of Eve" as she contemplates eating the forbidden fruit. Correspondingly, "Ahriman stands at the side of [Goethe's] Faust."⁷⁸ A few years earlier Steiner might have adhered more faithfully to the

storyline by having Mephistopheles stand beside Faust!

Dualism is expressed through Lucifer and Ahriman themselves and also through orders of beings whom they oversee. In Steiner's words: "[L]uciferic beings, striving for universal freedom, and ahrimanic beings striving for lasting dominion, are constantly waging war in this cosmos we are part of. This battle involves us and affects everything."⁷⁹

Modern man, in Steiner's view, "hovers perpetually between two extremes: between the ahrimanic on the one side, where he is presented with an outer delusion . . . and, on the other, the luciferic element within him which induces the tendency to illusions, hallucinations and the like."⁸⁰ The two extremes are expressed in the tension between mysticism and science: "[J]ust as external science becomes ahrimanic, the higher development of our inner nature becomes luciferic if we give ourselves up to mystical experience."⁸¹ The polarity is also expressed in art: "[S]ome artists have been more luciferic—they are the expressionists; the tendencies of other artists have been ahrimanic—they are the impressionists."⁸²

From another perspective:

Lucifer is the power that stirs up all fanatical, all falsely mystical forces in human beings, all that psychologically tends to bring the blood into disorder and so lift people above and outside themselves. Ahriman is the power that makes people dry, prosaic, philistine—that ossifies them and anchors them in the superstition of materialism.⁸³

Steiner's reference to "the superstition of materialism" was evocative, since we would normally consider superstition to be luciferic in nature. From yet another perspective Steiner offered a physiological illustration of luciferic-ahrimanic tension:

[E]verything that has to do with the blood tends toward the luciferic, whereas all that has to do with the bones tends toward the ahrimanic. As human beings we are at the point of balance between the blood and the bones, just as we strive for psychological

balance between visionary excesses and dry philistinism.⁸⁴

Steiner's advice was to soften each influence by drawing upon its polar opposite: "[M]en must become more objective where their own impulses are concerned, and far, far more subjective where the external world is concerned—not by introducing pictures of phantasy [sic] but by bringing interest, alert attention and devotion to the things of immediate life."⁸⁵

Christ as Mediator

"The true nature and being of man," Steiner continued, "is essentially the effort to hold the balance between the powers of Lucifer and Ahriman. The Christ impulse helps contemporary humanity to establish that equilibrium."⁸⁶ Significantly Christ incarnated three millennia after Lucifer and roughly three millennia before Ahriman's projected incarnation. But Christ is not just mediator between the opposing evil forces, he may use the two personages to serve his purpose: "Lucifer and Ahriman intervene in the evolution of mankind side by side with the Christ Impulse—these things must be taken in all earnestness and their consequences rightly assessed."⁸⁷

In an October 1913 lecture Steiner described a series of encounters Jesus had with Lucifer and Ahriman. Jesus first saw the two entities on the gateposts to the Essene community—recalling the Boaz and Jachim figures at the entrance to Solomon's temple.⁸⁸ Shortly thereafter he saw Lucifer and Ahriman fleeing the sanctity of the Essenes.⁸⁹

Following the baptism in the Jordan, in which the Christ entered into Jesus' body, Lucifer and Ahriman participated in the triple temptation in the wilderness. Lucifer made the first offer: "If thou wilt enter my realm, I will give thee all the beauty and glory that belong to these old kingdoms." Christ rejected the offer, whereupon Lucifer and Ahriman jointly made the second offer: "Lucifer sought to goad His pride; Ahriman to play upon His fear." When that offer was also rejected Ahriman dismissed Lucifer: "I cannot use thee, thou dost but hinder me, thou hast not enhanced my power but weakened it." Ahriman's dismissal of Lucifer may have signified the turning point when lu-

ciferic influence began to yield to ahrimanic influence.

Ahriman alone made the third and final offer: "Turn the stones into bread, if thou wouldst boast of Divine power."⁹⁰ Christ rejected that offer, too, bringing the encounter in the wilderness to an end. Although he had resisted the temptations successfully and conquered Lucifer, he was left with "the sting of Ahriman, where men were under Ahriman's domination."⁹¹ In particular Ahriman acquired the ability to exploit humankind's lust for money:

Ahriman communicated to Christ something that could indeed be known on Earth, but could not yet be known by the God who had come to Earth for the first time. He did not know that there below it was necessary to turn mineral substance—metal—into money, into bread. . . . That was the point where Ahriman still retained power. And he said: I shall use that power!

In due course Judas placed himself at Ahriman's service and betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver.⁹²

We have already seen that luciferic influence, through its support of gnosis, helped humankind grasp the "Mystery of Golgotha." But a totally new understanding was needed. Steiner explained: "The Gospels were given as a necessary counterweight to the Luciferic Gnosis."⁹³ The gospels are not self-explanatory, however:

[I]f no attempt is made to develop understanding of [the gospel's] content, the aims of Ahriman are furthered, not the progress of mankind. In the absolute sense, nothing is good in itself, but is always good or bad according to the use to which it is put. The best can be the worst if wrongly used. Sublime though they are, the Gospels can also have the opposite effect if men are too lazy to search for a deeper understanding based on spiritual science.⁹⁴

Misinterpretation of the gospels resulted in unwise doctrine and more recently the rise of fundamentalism.

"What is essential now," Steiner declared, "is to acquire a *spiritual* understanding of the

Mystery of Golgotha in the light of the truths enshrined in the Gospels.” More generally a new spirituality is needed to transcend the prevailing rationalism and materialism. Steiner saw the birth of that new spirituality in his own lifetime: “Since the last third of the nineteenth century the spiritual has been streaming around us; it is streaming into earthly evolution.”⁹⁵ The important thing is for people to recognize and respond to it appropriately:

[T]here is a great deal in the spiritual and unspiritual currents of the present time of which men should be acutely aware, and determine their attitude of soul accordingly. Upon the ability and willingness to penetrate to the roots of such matters will depend the effect which the incarnation of Ahriman can have upon men, whether this incarnation will lead them to prevent the earth from reaching its goal, or bring home to them the very limited significance of intellectual, unspiritual life.⁹⁶

Like the charioteer in the Tarot card, Christ brings higher power to bear to balance and synthesize the opposing forces. We are called upon to participate in that effort, and thereby begin to comprehend the mediating work of the Christ, the “third reality”:

If men rightly take in hand the currents leading towards Ahriman, then simply through his incarnation in earthly life they will recognize the ahrimanic influence on the one side, and on the other its polar opposite—the luciferic influence. And then the very contrast between the ahrimanic and the luciferic will enable them to perceive the third reality.⁹⁷

Steiner followed that statement, in his lecture, with the startling assertion that we must gain “an understanding of *this trinity of the Christian impulse, the ahrimanic and the luciferic influences*; for without this consciousness [we] will not be able to go forward into the future with the prospect of achieving the goal of earth-existence.”⁹⁸ We must recognize Christ’s ability to make use of Lucifer and Ahriman, no matter what evil they might also be doing. This

does not necessarily mean that they are willing collaborators; perhaps even unmitigated evil can be an instrument of Divine Purpose.

Steiner generalized this trinity to place humanity in the role of mediator: “[T]he world can really be understood only in terms of a triad. On one side we have everything luciferic, on the other everything ahrimanic, and in the third, central place, the point of balance between the two, humanity, with a sense of its relationship to the divine, of its divine essence.”⁹⁹ “We can understand the world in the right way,” Steiner declared,

only when we see it based on this triad and are perfectly clear that human life is the beam of the scales. Here is the fulcrum: on one side is the luciferic element, actually pulling the pan upwards; opposite is the ahrimanic element pulling the pan downwards. Our human task—our human essence—is to keep the pan balanced.¹⁰⁰

Steiner suggested that this truth was an initiatory secret whose broader dissemination the evil powers were eager to prevent: “the cosmic existence in which we find ourselves can only be understood in terms of the triad,” but “it lies in the deepest interest of the luciferic and ahrimanic powers to conceal this secret of the number three—after all, only the proper penetration of this secret would allow humanity to bring about the state of balance.”¹⁰¹

One strategy the powers used was to promote “the illusion of the duality of God and the devil . . . the notion of divine spiritual powers above and diabolical powers below.” Presumably the church bears the blame for preaching that duality, even though it seemed to be supporting Christ’s campaign against luciferic Gnosticism. On the other hand, the church could also be blamed for preaching the notion of heaven, which Steiner saw as a luciferic ruse to distract us from the triple reality! Steiner added: “It is as if human beings have been deprived of the possibility of balance because a healthy human understanding of the world consists of in a proper grasp of the triad and this has been . . . concealed from them.”¹⁰²

Lucifer and Ahriman after Steiner

Steiner's followers, in the Anthroposophical Society and elsewhere, continued to speak of Lucifer and Ahriman and their respective influences. Richard Leviton shared an important insight into Lucifer's incarnation and mission:

It was as if Lucifer, regent of human manas and hierophant of the Mysteries, momentarily took human biological form as a living fount of inspiration for the primeval, "pagan" wisdom culture. In that capacity he brought the ancient Rishis, the original teachers of a young humanity, the world of "intellectualistic thought," the domain of high reason and pictorial conceptions, and the ideal of a cosmic and unconditioned activity of Intelligence and Will. Intellectually, Lucifer taught the Rishis how to fly.¹⁰³

Presumably that last remark is not to be taken literally. Leviton went on to comment on ahrimanic influence in today's world:

Ahriman fosters the illusion that elemental matter is a reality in itself, that physical-sensory life is the consummation of existence. It is not hard to see how Ahriman's materialism effectively bars all outlook on the spiritual world for many people; an objective survey of the parameters of modern scientific theory and research demonstrates this readily. The arbiters of contemporary scientific and medical thinking almost unilaterally refuse to see through the material world to its true, spiritual foundations.¹⁰⁴

Anthroposophist Judith von Halle commented on Christ's redemptive mission, mediating between Lucifer and Ahriman: "Through Christ's sacrifice the human being's physical organization was returned to the condition it had before the influences of Lucifer and Ahriman took effect."¹⁰⁵ Furthermore:

Since the incisive intervention of the Christ impulse in the human organism and our supersensible bodies, it has become possible for us to activate and exert our I [roughly equivalent to the trans-Himalayan "Ego"] in a balancing way between the influence of Ahriman and Lucifer. . . . Since the Mystery of Golgotha, Lucifer and Ahriman no

longer make a direct contribution to the forming of consciousness. Instead they work harmfully upon the astral body and the etheric body, and the I filled with the thought of Christ is continually called upon to bring their lower influence under control.¹⁰⁶

Referring to the transfiguration on Mount Tabor, Von Halle saw Moses and Elijah standing either side of Christ as three in one: "Together with the Sun of Christ . . . they form a unity."¹⁰⁷ We are reminded of Boaz and Jachim at the entrance to the temple, Lucifer and Ahriman at the entrance to the Essene community, and also of the two thieves at the crucifixion.

Sevak Gulbekian took a harder line on Ahriman's moral status than Steiner had. He viewed Ahriman—and presumably we could include Lucifer—not as morally ambiguous, but as fundamentally evil; what we might regard as beneficial influence was no more than "evil masquerading as good."¹⁰⁸ He cited Christ's words: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."¹⁰⁹

Gulbekian also cited a passage from *2 Thessalonians* that seemed to apply directly to Lucifer. It referred to the "man of sin . . ., the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. . . . Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."¹¹⁰ If Gulbekian is right, Lucifer and Ahriman have expended a great deal of effort on masquerading.

Interface with Other Esoteric Teachings

We have seen that Helena Blavatsky provided a model of Lucifer as a beneficent entity countering the evil Jehovah's plan to make humankind into automata. She laid the blame for the demonization of Lucifer in western culture squarely on institutional Christianity:

There is a whole philosophy of dogmatic craft in the reason why the first Archangel, who sprang from the depths of Chaos, was called Lux (Lucifer), the ‘Luminous Son of the Morning,’ or manvantaric Dawn. He was transformed by the Church into Lucifer or Satan, because he is higher and older than Jehovah, and had to be sacrificed to the new dogma.¹¹¹

Yet even the original, good Lucifer was perceived as ambiguous by humankind:

Lucifer—the spirit of Intellectual Enlightenment and Freedom of Thought—is metaphorically the guiding beacon, which helps man to find his way through the rocks and sandbanks of Life, for Lucifer is the Logos in his highest, and the “Adversary” in his lowest aspect—both of which are reflected in our Ego.¹¹²

Blavatsky explained further:

Lucifer is divine and terrestrial light, the “Holy Ghost” and “Satan,” at one and the same time, visible Space being truly filled with the differentiated Breath invisibly; and the Astral Light, the manifested effects of the two who are one, guided and attracted by ourselves, is the Karma of humanity.¹¹³

Alice Bailey acknowledged that Lucifer had fallen from grace but sought to put the event into a larger perspective:

Symbolically speaking, some of the sons of God fell from their high estate, led, at one time, by “Lucifer, Son of the Morning.” This “fall of the angels” was a tremendous event in the history of our planet, but was nevertheless only a passing and interesting phenomenon in the history of the solar system, and a trifling incident in the affairs of the seven constellations, of which our solar system is but one.¹¹⁴

Bailey spoke of Lucifer as the ruler of humanity, noting for comparison that Christ rules the Hierarchy, and Melchizedek Shamballa.¹¹⁵ She likened Lucifer to the Prodigal Son, alluding to humanity’s descent into matter and its slow re-emergence into light. If Lucifer fell from grace, so did humanity, but that was not the end of the story.

Writing three years after Steiner’s death, Rosicrucian Manly Hall attributed to scholars of his own esoteric tradition an insightful comment on the nature of luciferic influence and on Lucifer himself, in relation to Christ and Jehovah:

Certain Rosicrucian scholars have given special appellations to these three phases of the sun: the spiritual sun they called *Vulcan*; the soular and intellectual sun, Christ and Lucifer respectively; and the material sun, the Jewish Demiurgus *Jehovah*. Lucifer here represents the intellectual mind without the illumination of the spiritual mind; therefore it is “the false light.”¹¹⁶

Hall also offered an interesting connection between overcoming luciferic influence and the alchemical process: “The false light is finally overcome and redeemed by the true light of the soul, called the *Second Logos* or *Christ*. The secret processes by which the Luciferian intellect is transmuted into the Christly intellect constitute one of the great secrets of alchemy, and are symbolized by the process of transmuting base metals into gold.”¹¹⁷

Hall’s reference to the “Second Logos” reflects his familiarity with Theosophical teachings. He was probably familiar with Steiner’s work, too, and may have included the latter among the “Certain Rosicrucian scholars.” Nevertheless, this is a significant comment from someone outside Steiner’s immediate circle, on the mediation of Christ between Lucifer and his polar opposite. Why Hall retained Jehovah to play the role of polar opposite is unclear; perhaps he did not agree with Steiner’s substitution of Ahriman for Jehovah.

Polarities

The Kabbalah is a sophisticated system of esotericism in which pairs of opposite sephiroth are in continual tension. As manifestations of the Ain Soph they represent contrasting, Janus-like faces of deity. As a roadmap of the spiritual journey the Tree of Life presents contrasting challenges that must be confronted and brought into equilibrium. The free-flowing creativity of Netzach must be balanced against the rational groundedness of Hod; the unstinting generosity of Chesed against the stern

judgmentalism of Geburah; and the raw, masculine energy of Chokmah against the feminine, form-making quality of Binah. Equilibrium is sought in the sephiroth on the Middle Pillar, the “Pillar of Equilibrium,” though a more insightful term might be “Pillar of Synthesis.”

Steiner’s Lucifer and Ahriman bear some similarity to Netzach and Hod, viewed as manifestations of deity. And the luciferic and ahrimanic influences bear some similarity to Netzach’s and Hod’s respective challenges. But the match is not good, and Steiner’s dualism cannot be correlated in any meaningful sense with the Geburah–Chesed or Chokman–Binah polarities.

One point of contact between Steiner’s dualities and the Kabbalah should be noted, however. Each pair of opposing sephiroth, together with the sephirah on the Middle Pillar into which it is resolved, form a triangle, a kind of trinity. Netzach, Hod and Tiphareth form one of these trinities, and Christian Kabbalists associate Tiphareth with Christ. Another point of contact is the kabbalistic axiom that the seeker must experience each of the opposing forces before bringing them into equilibrium and moving to a higher level on the Tree. According to Steiner, humanity had to experience the long period of luciferic dominance, and now has to experience the modern period of ahrimanic influence, before it can appreciate the mediating mission of the Christ.

Neither mainstream Christianity nor Islam considered the possibility of either dualistic evil or a mediator between them. As monotheistic religions they admitted one God and one Devil. Yet we do find notions of opposing evil forces in esoteric Christianity. For example Edward Maitland, nineteenth-century Christian esotericist and close associate of Anna Kings-

ford, commented on polar-opposite influences in the church:

Christianity—which is rightly definable as a symbolic synthesis of the fundamental truths contained in all religions—early fell into bad hands. Like its Founder, it was crucified between two thieves, who were no other than the types of its crucifiers. These were, on the one hand, Superstition, which is the distortion of spiritual perception; and on the other hand Materialism, which is the privation of spiritual perception. These are the “two beasts” of mystical Scripture, which come up, respectively, from the “sea” and the “earth,”

to ravage the hopes of humanity. And the two are one under the modes of its manifestation.¹¹⁸

We do not know whether Steiner read that comment. If he had, he might have explained that superstition and materialism were nothing else than luciferic and ahrimanic influences, respectively. Also he might have acknowledged the “two beasts” as prototypes of his Lucifer and Ahriman.

Trans-Himalayan teachings do not offer a direct equivalent of Steiner’s dualism, but Bailey discussed pairs of opposites at some length. She described the Battle of Kurukshetra as being fought on multiple levels of reality, one of which involves the astral body as it is “either attentive to the egoic impression or swayed by the million voices of earth.”¹¹⁹ Bailey also spoke of “the planetary kurukshetra,” which “will be succeeded by the Judgment Day when the Sons of Manas [Sanskrit: “Mind”] will be cast out and the Dragons of Wisdom rule.”¹²⁰

Polarities lie at the very heart of the Fourth Ray of Harmony through Conflict. Much of Bailey’s discussion concerned polarities with a

Steiner identified the Christ as the resolving force between Lucifer and Ahriman. He even suggested that the three entities form a “trinity” engaged in a collective effort to promote the evolution of human consciousness. Although Lucifer and Ahriman wrought great evil, and continue to do so, they nevertheless served—willingly or unwillingly—as agents of Divine Purpose.

clear moral distinction, such as materialism and spirituality, Christ and the anti-Christ. The disciple “stands at the midway point” only insofar as he or she has yet to make the right moral choice.¹²¹ She spoke of the soul as the mediator between spirit and matter and the expression of an important soul quality: “God Himself produced the pairs of opposites—spirit and matter—and also produced the middle way which is that of the consciousness aspect or the soul aspect.”¹²²

Importantly, Bailey described the astral plane as “the plane of duality, of the pairs of opposites, and it is the interplay of these opposites, plus the energies released by the individual, which has, during the ages, built up the world glamour.”¹²³ Overcoming that duality is the major challenge of the second initiation. Duality itself is implicit in the astrological sign of Gemini and the Fourth Ray.

Maya, Glamour and Illusion

As noted, Behemoth and Leviathan represented the elements of earth and water, respectively, and they could be interpreted as symbolizing maya and glamour. It is not difficult to correlate Ahriman with maya and Lucifer with glamour and perhaps also with illusion.

If maya relates to the physical world, glamour relates to the astral, or emotional, nature. Bailey identified nine types of glamour: destiny, aspiration, self-assurance, duty, environing conditions, mind, devotion, desire, and personal ambition. For example: those who succumb to the glamour of aspiration “are completely satisfied and pre-occupied with their aspiration towards the light and rest back upon the fact that they are aspirants. Such people need to move onward on to the Path of Discipleship and cease their preoccupation and satisfaction with their spiritual ambitions and goals.”¹²⁴ The glamour of devotion leads “to an undue stimulation of the astral body. The man or woman thus glamourised sees only one idea, one person, one authority and one aspect of truth. It feeds fanaticism and spiritual pride.”¹²⁵

The concept of illusion has been explored in multiple religions and philosophies. Theosophist Gottfried de Purucker pointed out that both the Stoics and the ancient Hindus be-

lieved that the physical world was illusory. But the concept of illusion developed in the Vedanta to mean “not that a thing seen does not exist, but that we are blinded and our mind perverted by our own thoughts and our own imperfections, and do not as yet arrive at the real interpretation and meaning of the world, of the universe around us.”¹²⁶ De Purucker added that this definition is “near to our own teachings.”

According to Bailey, illusion is comparable with maya and glamour but “is more mental in its impact. It concerns the ideas whereby we live, and the thought life which more or less (although mostly less) governs our daily undertakings.”¹²⁷ Illusion, so defined, relates to the lower mental nature. Two of the most serious forms are the illusion of separateness¹²⁸ and the illusion of superiority.¹²⁹

We saw that Job had to confront and overcome both Behemoth and Leviathan. They were not polar evils where the goal was to find a more desirable middle ground. The same is true of maya, glamour and illusion in trans-Himalayan teachings; the goal is to overcome all of them and to focus the consciousness in the higher mind. That is the challenge, for us as it was for the biblical Job, of the third initiation.

While we may be able to correlate Ahriman with maya, and Lucifer with glamour and illusion, an essential element of Steiner teachings is that they are dualistic *beings*. The goal is to resolve their polar opposite influences, and Christ’s mission was intended to accomplish that.

Prophecies

Writing through his amanuensis Alice Bailey in the 1940s, the Tibetan Master made a number of far-reaching prophecies. They referred to the reappearance of the Christ and the externalization of the Hierarchy of Masters, while related prophecies concerned the establishment of a new world religion and the restoration of the mysteries. We were told that a date “for the first stage of the externalization of the Hierarchy will “in all probability . . . be set” at the next General Assembly of the Hierarchy, scheduled for 2025.¹³⁰ No dates were set for the other developments, and all would depend on our progress toward establishing right hu-

man relations, but the Tibetan implied that they would occur within decades rather than centuries. The Tibetan and other trans-Himalayan teachers also prophesied longer-term events, like the advent of the sixth root race.

Nowhere did the Tibetan speak of the forthcoming incarnation of Ahriman, though Steiner predicted that it would occur within the same timeframe. Steiner mentioned the reappearance of the Christ, which he predicted would begin in the 1930s and last 2,500 years.¹³¹ But he insisted that it would be restricted to the etheric plane and that Christ would not again take dense physical embodiment. He did not discuss its relationship with, or impact on, the reincarnation of Ahriman. Steiner never mentioned the externalization of the Hierarchy, though it would seem to have a major impact on the circumstances in which Ahriman might take (presumably dense-) physical embodiment and “live among men on the earth.” In fact, except for the rarest of references to “the Masters,”¹³² Steiner never mentioned the Hierarchy.

The conflict between the two scenarios is worrisome. Yet there is an interesting point of agreement. Steiner urged us to prepare for the Ahriman’s incarnation in order to ameliorate its negative effects, while the Tibetan urges us to prepare for the reappearance of the Christ and externalization of the Hierarchy in order to make them possible. Both scenarios stress the importance of effective human action.

Concluding Remarks

Ahriman and Lucifer had long histories before Steiner made them the main characters in his system of moral dualism. Blavatsky’s newly published *Secret Doctrine*, as well as ideas circulating within Freemasonry in the late nineteenth century, may have influenced him. Steiner struggled with the identities of his dualistic beings, first considering a good Lucifer and an evil Jehovah, then settling on a predominantly evil Lucifer and bringing in a similarly evil Ahriman as a substitute for Jehovah. We do not know whether Steiner’s struggle reflected attempts to read the Akashic Records

more clearly or whether it simply represented literary experimentation.

Whatever the process of character development, the value of Steiner’s teachings on Lucifer and Ahriman is unquestioned. His achievement was twofold. First, he painted a vivid and compelling picture of luciferic and ahrimanic influence throughout human history and our need to recognize and respond to them. Luciferic influence had a largely favorable effect on human development, stimulating memory and nurturing ancient cultures. It continues to manifest in less favorable ways, including the many types of glamour that we all seek to overcome. Ahrimanic influence stimulated the rise of science and technology but also led to materialism, nationalism, and religious fundamentalism. Several additions to Steiner’s list have been suggested.

Warning of growing ahrimanic influence was, in Steiner’s view, a major element of Anthroposophy’s mission. That may be true; but, without ever referring to Ahriman or ahrimanic influence, many other people over the last 100 years have encouraged a focus on spirituality and common purpose, and a corresponding rejection of materialism, nationalism, fundamentalism, and the other ills Steiner identified.

Second, Steiner identified the Christ as the resolving force between Lucifer and Ahriman. He even suggested that the three entities form a “trinity” engaged in a collective effort to promote the evolution of human consciousness. Note that all three entities in the trinity are male. Evidently Steiner did not believe that gender balance was important to the evolution of consciousness.

Although Lucifer and Ahriman wrought great evil, and continue to do so, they nevertheless served—willingly or unwillingly—as agents of Divine Purpose. A rough equivalence can be recognized between Steiner’s trinity and the triangle of Netzach, Hod and Tiphareth in the Kabbalah.

Steiner’s Lucifer and Ahriman represent just one polarity. The Kabbalah reminds us that other polarities may be no less important. Modern society has failed to resolve the

Chesed–Geburah polarity in developing public welfare policies. The gender tensions implicit in Chokmah and Binah remain largely unresolved in the developed nations, and in the developing world resolution has hardly begun. Are these latter polarities also associated with powerful beings, and what difference would it make if they were? If such powerful beings exist, have they incarnated or will incarnate sometime in the future, and what difference would that make?

These are just two of the questions this article has identified, without attempting to answer. Other important questions relate to the nature of evil: Is evil an absolute, or is some degree of ambiguity always present? Are ostensibly evil beings, on our level and above, capable of doing some good? And how should we judge beings whose good and evil actions seem to be rather equally balanced? What role does moral ambiguity at higher levels play in the Divine Plan for humanity—and in the working out of karma?

We have seen that a Rosicrucian writer embraced the notion of Christ’s mediation between Lucifer and a being with polar-opposite qualities—even though the latter was identified as Jehovah rather than Ahriman. By contrast, none of the trans-Himalayan teachers mentioned Lucifer and Ahriman or even devoted much attention to the influences that Steiner associated with them. Much of Steiner’s other work overlaps with trans-Himalayan teachings, providing comforting assurance of mutual validity. Yet his teachings on Lucifer and Ahriman are unique in modern esotericism, except for discussion by his own followers.

Furthermore, Steiner’s prophecy of Ahriman’s incarnation is hard to reconcile with the Tibetan Master’s prophecies of the reappearance of the Christ and the externalization of the Hierarchy. Both scenarios would seem to be of great importance to humanity and the planet. Inconsistency between Steiner’s teachings and trans-Himalayan teachings requires careful consideration as we assess their relative merits—or as we evaluate the totality of esoteric teachings available to us.

Some Anthroposophical writers now seem to emphasize luciferic and ahrimanic influences rather than the objective reality of Lucifer and Ahriman. Perhaps the personages merely *symbolize* the influences or serve as archetypes describing contrasting attitudes and behaviors that have manifested throughout history and continue to manifest today. Whether or not they are “real” entities, we can readily accept the challenge of overcoming those attitudes and behaviors in ourselves and others.

Esotericists may not all believe that Lucifer was the “God of Light,” but they agree that he did not deserve the treatment received at the hands of western Christian culture. That said, esotericists have sometimes attracted criticism for their efforts to reinstate him. Indifferent to the negative reactions that could be expected from the general population, the Theosophical Society published the journal *Lucifer*, and Foster Bailey—who had recently left the Society—founded Lucifer’s Trust to publish the works of Alice Bailey.¹³³ Eventually the journal was discontinued, and the publishing company was renamed The Lucis Trust.

¹ *Galatians* 5:17. All quotes are from the King-James Bible.

² The stigmatics of western Christianity also recognized the sanctifying benefits of suffering, but their condition was not always voluntary.

³ The Buddha, *The Book of Kindred Sayings*, V, trans., F. L. Woodward, quoted in Richard A. Gard, *Buddhism* (New York, NY: George Braziller, 1962), 128.

⁴ See for example Joseph K. Kim & David S. Lee, *Yin and Yang of Life* (Cambridge, UK: Perfect Paperback, 2010).

⁵ The relationships among the various sephiroth are depicted schematically on the Tree of Life. For a brief introduction to the Tree of Life see Dion Fortune, *The Mystical Qabalah* rev. ed., (Boston, MA: Weiser, 2000).

⁶ See for example Eden Gray, *The Tarot Revealed* (New York, NY: Bell, 1960), 84.

⁷ *Job* 40:15-18. The word *Behemoth* is interesting linguistically. Its ending suggests a plural noun, and the simplest explanation is that it is the plural form of *behemah* (“a beast”). But why should it be plural, when the scripture refers unmistakably to a single monster? One

theory cites the literary convention of *pluralis excellentiae*, in which the plural designates something big or important; for example the irregular plural noun *Elohim* is conventionally translated as “God.” Another theory is that Behemoth was not a Hebrew word, but was of Egyptian origin and meant “water buffalo.”

8 Job 40:19-24.
9 Job 41:19-21.
10 Job 41:26-29.
11 Job 41:3-6.
12 Job 41:31-34.
13 Isaiah 27:1.
14 Closing verses of the *Akdamut*, quoted in David Brickner & Rich Robinson, *Christ in the Feast of Pentecost* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2008), 94-95. Note that another version of the *Akdamut* mentions the banquet but not the battle:
http://www.ou.org/torah/article/akdamut_and_ketuvah#.UaK2MpxBr6g. Accessed May 28, 2013.

15 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, question 89, article 8, objection 2.
16 John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book VII, 453-474.
17 Zachary Lansdowne, “Symbolic Interpretation of the Book of Job: A Poem of Initiation,” *The Esoteric Quarterly* (vol. 9, no. 1, Spring 2013), 53-76.
18 Significantly, *Job* makes no reference to Moses or Mosaic Law.
19 “Psychodrama” is used in its general sense, without reference to the therapies developed by Jacob L. Moreno.
20 In some accounts Ohrmazd and Ahura Mazda are one and the same.
21 *Vendidad* 19. See for example:
<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ahriman>. Accessed June 4, 2013.
22 *Yasht* 19:96. See for example:
<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ahriman>. Accessed June 3, 2013.
23 Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, trans., F. C. Babitt, ch. 47.
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/33731739/Plutarch-Isis-and-Osiris>. Accessed June 1, 2013.
24 Isaiah 14:12-15.
25 2 Enoch 29:3-4.
26 Luke 10:18.
27 Revelation 20:1-3.
28 Revelation 20:7-8, 10.
29 Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur, The Winchester Manuscript*, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998, 342-343.

30 Ibid., 345.
31 Corinne Helene, *Mysteries of the Holy Grail* (Black Mountain, NC: New Age Press, 1973), 25.
32 Ibid., 26.
33 Heindel made that claim to refute suggestions that he had plagiarized some of Steiner’s work.
34 Max Heindel, *The Rosicrucian Philosophy in Questions and Answers*, 3/e, vol. I, §6:131 (Oceanside, CA: Rosicrucian Fellowship, 1922), 262. Emphasis removed.
35 Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine II* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1888), 512.
36 Ibid. II, 243
37 Christopher Bamford, introduction to Rudolf Steiner, “*Freemasonry*” and *Ritual Work* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2007), xvi. The present author is indebted to Sylvia Lagergren whose extensive library of Steiner’s works greatly facilitates this research.
38 See for example Rudolf Steiner, *The Temple Legend* 3/e, (London: ENG: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1997).
39 “Taxil Hoax.” See for example:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxil_hoax. Accessed June 4, 2013.
40 Waite’s rebuttal of Taxil forms a major theme in his book *Devil Worship in France* (1896).
41 See for example:
<http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/texts/LuciferandSat-an.html>. Accessed June 5, 2013.
42 Steiner spoke of the Saturn, Sun and Moon evolutions prior to the present Earth evolution. The Sun evolution corresponds to the Venus chain in trans-Himalayan teachings.
43 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Berlin, Germany, October 25, 1905.
<http://web.archive.org/web/20060102132433/http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/Dates/19051025p01.html>. Accessed June 14, 2013.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Dornach, Switzerland, Nov. 21, 1919. Steiner’s lectures on Oct. 27; Nov 1, 2, 4 and 21 (part), and Dec. 25 and 26 are reproduced in *The Incarnation of Ahriman* trans., M. Barton (London, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2006). The missing part of the Nov. 21 lecture is available, in a different translation at:
<http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/MissMich/19191121p01.html>. Accessed August 12, 2013.
47 Steiner, lecture, Switzerland, Nov. 21.

- 48 Arthur E. Waite, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* (New York, NY: Weathervane, 1970), 12. Ahiman is identified as the son of Anak in *Joshua* 15:14.
- 49 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Leipzig, Germany, September 3, 1908.
<http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/Dates/19080903p01.html>. Accessed June 14, 2013.
- 50 Steiner, lecture, October 25, 1905. Later Steiner described Lucifer's own incarnation in China.
- 51 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Christiania, Denmark, June, 12, 1912.
<http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19120612p01.html>. Accessed June 3, 2013.
- 52 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Dornach, Switzerland, Nov. 4, 1919. Steiner's lectures on Nov. 1, 2, 4 and 15 are reproduced in *The Influences of Lucifer and Ahriman*, trans., D. S. Osmond, (Sussex, ENG: Rudolf Steiner Publ. Co., 1954).
- 53 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 4, 1919.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Dornach, Switzerland, Nov. 1, 1919. Emphasis in original.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Bern, Switzerland, Nov. 4, 1919.
- 59 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 2, 1919.
- 60 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 21, 1919.
- 61 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 4, 1919.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 1, 1919.
- 64 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 4, 1919.
- 65 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 1, 1919.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 4, 1919. Emphasis in original.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 1, 1919.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 4, 1919.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 1, 1919.
- 77 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Dornach, Switzerland, August 26, 1916. Reproduced in *The Riddle of Humanity*, London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1990, 159-160.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 21, 1919.
- 80 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 2, 1919.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 Steiner, lecture, Oct. 27, 1919.
- 84 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 21, 1919.
- 85 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 2, 1919.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Oslo, Norway, Oct. 5, 1913. His lectures on Oct. 5 and 6 are reproduced in *The Fifth Gospel*, trans., C. Davy and D. S. Osmond (Bristol, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1992).
- 89 Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Oslo, Norway, Oct. 6, 1913
- 90 Ibid. Note that Steiner's description of the three temptations differs somewhat from the account in the New Testament. The latter presents them, in order, as turning stones into bread, jumping from the pinnacle of the temple, and gaining all the kingdoms of the world. See *Matthew* 4:1-11; *Luke* 4:1-13.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 4, 1919.
- 94 Ibid.
- 95 Ibid.
- 96 Ibid.
- 97 Ibid.
- 98 Ibid. Emphasis added.
- 99 Steiner, lecture, Nov. 21, 1919.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Ibid.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 Richard Leviton, *Imagination of Pentecost* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1994), 234-235.
- 104 Ibid., 241.
- 105 Judith von Halle, *Secrets of the Stations of the Cross and the Grail Blood* (Forest Row, UK: Temple Lodge, 2007), 24.
- 106 Judith von Halle, *Descent into the Depths of the Earth* (Forest Row, UK: Temple Lodge, 2011), 87.
- 107 Judith von Halle, *And if He had not Been Raised* (Forest Row, UK: Temple Lodge, 2007), 101.
- 108 Sevak Gulbekian, Introduction to Steiner, *The Incarnation of Ahriman*.
- 109 *Matthew* 24:24.
- 110 *2 Thessalonians* 2:3-9.
- 111 Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine I* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1888), 70-71.
- 112 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine II*, 162. Emphasis removed.

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- ¹¹³ Ibid., 513.
- ¹¹⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology I* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1936), 394-395.
- ¹¹⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1957), 107.
- ¹¹⁶ Manly P. Hall, *Secret Teachings of All Ages* (Los Angeles, CA: Philosophical Research Society, 1928), 51.
- ¹¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁸ Edward Maitland, Preface to Anna Kingsford, *Clothed With the Sun* (London, UK: John M. Watkins, 1889).
- ¹¹⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Light of the Soul* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1927), 216.
- ¹²⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1925), 705.
- ¹²¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age I* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1944), 92.
- ¹²² Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour, A World Problem* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1950), 79.
- ¹²³ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age II* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1955), 403.
- ¹²⁴ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age I*, 26.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid., 27.
- ¹²⁶ G. de Purucker, *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical Univ. Press, 1979), 25, 33.
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- ¹²⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *From Bethlehem to Calvary* (New York, NY: Lucis, 1937), 119. Parenthesis in original.
- ¹²⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle* (New York: Lucis, 1950), 138.
- ¹²⁹ Bailey, *Glamour, A World Problem*, 187.
- ¹³⁰ Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, 530.
- ¹³¹ See the several lectures, delivered between 1910 and 1917, reproduced in *The Reappearance of the Christ in the Etheric* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2003). Steiner gave the last of these lectures before he addressed the issue of Ahriman's reincarnation, but other aspects of Ahriman and Lucifer had interested him for several years.
- ¹³² For example Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Leipzig, Germany, November 5, 1911. Reproduced in Rudolf Steiner, *Esoteric Christianity*, Forest Row, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2000, 125.
- ¹³³ To this day conspiracy theorists allege that the Lucis Trust is either a diabolical institution or is an agent of United Nations intent on subjugating the United States.

Alice A. Bailey's Formulas for Initiation: Formulas One and Two

Zachary F. Lansdowne

Abstract

Alice Bailey presented “six ancient formulas or symbolic forms which are to be found in the archives for disciples,” and said that “they concern the six fundamental prerequisites for initiation.” She did not, however, explain the meaning of these formulas but instead acknowledged their “mysterious presentations” and “their extreme difficulty of interpretation.” This article demonstrates the following. Formula One, a verbal formula, depicts the steps for building the antahkarana, which is the inner bridge between one's lower and higher selves, and the steps for releasing the faculty of spiritual perception and manifesting the third eye. Formula Two, a visual formula, has three possible meanings: a schematic diagram that portrays an individual's development of techniques along certain predetermined lines; a visual aid for facilitating the integration and fusion of a group of people; and a depiction of the multidimensional nature of humanity. A subsequent article will elucidate the meanings of Formulas Three through Six.

Background

Alice Bailey (1880 – 1949), a modern theosophical writer, introduced six symbolic formulas for initiation in *Discipleship in the New Age*, volume II:

There are six ancient formulas or symbolic forms which are to be found in the archives for disciples. They concern the six fundamental prerequisites for initiation. They are used prior to all the major initiations, and have therefore five significances or meanings which will become apparent only as each of these initiations is undergone. They are in the form sometimes of symbols and sometimes of words, and are amongst the

oldest formulas in the world. They have been used down the ages by all disciples and initiates of the Great White Lodge.¹

She did not explain the meaning of these formulas but instead acknowledged their puzzling nature: “To grasp the meaning of these mysterious presentations, the creative imagination must be brought into play”;² “These formulas and their implications have caused some of you concern because of their extreme difficulty of interpretation.”³ She did, however, make some general remarks about their meaning:

1. They are second ray presentations of soul ideas. Essentially, they are geometrical forms, lying behind all exoteric manifestations; even when presented as words or phrases they are susceptible of being reduced to definite forms. *They are building patterns.*
2. They express significance and intention. To the disciple and the initiate who employs them correctly and with understanding, they indicate energy direction as a definite part of the creative work which emanates constantly from the world of souls, from the Kingdom of God and from the Hierarchy. *They are rightly oriented energy patterns.*
3. They are related to the world of meaning and are the esoteric symbols to be found be-

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hind all exoteric forms. They veil that which is in process of being revealed. *They are revealing patterns.*

4. They contain or veil the six prerequisites for initiation, and are therefore six in number. They indicate the six relationships or the six intermediate stages of consciousness to be found between initiations. *They have unique reference to the pattern of the initiate-consciousness.*

5. They are definitely formulas of integration, both universal and individual. *They present certain great creative patterns* connected with the integration of lesser forms into a greater whole.

6. They are related to the entire process of death. Death—from the angle of the formulas—is the integration of the essential being in all forms with the pattern which produced its exoteric manifestation. *They concern the discovery of the pattern.*⁴

Bailey gave these formulas to her students in a sequential manner, presenting only one formula at a time, and she encouraged her students to decipher them. For example, in the case of Formula One, she said this to them: “I would ask you to write your understanding of the formula.”⁵ She made the observation, however, that most of her students simply ignored them:

The five [formulas] which you have already received still remain unexplored and unexplained by any of you. You have—with only one or two exceptions—omitted to give much thought or study to these important creative processes.⁶

To the best of our knowledge, this article is the first published attempt to decipher these symbolic formulas for initiation. Our interpretative approach is to assign meanings to the formulas’ symbols based on clues found in Bailey’s published writings. The resulting meanings should not be viewed as authoritative or complete. Although our meanings may not be what were originally intended, our justification for them can be intellectually understood and be traced back to Bailey’s own material. This article clarifies Formulas One and Two, and a

subsequent article will address Formulas Three through Six.

Formula One

A line of fire between two blazing points. A stream of water blue, again a line, emerging from the earth and ending in the ocean. A tree with root above and flowers below.

Out of the fire and always at the midway point appears the eye of God (Shiva). Upon the stream, between the two extremes, there floats the eye of vision; a thread of light unites the two.

Deep in the tree, between the root and flowers, the eye again is seen. The eye that knows, the eye that sees, the directing eye—one made of fire, one fluid as the sea, and two which look from here to there. Fire, water and the earth—all need the vital air. The air is life. The air is God.⁷

The Sanskrit word *antahkarana* can be translated as “internal sense organ.” Bailey provides this definition: “*Antahkarana*. The path, or bridge, between higher and lower mind, serving as a medium of communication between the two. It is built by the aspirant himself in mental matter.”⁸ She also provides the following clue for interpreting Formula One: “I would have you note how this formula refers to the *antahkarana* . . . It will be apparent to you consequently the need for definite work upon the instructions given you upon the *antahkarana*.”⁹

Formula One has three paragraphs, each of which is considered separately. Our commentary on each paragraph has the following format: given first is a brief interpretation of the paragraph, with the original symbolic statement indicated by parentheses; given next is a lengthy justification of this interpretation, based upon a detailed analysis of the paragraph’s symbols.

The Antahkarana

Formula One’s first paragraph is interpreted as follows:

As the first step for building the antahkarana, the disciple has the conscious intention of linking the personality to the Spiritual Triad and then visualizes the construction of a bridge between these two points (“A line of fire between two blazing points”). As the second step, the disciple projects the focus of sensitivity, carrying it forward on the impetus of three factors—an intuition, an affirmation compatible with his or her psychological tendency, and continued visualization (“A stream of water blue, again a line”)—so that he or she emerges from engrossment with the physical plane and ends in sensitivity to the intuitional plane (“emerging from the earth and ending in the ocean”). These two steps constitute an invocation, so the third step is the resulting evocation: the monadic will descends from the Monad, which is located above the planes of human evolution (“A tree with root above”), and gradually quickens the vibratory rate of the seven chakras, which are on the lowest, or physical, plane (“and flowers below”). The antahkarana is built through merging the disciple’s upward projection and the Monad’s downward projection.

The foregoing interpretation construes each sentence of the first paragraph as a step for building the antahkarana, and the rest of this subsection justifies that explanation. Each sentence of the paragraph is repeated in italic and then is followed by a detailed analysis of its symbols.

According to Theosophy, our universe consists of seven worlds that are often called “planes.” The first paragraph refers to these planes, so some background information is needed. The seven planes have the following names: 1) divine; 2) monadic; 3) spiritual; 4) intuitional, or buddhic; 5) mental; 6) emotional, or astral; 7) physical.¹⁰ These planes are arranged metaphorically in an upper and lower manner. The mental, emotional, and physical planes are the three lowest planes, and are spoken of as “the three worlds of human endeavor.”¹¹ The spiritual through physical planes are the five lowest planes, and are spoken of as “the five planes of human evolution.”¹²

A line of fire between two blazing points. “Line” is a symbol of a bridge, because Bailey mentions, “This line of light (this strand or bridge).”¹³ “A line of fire” represents a visualized image that is formed out of mental substance, because Bailey says, “Fire is the symbol of the mind.”¹⁴ The two “points” are the threefold personality (consisting of the mental, emotional, and physical bodies) and the Spiritual Triad, because Bailey speaks of “The technical antahkarana, bridging between the threefold personality and the Spiritual Triad.”¹⁵ The two points are “blazing” prior to the visualization, indicating that they had already been objects of thought. Bailey writes, “It is this *conscious intention* which confers potency in the life of each disciple and initiate.”¹⁶ The word *blazing* has the meaning of shining intensely, so it symbolizes the potency conferred by conscious intention.

A stream of water blue, again a line, emerging from the earth and ending in the ocean. Bailey describes the task of building the antahkarana: “it entails using the totality of the awareness already developed and already ‘enlightened’ by the soul, and (with deliberation) making it increasingly sensitive to the focussed activity of the world of the higher spiritual realities.”¹⁷ Here, “soul” denotes “the inner divine voice.”¹⁸ Accordingly, the “stream” in the second sentence symbolizes the act of projecting the focus of sensitivity.

Bailey says, “Water is the symbol of the emotional nature”¹⁹ and “it is the intuition which is sublimated emotion,”²⁰ so water could symbolize either an emotion or an intuition. “Water” in the second sentence is taken as an intuition, because Bailey says, “The disciple [who is building the antahkarana] has purified and refined his imaginative faculties so that they are now responsive to the impression of the buddhic principle or of the intuitive perception—perception, apart from sight or any recorded possible vision.”²¹

Teachings on the seven rays were part of the ancient Hindu *Rig Veda*, often dated between 1700 and 1100 BCE, and have been disseminated in modern Theosophy.²² According to these teachings, one’s ray signifies one’s intrinsic psychological tendency. Bailey says

that “the act of projecting the antahkarana is ... carried forward on the impetus of a Word of Power,”²³ and lists seven specific Words of Power that can be used for this purpose, one for each of the seven rays:

Ray One. “I ASSERT THE FACT.”

Ray Two. “I SEE THE GREATEST LIGHT.”

Ray Three. “PURPOSE ITSELF AM I.”

Ray Four. “TWO MERGE WITH ONE.”

Ray Five. “THREE MINDS UNITE.”

Ray Six. “THE HIGHEST LIGHT CONTROLS.”

Ray Seven. “THE HIGHEST AND THE LOWEST MEET.”²⁴

Each listed Word of Power is an affirmation that asserts the completion of the antahkarana, and is meant to be compatible with the corresponding ray, or psychological tendency. Bailey says that blue is the color of the second ray,²⁵ so “blue” in the second sentence signifies the use of an affirmation compatible with the second ray. She also says that her formulas for initiation “are second ray presentations,”²⁶ so “blue” in the second sentence is also construed as illustrating this rule: one selects an affirmation that is compatible with one’s psychological tendency. The selected affirmation need not be from the above list, but it ought to be a concentrated thought based on a comprehension of the work to be done.²⁷

Consider the phrase, “emerging from the earth and ending in the ocean.” Bailey uses “earth” as a symbol of the physical plane,²⁸ which is the domain of physical sense perception, but what is the meaning of “ocean”? Bailey provides a related sentence: “But when the initiate has freed himself from the realm of delusion, of fog, of mist and of glamour, and stands in the ‘clear cold light’ of the buddhic or intuitional plane ... he hovers within the ocean of light, and pours that light into the depths.”²⁹ Accordingly, “ocean” is an abbreviation of “ocean of light,” which in turn denotes the intuitional plane. This meaning of ocean is consistent with the earlier interpretation of water as signifying an intuition.

A tree with root above and flowers below. This tree is the *tree of life*, because two classic Hindu scriptures, the *Katha Upanishad* and *Bhagavad Gita*, describe the “tree of life” as “Rooted above, with branches below.”³⁰ Bailey explains the meaning of this symbolic tree:

Upon the Path of Initiation, the monadic will (of which the egoic will is the reflection and the individual self-will is the distortion) is gradually transmitted, via the antahkarana, direct to the man upon the physical plane. This produces the higher correspondence of those qualities so glibly spoken of by the well-trained but dense esotericist—transmutation and transformation. The result is the assimilation of the individual will and the egoic will into the purpose of the Monad which is the purpose—undeviating and unalterable—of the One in Whom we live and move and have our being. This is the field of the true burning, for our “God is a consuming Fire.” This is the burning bush or the burning tree of life of Biblical symbolism.³¹

The word *reflection* is used when a force manifested on a higher plane is passed down to a lower level, where it is conditioned by a grosser kind of matter, so that some of the effective power is lost in the reflected force. In psychology, the word *Ego* is often used to denote the conscious subject, self, self-image, or conceit. In Theosophy, however, *Ego* is synonymous with *Spiritual Triad*,³² so the “egoic will” in the above quotation denotes the reflection of the monadic will on the level of the *Spiritual Triad*.

According to the above quotation, the phrase, “A tree with root above,” has this meaning: the tree of life, which is the downward projection of the monadic will, has its root, which is the Monad, on the monadic plane, which is above the five planes of human evolution. The above quotation uses the adjective “burning” three times to characterize that tree, thereby emphasizing that it has what is called “the purificatory nature of fire,”³³ and describes the effect of this burning as “the assimilation of the individual will and the egoic will into the purpose of the Monad.”

The physical plane is the lowest plane, and it is said to have seven subplanes. The three lowest physical subplanes, called the gaseous, liquid, and dense subplanes, provide the substance for the dense physical body of a human being. The four highest physical subplanes, called the etheric subplanes, provide the substance for the etheric, or vital, body of a human being.³⁴ The Sanskrit word *chakra* literally means wheel. The Hindu tradition describes seven wheels of energy, called chakras, that belong to the etheric body and have the following locations and Sanskrit names:

1. Head centre—sahasrara chakra
2. Centre between eyebrows—ajna chakra
3. Throat centre—vishuddha chakra
4. Heart or cardiac centre—anahata chakra
5. Solar plexus centre—manipura chakra
6. Sacral or sexual centre—svadhithana chakra
7. Centre at base of spine—muladhara chakra.³⁵

The phrase, “flowers below,” denotes the seven chakras, because the Hindu tradition depicts each chakra as a flower with a varying number of petals.³⁶ Thus the entire sentence, “A tree with root above and flowers below,” depicts the Monad as projecting its will downward to affect the chakras. Bailey corroborates this interpretation by describing the Monad’s effect on these energy centers: “In this we have the secret of the gradual vibratory quickening of the centres as the Ego first comes into control, or activity, and later (after initiation) the Monad, thus bringing about changes and increased vitality within these spheres of fire or of pure life force.”³⁷

Invocation is an appeal to a higher power for assistance; *evocation* is the subsequent response of assistance. The first two sentences, which depict the disciple’s upward projection of the focus of sensitivity, constitute an invocation; the third sentence, which depicts the Monad’s downward projection of its will, is the resulting evocation. The antahkarana is built through merging the disciple’s upward projection and the Monad’s downward projec-

tion, as Bailey explains: “Finally, contact between that which the Monad projects and that which the disciple is projecting is made ... The bridge is now built.”³⁸

The Faculty of Spiritual Perception

Formula One’s second paragraph is interpreted as follows:

The disciple receives the following revelation: the Monad, which is the source of the downward stream of the monadic will, is a midway point because it is the eye through which the gaze of the planetary Logos directs His will (“Out of the fire and always at the midway point appears the eye of God (Shiva)”). Upon this stream, within the Spiritual Triad, there is released the disciple’s faculty of spiritual perception (“Upon the stream, between the two extremes, there floats the eye of vision”). This faculty enables the disciple to perceive another person as being a son of God, in the sense of having a divine nature that was bestowed by the planetary Logos (“a thread of light unites the two”).

The foregoing interpretation construes the second paragraph as portraying revelations gained through use of the antahkarana, and the rest of this subsection justifies that explanation. Each sentence of the paragraph is repeated in *italic* and then is followed by a detailed analysis of its symbols.

Out of the fire and always at the midway point appears the eye of God (Shiva). “Fire” in the first sentence of the second paragraph symbolizes the downward stream of the monadic will, which is depicted in the last sentence of the first paragraph, because Bailey speaks of “the fire of the Monad, pouring down the antahkarana.”³⁹ “The midway point” could be the Monad, because Bailey describes it as the middle of two directions: “the Monad ... grips afresh its egoic expression in one direction, and awakens to planetary realisation in another.”⁴⁰ Moreover, she confirms that the Monad is the intended midway point by characterizing it as the eye of God:

The Eye of God. Shiva is the first Person of the Trinity, the Destroyer, but at the same

time the Final Absorber, the Whole and yet the part. This is the organ of the divine Will or Power, the Eye, through Whose directed gaze the power flows outward to its created Whole. In the case of the human spirit, it is the Monad.⁴¹

The first sentence uses this wording: “at the midway point appears the eye of God.” Elsewhere Bailey describes someone as having a similar experience but refers to it as “the revelation of the ‘Presence’”: “he becomes aware also of that ‘Presence’ which enfolds even that spiritual Entity, his own Monad. He sees his Monad as one with the Planetary Logos.”⁴² Accordingly, our interpretation, given above, refers to the disciple’s experience as a “revelation.”

The disciple’s revelation has this implication: the monadic will is actually a reflection of the divine will. Bailey characterizes this relationship in a couple of ways: “the will, as considered and understood by the initiate, is essentially that monadic essence, qualified by ‘fixed determination,’ which is identified with the Will or Purpose of the planetary Logos”;⁴³ “In the final stages of initiation, the Monad becomes the revealer of the purpose of God, of the will of the planetary Logos.”⁴⁴

Upon the stream, between the two extremes, there floats the eye of vision. The second sentence speaks of a second midway point that is “between the two extremes.” The second midway point is the Spiritual Triad, assuming that the Monad and personality are the two extremes. “The eye of vision,” which floats on the stream of the monadic will within the second midway point, is taken to be the faculty of spiritual perception. Elsewhere Bailey describes “the release of the faculty of spiritual perception and of intuitive understanding, which involves the negation of the activity of the lower or concrete mind, of the lower personal self,”⁴⁵ which confirms that this faculty is not part of the personality.

A thread of light unites the two. The term *son of God* is used in the New Testament to denote someone—a man or woman—who has a divine nature that was bestowed by God. For example, 1 John 3:1 states, “Behold, what

manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.”⁴⁶

The first sentence depicts the disciple’s revelation that he or she is a son of God, in the sense of having a divine nature that was bestowed by the planetary Logos. The last phrase of the second sentence, “a thread of light unites the two,” means that the disciple perceives another person as also being a son of God in the same sense. Bailey makes a similar comment, “Again, I say, that the Masters of the Wisdom see neither Jew nor Gentile, but only souls and sons of God,”⁴⁷ but she also speaks of “the sons of men who know not yet they are the Sons of God.”⁴⁸

Bailey sometimes denotes spiritual perception with several related terms: intuitional perception, triadal perception, and vision. *A Course in Miracles (ACIM)*, a modern system of spiritual psychology, also denotes spiritual perception with several related terms: Christ’s vision, vision, spiritual sight, and true perception. For example, *ACIM* describes “Christ’s vision” in this way:

Christ’s vision has one law. It does not look upon a body, and mistake it for the Son whom God created. It beholds a light beyond the body; an idea beyond what can be touched, a purity undimmed by errors, pitiful mistakes, and fearful thoughts of guilt from dreams of sin. It sees no separation. And it looks on everyone, on every circumstance, all happenings and all events, without the slightest fading of the light it sees.⁴⁹

The Third Eye

Formula One’s third paragraph is interpreted as follows:

Through the deep downward projection of its will (“Deep in the tree”), the Monad brings about the vibratory interaction between the head and ajna chakras (“between the root and flowers”), resulting in the manifestation of the third eye. The disciple realizes that the third eye is similar to the Monad, because the third eye is the eye through which his or her gaze directs his or her will (“the eye again is seen”). The disciple is completely aligned, because the higher light

passes from the Monad, which is its source (“The eye that knows”); through the faculty of spiritual perception, which perceives that light within other persons (“the eye that sees”); and down to the third eye, which directs that light to the five lowest chakras (“the directing eye”). The disciple has a triple freedom, because he or she can pass on to the burning ground of sacrifice, consisting of the remaining elements of self-will, as revealed by the Monad (“one made of fire”); or into the ocean of light, or intuitional plane, as revealed by the faculty of spiritual perception (“one fluid as the sea”); or onto the earth, or physical plane, as revealed by the depth perception of the two dense physical eyes (“and two which look from here to there”). The Monad, faculty of spiritual perception, and third eye all need the divine will (“Fire, water and the earth—all need the vital air”). The divine will is embodied in the basic principle of life at the heart of every form upon the planet (“The air is life”). The divine will is God (“The air is God”).

The foregoing interpretation construes the third paragraph as portraying the activity of the will in its various aspects, and the rest of this subsection justifies that explanation. Each sentence of the paragraph is repeated in italic and then is followed by a detailed analysis of the associated symbols.

Deep in the tree, between the root and flowers, the eye again is seen. As in the first paragraph, “tree” refers to the monadic will’s downward projection, “root” to the Monad, and “flowers” to the chakras. As indicated by the last sentence of the first paragraph, the monadic will’s downward projection gradually quickens the vibratory rate of the chakras. Bailey states, “The third eye manifests as a result of the vibratory interaction between the forces of the soul, working through the pineal gland, and the forces of the personality, working through the pituitary body.”⁵⁰ This statement is construed to mean that the third eye manifests as a result of the vibratory interaction between the head and ajna chakras, because Bailey says that the pineal gland and the pituitary body are the dense externalizations of these two chakras,⁵¹

and “the third eye exists in etheric matter.”⁵² Consequently, in the first sentence of the third paragraph, the “flowers” are the head and ajna chakras, and their interaction manifests the third eye.

Wikipedia provides this definition: “In metaphysics, a *universal* is what particular things have in common, namely characteristics or qualities. In other words, universals are repeatable or recurrent entities that can be instantiated or exemplified by many particular things.”⁵³ The final phrase of the first sentence, “the eye again is seen,” indicates that the disciple sees an “eye” that he or she has previously seen. This “eye” is interpreted as a universal. Bailey gives a clarifying comment: “The Monad is to the planetary Logos what the third eye is to man.”⁵⁴ In the second paragraph, the disciple receives this revelation: the Monad is the eye through which the gaze of the planetary Logos directs His will. After manifesting the third eye, the disciple discovers that, in Bailey’s words, “The third eye is the director of energy or force, and thus an instrument of the will.”⁵⁵ The “eye” in the first sentence signifies the characteristic of being a directing eye, because this characteristic is exemplified by both the Monad and third eye. Thus the final phrase of the first sentence has the following meaning: the disciple realizes that the third eye is similar to the Monad, because the third eye is the eye through which his or her gaze directs his or her will.

The eye that knows, the eye that sees, the directing eye. Here, “the eye that knows” is the Monad, “the eye that sees” is the faculty of spiritual perception, and “the directing eye” is the third eye. The listing of these three eyes, from top to bottom, is taken as depicting alignment, which Bailey also describes:

The medium of revelation at this initiation is the antahkarana, which is rapidly being constructed and can thus prove the connecting link and the esoteric mode of vision. The instrument of reception is the third eye which—for a moment—is temporarily suspended from its task of directing energy upon the physical plane and then becomes a stationary, receptive organ, turned inward

toward the higher light ... For the first time in his personal history the initiate is completely aligned and can function straight through from the head centre to the highest point of the Spiritual Triad.⁵⁶

In both this quotation and our interpretation of the third paragraph given above, “higher light” denotes the monadic will, because Bailey confirms elsewhere the equivalence of the “light of the Monad” and “will aspect ... from the Monad.”⁵⁷

One made of fire, one fluid as the sea, and two which look from here to there. The final part of the second sentence is concerned with four eyes: “one made of fire” is the Monad; “one fluid as the sea” is the faculty of spiritual perception; “and two which look from here to there” are the two dense physical eyes that provide depth perception, which is the ability to perceive the distance of objects when viewing a physical scene. Bailey writes, “It is a freedom, triple in its kind, which greets the man who passes freely from the sphere of earth into the ocean of the watery sphere, and thence on to the burning ground of sacrifice.”⁵⁸ Here, “the sphere of earth” is the physical plane, and “the ocean of the watery sphere” is the ocean of light, which is the intuitional plane. “The burning ground of sacrifice” is the field of impurities that can be burned up by the monadic will. Bailey says that “the will aspect streams from the Monad and ... destroys as by fire all elements of self-will,”⁵⁹ so “the burning ground of sacrifice” consists of the remaining elements of self-will that are highlighted by the monadic will. Accordingly, these four eyes reveal the fields of earth, water, and fire, and enable one to pass freely among them. Moreover, the significance of “one fluid as the sea” is further evidence that Formula One consistently uses water, or its derivatives such as ocean, fluid, or sea, to represent intuitive understanding.

Fire, water and the earth—all need the vital air. What is the meaning of “vital air” in the third sentence? In an early draft of this article, we interpreted it as a symbol of the Sanskrit word *prana*, which denotes the vital energy that animates the etheric body, because Bailey

uses “vital air” as a synonym for *prana*.⁶⁰ Such an interpretation would be consistent with the third sentence for this reason: the Monad (symbolized by fire), the faculty of spiritual perception (symbolized by water), and the third eye (symbolized by earth) are part of either the planetary etheric body (located on the four highest planes) or the human etheric body (located on the four highest physical sub-planes), so they all need *prana* (whether planetary or human). We were dissatisfied with this interpretation, however, because it did not seem related to the third paragraph’s theme. Eventually we noticed Bailey’s statement: “this dynamic active and energising will ... is, in one sense, the higher correspondence to the *prana* which ‘enlivens’ the dense physical body of man.”⁶¹ Accordingly, for the remainder of the third paragraph, “vital air,” or “air,” is interpreted as the divine will, so the third sentence becomes: The Monad, faculty of spiritual perception, and third eye all need the divine will.

Why is the divine will needed by these three organs of revelation? As indicated by the second paragraph, the output of the Monad, which is the monadic will, is a reflection of its input, which is the divine will. The *triadal will*, which is equivalent to what was previously called the “egoic will,” is the reflection of the monadic will on the level of the Spiritual Triad. Bailey explains how the triadal will leads to accurate spiritual perception:

Up to the present time, even disciples have little idea of the exceeding power of the triadal will. It might be here affirmed that those healers who have triadal consciousness and can exercise the potency of the monadic life and will, via the Spiritual Triad, will always be successful healers; they will make no mistakes, for they will have accurate spiritual perception.⁶²

Bailey mentions “that intelligent will which links the Monad or spirit with its lowest point of contact, the personality, functioning through a physical vehicle.”⁶³ In other words, the *intelligent will* is the reflection of the monadic will on the level of the personality. Bailey writes: “All white magical work is carried forward

with a definitely constructive purpose, made possible through the use of the intelligent will ... The organ used is the third eye.”⁶⁴

Thus the third sentence has this expanded meaning: the Monad needs the divine will; the faculty of spiritual perception needs the triadal will, which is a reflection of the divine will; and the third eye needs the intelligent will, which is another reflection of the divine will. What is the practical significance of this sentence? The systematic use of the antahkarana to energize oneself with the divine will can be viewed as the higher correspondence to the Hindu practice of *pranayama*, which is the systematic use of a breathing exercise to energize the physical body with prana.⁶⁵

The air is life. The fourth sentence encapsulates the relationship between the divine will and principle of life, of which Bailey gives these longer descriptions:

This great Centre of Existence works through a triangle of energies ... and its major activity is bequeathing, distributing and circulating the basic principle of life itself to every form which is held within the planetary ring-pass-not of the planetary Life or Logos. This energy is the dynamic incentive at the heart of every form and the sustained expression of the intention of Sanat Kumara—an intention working out as the planetary Purpose which is known only to Him.⁶⁶

A stream of energy ... carries the life principle of our planet and ... is dispersed throughout all forms upon the planet and we call it LIFE. It must be remembered that this life principle embodies or is impregnated with the will and purpose of THAT which overshadows Sanat Kumara.⁶⁷

Christ’s vision has one law. It does not look upon a body, and mistake it for the Son whom God created. It beholds a light beyond the body; an idea beyond what can be touched, a purity undimmed by errors, pitiful mistakes, and fearful thoughts of guilt from dreams of sin. It sees no separation. And it looks on everyone, on every circumstance, all happenings and all events, without the slightest fading of the light it sees.

Both quotations mention “purpose,” of which Bailey provides this specialized definition: “the purpose is that aspect of the divine will which seeks immediate expression on Earth.”⁶⁸

Both quotations mention “Sanat Kumara,” a Sanskrit name that means “Eternal Youth,”

who is also mentioned in two classic texts of Hinduism: *Mahabharata* and *Chandogya Upanishad*.⁶⁹ Bailey speaks of “the manifested form of the planetary Logos in the Person of Sanat Kumara,”⁷⁰ thereby revealing their relationship. Thus, in the second quotation, “THAT which overshadows Sanat Kumara” is an indirect way of denoting the planetary Logos.

Assuming that “air” and “life” denote the divine will and basic principle of life, respectively, the fourth sentence has this

implication: one cannot remain satisfied with identifying oneself with anything less noble than the divine will, because that will is embodied in one’s originating principle. Owing to this divine discontent, one eventually takes an inward journey that goes past each successive sheath that veils one’s divine origin. One learns on this journey that one’s identity is not the physical, emotional, mental, or even more refined sheaths. What then is a human being? Bailey characterizes the ultimate discovery of self-identity: “A point of divine dynamic will, focussed in the soul and arriving at awareness of Being through the use of form.”⁷¹

The air is God. By substituting “divine will” for “air” in the fifth sentence, it becomes: “The divine will is God.” Bailey provides this explanation:

The work of the Aryan Adepts is to impress upon the world consciousness that God is Will. To do this for the human family, They

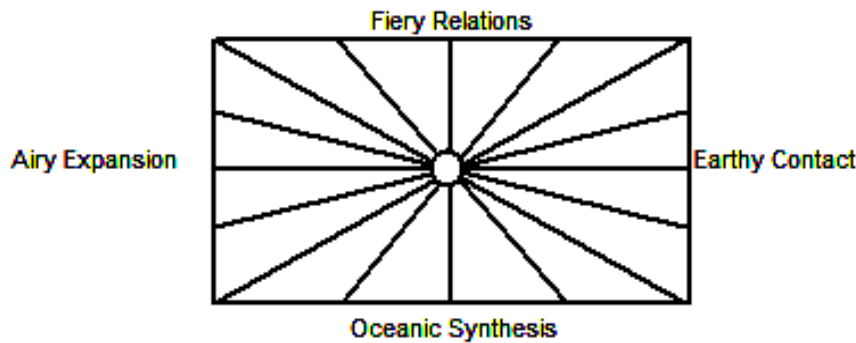
work with the intellect so as to bring it into control, to subordinate other forms to the mind and through the mind to reveal to man the vision of what is and what will be.⁷²

In the above quotation, “Will” is capitalized, indicating that it is the divine will. Thus the fifth sentence renders the concept that the Aryan, or modern, Adepts are said to be impressing upon the world consciousness. *ACIM* states, “Only a purpose unifies, and those who share a purpose have a mind as one.”⁷³ Thus the fifth sentence implies that one can be uni-

fied with God only through right spiritual motive—the motive being the intelligent fulfillment of the will aspect of divinity.

Formula Two

This formula is seen by the disciple inscribed upon the plates of the unknown metal ... It is formed of a series of lines which meet at a circle within a square ... Four words, or rather phrases, are found written, deep in the metal, around each side of the square:⁷⁴



Three interpretations are given for this visual formula, because of Bailey’s clue:

My difficulty in explaining the higher meaning of the external simplicity of these phrases is great; you can only arrive at them yourself as you ponder the only three interpretations possible to you at this time: the individual application of the symbol, its national application, and its human application.⁷⁵

According to our analysis, the three interpretations of Formula Two are as follows: a schematic diagram that portrays an individual’s development of techniques along certain predetermined lines; a visual aid for facilitating the integration and fusion of a group of people; and a depiction of the multidimensional nature of humanity. Each interpretation is considered separately.

The Lines of Techniques

A *schematic diagram* portrays the elements of a system using abstract, graphical symbols rather than realistic pictures. For the first interpretation, Formula Two is a schematic

diagram that depicts the disciple as being more advanced than the attainment indicated by Formula One. Bailey gives the following meanings for its graphical symbols: “the *circle* [indicating] the sphere of his self-initiated activity”;⁷⁶ “the *square* which—for the purposes of our work—we will simply regard as the field of service and of experience—experience in work and not individual life experience”;⁷⁷ and “*lines* of activity and techniques.”⁷⁸

Each side of the square represents a field of experience, so exactly four interrelated fields are depicted. A line represents a technique, or procedure, and the circle represents the sphere of self-initiated activity, so each line that connects the circle to a side of the square represents a technique that the disciple has freely chosen to initiate in the corresponding field of experience. Bailey speaks of the “freedom to move forward along certain predetermined lines.”⁷⁹ The use of lines to represent the depicted techniques indicates that these techniques develop along certain predetermined lines. At any moment, the disciple’s progress is represented by a specific position along each

line: a position close to the circle signifies an early point in the development of the depicted technique; a position closer to a side of the square signifies a later point.

The four phrases written along the sides of the square depict the four fields of experience and utilize symbols that were deciphered for Formula One. Thus Earthy Contact and Oceanic Synthesis refer to the physical and intuitional planes, respectively, because those are the meanings of “earth” and “ocean” in Formula One’s first paragraph. Fiery Relations refer to the monadic will, because that is the meaning of “fire” in Formula One’s second paragraph. Airy Expansion refers to the divine will, because that is the meaning of “air” in Formula One’s third paragraph.

In Formula One’s third paragraph, the disciple’s alignment enables the monadic will’s downward projection to release the faculty of spiritual perception, which reveals the intuitional plane. In Formula Two, this alignment is depicted by the vertical line that passes from Fiery Relations to Oceanic Synthesis. Formula Two also has a horizontal line that passes from Airy Expansion to Earthy Contact, and it depicts the disciple’s service: manifesting the divine will, in the form of the divine plan, on earth. Formula One is concerned with only the construction of the antahkarana and its associated vertical life of alignment, but Formula Two is also concerned with the resultant horizontal life of service. Formula Two’s vertical line and horizontal line meet at its center to form the *equal-armed cross*, which represents the joining of both kinds of life. Bailey also speaks of “the Cross as the Expression of the Vertical and the Horizontal Life.”⁸⁰

Formula One’s third paragraph portrays the disciple as having the freedom of passing into any of the first three fields of experience: the physical plane, intuitional plane, and burning ground of sacrifice, which consists of the remaining elements of self-will that are highlighted by the monadic will. Formula Two, however, depicts further attainment: the *circle* indicates that the disciple still has freedom of choice, but the *square* indicates that he or she can work in any of the four fields of experience. Moreover, Formula One’s third para-

graph portrays the disciple as merely passing in and out of each of its three fields. Formula Two, however, depicts further engagement: the *lines* indicate that the disciple has initiated and is developing techniques in each of its four fields. Let us consider these techniques and their development.

Earthy Contact. The disciple develops a succession of approaches for contacting and working with people on the physical plane, as Bailey explains:

First, he finds a group upon the physical plane whose ideals and plans for service conform to his idea of correct activity, and with this group he affiliates himself, works, learns, and in learning, suffers much. Later he finds his way into a Master’s Ashram, where his effort is increasingly to learn to use the will in carrying out the Plan and to accommodate himself to the group methods and plans, working under the law of occult obedience for the welfare of humanity. The initiate, however, works in neither of these ways, though he has acquired the *habit* of right contact with organisations in the three worlds and right cooperation with the Hierarchy ... His service is invoked by the group or groups needing his help. His response is an occult evocation given in unison with the group of servers with which he is affiliated on the inner side.⁸¹

Oceanic Synthesis. The disciple gradually develops the capacity to live the life of spiritual, or intuitional, perception, as Bailey explains:

The intuition is the expression of the threefold Spiritual Triad, placing it in relation to the higher levels of divine expression; it is a result of the life of the Monad—an energy which carries revelation of divine purpose. It is in the world of this divine revelation that the disciple learns eventually to work and in which the initiate consciously functions. Of this higher experience, the active life of the three worlds is a distorted expression but constitutes also the training ground in which capacity to live *the initiate life of intuitional perception* and to serve the Plan is slowly developed.⁸²

Fiery Relations. The disciple develops a steady, sequential process in which the monadic will burns up all subjective hindrances, as Bailey explains:

When the blazing light of the sun is correctly focussed on or through a glass it can cause ignition. When the blazing light of the Monad is focussed directly upon the personality, via the antahkarana and not specifically through the soul, it produces a blazing fire which burns up all hindrances in a steady, sequential process. Wording it otherwise, when the will aspect streams from the Monad and focusses through the personal will (as the mind can grasp and realise it) it destroys as by fire all elements of self-will.⁸³

Airy Expansion. The disciple develops graded sequences that implement the divine plan, which fulfills the divine purpose, which in turn is the aspect of the divine will that seeks immediate expression on Earth. Bailey gives this explanation:

The work of the initiate is carried forward within the ring-pass-not of the Universal Mind; this is only a phrase expressive of the range of thought, planning and purpose which is that of a planetary or solar Logos. *The quality* of the approach which the initiate brings to the work is drawn, as pure energy, from the heart centre of the planetary Logos; it is pure love with its inevitable corollaries, wisdom and understanding. These give him insight into the plan. *The power* which he can bring to the task is drawn from his comprehension of the purpose of the planetary Logos and this expansive and all-inclusive work is entered into in graded sequences and carried forward under the influence of the initiate's expanding awareness and his growing sensitivity to impression.⁸⁴

This first interpretation of Formula Two has these practical implications:

1. *The lines.* The preceding four quotations corroborate the meaning given to the lines, namely, that they depict techniques, or procedures, that develop in an orderly and predetermined way. By observing the activities

of more advanced disciples, or by studying the more advanced formulas for initiation, one can predict the next phase of each of one's own techniques. As a result, one can immediately shift into the next phase when its time has come, rather than being held back by outgrown habits and attachments. Bailey makes a related remark: "All these phases of intention and of techniques are right in their own place, just as long as they have teaching value, and whilst the higher next phases remain vague and nebulous. They become wrong when they are perpetuated and carried on when the next stage is clearly seen but not followed."⁸⁵

2. *The square.* If one is limited to only three fields of experience, then one is experientially at the stage of Formula One even though one might be intellectually studying Formula Two. In this case, the symbol of the square indicates that one can anticipate working eventually in the fourth field, namely, as a conscious exponent of the divine plan. The repeated, patient, and conscious use of the antahkarana brings about that which is to be, as Bailey explains: "The Light of the Spiritual Triad streams into the consciousness of the initiate, via the antahkarana, so that the Plan for humanity and the divine Purpose in relation to the planet become increasingly clear."⁸⁶

3. *The circle.* This symbol indicates that one has the freedom to initiate activity in any available field of experience. With this freedom comes the responsibility of choosing to work in a balanced way. Formula Two contains symmetrical lines leaving the circle in all directions, which portrays the development of techniques in all fields. Thus this visual formula depicts the following ideal propounded by Bailey: "the disciple is ever *balanced* in endeavour and runs not to extremes of any kind."⁸⁷

4. *The equal-armed cross.* This symbol depicts the following multifaceted ideal: supporting the horizontal life of service by means of the vertical life of alignment,⁸⁸ developing each direction at the same pace,⁸⁹ preserving each direction with equal care,⁹⁰ and merging them together.⁹¹ Bailey

writes, “By the time a man is admitted into an Ashram he ... is now ready to build his own cross upon which he takes his stand—with his hands *stretched out in blessing*.”⁹²

Thus one can use this ideal cross as the model for the cross that one builds through one’s own efforts.

The Sun of Group Fusion

The second interpretation of Formula Two is concerned with the activity of a group, which could be a family, school, church, or public-spirited organization. A group is said to be *integrated* when its members recognize and subordinate themselves to a common vision, and to be *fused* when its members work together as a unit.⁹³ Formula Two is related to Bailey’s three steps by which a member of a group facilitates its integration and fusion:

- a. By bringing each group member into conscious rapport through *naming* and *loving*.
- b. By seeing all the group members as a circle of living points of light along with yourself in the circle, but not at the centre of the circle.
- c. By imagining all these points of light as fusing and blending to make a radiant sun, with rays of light going out towards the four corners of the earth.⁹⁴

The first step in this list is “bringing each group member into conscious rapport through *naming* and *loving*.” The purpose of this step is to establish a telepathic rapport with the other group members by regarding each one in a positive, constructive, and inclusive manner. In Formula Two, a group member is depicted by a point where a line touches the inner circle, so the set of such points represents all members. Counting these points shows that the number of depicted members is sixteen. The Hindu tradition asserts that the number of petals in the throat chakra is also sixteen.⁹⁵ Bailey refers to the throat chakra as “the centre of creative activity,”⁹⁶ and says that “the number of the petals which form a centre ... indicates the number of the energies which are available for service.”⁹⁷ By depicting each member as analogous to a petal of the throat chakra, Formula

Two regards him or her in a positive, constructive, and inclusive manner: namely, as a worker who is part of a center of creative activity and is available for service.

The initial part of the second step is “seeing all the group members as a circle of living points of light.” The purpose of this part is to visualize group integration, assuming that the “light” in each member signifies his or her recognition of a common vision, and the “circle” signifies the social conformity that results from the members subordinating themselves to that common vision. In Formula Two, the inner circle containing the sixteen points is a picture of the visualized “circle of living points of light.”

The final part of the second step is “seeing ... yourself in the circle, but not at the centre of the circle.” Bailey speaks of “the leader or focal point of the group,”⁹⁸ so being at the center of the circle symbolizes being the leader of the group. Thus the purpose of this part is to visualize your equality with your co-workers. If you regard yourself as more important than your co-workers, perhaps by applying these steps, then you create an insulating and separating wall between yourself and them.⁹⁹ In Formula Two, the inner circle without a central point is a picture of “yourself in the circle, but not at the centre of the circle.”

The initial part of the third step is “imagining all these points of light as fusing and blending to make a radiant sun, with rays of light going out.” The purpose of this part is to visualize group fusion, because the group members, each of whom is seen as a point of light, are imagined as working together as a single radiant sun. In Formula Two, the inner circle combined with the outward-going lines is a picture of the visualized “radiant sun.”

The final part of the third step is “imagining ... rays of light going out towards the four corners of the earth.” The purpose of this part is to visualize the integrated and fused group as affecting the entire planet. In Formula Two, the corners of the square provide a picture of the visualized “four corners,” and the four phrases indicate that the four sides of the square represent the four constituent parts that make up the

picture “of the earth” as it is seen from space. In particular, Earthy Contact, Oceanic Synthesis, Fiery Relations, and Airy Expansion represent continents, oceans, city lights, and clouds, respectively. For example, Carol Ballard’s book on astronomy gives this description: “Seen from space, Earth looks like a blue ball.

The white patterns are clouds, the green shapes are continents, and the blue is the oceans.”¹⁰⁰ Francis Reddy’s book on astronomy adds, “Seen from space, our planet sports its own constellations made by city lights.”¹⁰¹

In summary, Formula Two illustrates Bailey’s three steps for facilitating group integration and group fusion. This formula also has practical significance: it could be used as a visual aid during a group ritual in which all group members apply in unison Bailey’s three steps. Both Formula Two and the third step have a surprising implication: if a group is both integrated and fused, then it may affect the entire planet. Bailey provides this explanation of the group’s extensive effect:

The main objective of our joint work is still group integration and the setting up of that inter-communication between the group members which will result in the needed interplay and telepathic communication; this will finally establish that golden network of light which will serve to create a powerful focal point; this focal point will be the agent for *the revitalisation spiritually* of the etheric body of humanity—as a whole. This is an essential and important statement. This focal point will, in its turn, aid in the revitalising of the etheric body of the planet with new power and with fresh impulse.¹⁰²

The Pyramid of Humanity

For the third interpretation, Formula Two is seen as a pyramid. Although a pyramid is a three-dimensional object, the two-dimensional picture is obtained by viewing the depicted pyramid from a position that is above it. Thus the inner circle is the pyramid’s apex, and the outer square is its base. The two diagonal lines,

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which connect the opposite corners of the square, are the slanted edges of the pyramid’s four triangular sides. The pyramid’s apex, however, is on the monadic plane, its base is on the physical plane, and its intervening structure extends across the intermediate planes. Let us consider carefully each of these symbols.

The four phrases, written along each side of the square, simply denote the four elements of ancient Greek philosophy: earth, water, fire, and air.¹⁰³ In the commentary for Formula One’s first para-

graph, earth is deemed to be a symbol for the physical plane, water for the emotional nature, and fire for the mind. In addition, Bailey writes, “Air is the symbol of the higher life in which the Christ principle dominates, in which freedom is experienced and the soul comes to full expression.”¹⁰⁴ Here, “Christ principle” is a synonym for the intuition.¹⁰⁵

Each phrase indicates a stage of evolution, because it denotes a Greek element that has a symbolic meaning indicating where consciousness is polarized. For each phrase, which is written in *italic*, the following list provides the denoted element, which is written in parentheses, as well as Bailey’s description of the indicated stage of evolution:

1. *Earthy Contact* (earth). “During this [first] period, the man is polarised in his physical body and is learning to be controlled by his desire body, the body of feeling or of emotion. He has no aspirations

save such as pander to the pleasures of the body; he lives for his physical nature, and has no thought for aught that may be higher.”

2. *Oceanic Synthesis* (water). “The second period covers a point in development when the polarisation is largely in the emotional body and when lower mind desire is being developed ... The man is conscious of vague pleasures not associated with his physical body; he is capable of a deep love for teachers and guides wiser than himself, of a wild unreasoning devotion for his environmenting associates, and of an equally wild and unreasoning hatred.”

3. *Fiery Relations* (fire). “Now, on entering the third period, comes the most vital point in the development of the man, that in which mind is developing and the polarising life shifts to the mental unit ... His desires turn upward instead of downward, and become transmuted into aspiration,—at first aspiration towards the things of mind, and later towards that which is more abstract and synthetic.”

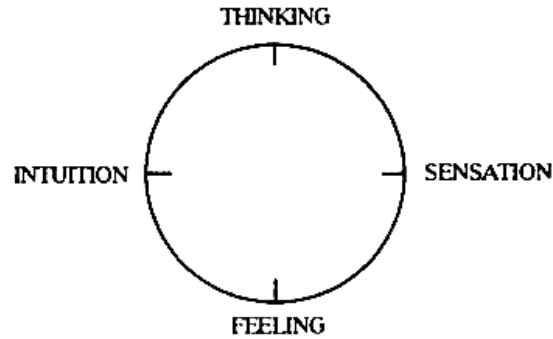
4. *Airy Expansion* (air). “It is by meditation, or the reaching from the concrete to the abstract, that the causal consciousness is entered, and man—during this final period—becomes the Higher self and not the Personality. The polarisation shifts ... entirely from the Personality to the Ego, until, at the close of that period, liberation is complete, and the man is set free.”¹⁰⁶

Each side of the pyramid represents the stage of evolution that is indicated by its associated phrase. Each of the first three stages corresponds to the polarization being within one body, and it ends when the polarization shifts upward into the next higher body. According to the third quotation in the above list, the third

stage corresponds to the polarization being within the mental body, which is located on the concrete levels of the mental plane. In the fourth quotation, “causal consciousness” is consciousness polarized within the causal body, which is located on the abstract levels of the mental plane.¹⁰⁷ According to the fourth quotation, the fourth stage corresponds to the polarization being within either the causal body or the Spiritual Triad, and it ends when the polarization shifts upward into the Monad.

These four stages of evolution appear elsewhere. The *Purusha Sukta*, which is part of the ancient Hindu *Rig Veda*, mentions the four traditional castes (or classes) of Hindu society.¹⁰⁸ Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952), an eminent teacher of Hinduism, states, “These [four castes] were symbolic designations of the stages of spiritual refinement.”¹⁰⁹ Yogananda’s descriptions of the four Hindu stages resemble Bailey’s foregoing descriptions.

Carl Jung (1875 – 1961), an eminent psychiatrist, describes four psychological functions: sensation, feeling, thinking, and intuition. Jung states, “As a rule, one or other function predominates, in both strength and development,”¹¹⁰ so he classifies people on the basis of their predominant function. Bailey’s notion of polarization is comparable to Jung’s notion of predominance, so each of Bailey’s four stages of evolution is characterized by the predominance of one of Jung’s four functions. By regarding feeling and thinking as rational opposites, and sensation and intuition as irrational opposites, Jung infers this arrangement: “The four functions therefore form, when arranged diagrammatically, a cross with a rational axis at right angles to an irrational axis.”¹¹¹ Daryl Sharp, a Jungian analyst, illustrates Jung’s arrangement of the four functions by using the following diagram:¹¹²



Sharp's diagram matches Formula Two's arrangement of the corresponding phrases around the pyramid. Thus Jung's diagrammatic insight provides an explanation for Formula Two's arrangement of these phrases: the indicated stages of evolution form a cross with a rational axis at right angles to an irrational axis.

The *All-seeing Eye* is a very old symbol of divinity. For example, the ancient Egyptians represented Osiris, their chief deity, by the symbol of an open eye.¹¹³ Both the Old and New Testaments have similar notions: Proverbs 15:3 states, "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, Beholding the evil and the good"; and 1 Peter 3:12 states, "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous." The circle at the apex of the pyramid is interpreted as the All-seeing Eye for two reasons. First, Professor Jasjit Suri states, "The human eye has a structure very close to that of a sphere,"¹¹⁴ so the human eye would have the shape of a circle if observed from a position that is above it. Second, the most notable depiction of the All-seeing Eye is an open eye at the apex of a pyramid, and it appears in the reverse of the Great Seal of the United States, which is reproduced on the United States one-dollar bill. Bailey gives the following explanation for this eye:

"The All-seeing Eye" ... refers to the power of the planetary Logos to see into all parts, aspects and phases (in time and space) of His planetary vehicle, which is His physical body and to identify Himself with all the reactions and sensitivities of His created world and to participate with full knowledge in all events and happenings. Through what medium does He, on

His own high levels, do this? Through what mechanism does He thus "see"? What is His organ of vision? ... The monadic world—so-called—is His organ of vision; it is also His directing agent for the life and light which must be poured into the phenomenal world.¹¹⁵

Sutratma is a Sanskrit word that can be translated as "thread-self," for which Bailey gives this definition: "The Sutratma is that magnetic link, spoken of in the Christian Bible as the 'silver cord,' that thread of living light which connects the Monad, the Spirit in man, with the physical brain."¹¹⁶ The silver cord is cited in Ecclesiastes 12:6-7: "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The All-seeing Eye's attention creates the sutratma for each person, because, in Bailey's words, "vitality or energy follows the line of the eye."¹¹⁷ Except for the diagonal lines, each line between the circle and the square is taken as a person's sutratma, because it can be regarded as following the line of the All-seeing Eye to the associated physical body.

Bailey notes the use of the sutratma and antahkarana by people in each stage of evolution:

Lower types of humanity use the sutratma as it passes through the etheric body.

Average men utilise almost entirely that part of the sutratma which passes through the astral plane. Their reactions are largely based on desire, and are emotional.

Intellectual men utilise the sutratma as it passes through the lower levels of the mental plane, down through the astral to the physical in its two sections. Their activities are energised by mind and not by desire, as in the earlier cases.

Aspirants of the physical plane use the sutratma as it passes through the two lower subplanes of the abstract levels of the mental plane, and are beginning gradually to build the antahkarana, or the bridge between the Triad and the Personality.¹¹⁸

After considering the meaning of each symbol in Formula Two, let us consider its meaning as a whole. The depicted pyramid is called the “Pyramid of Humanity,” because all human beings appear somewhere on it. Each person is represented by a point—symbolizing the position at which his or her consciousness is normally polarized—that appears on a line—symbolizing his or her sutratma. A person’s line goes from the circle—symbolizing the All-seeing Eye—down a side—symbolizing his or her stage of evolution—along the slanted surface—symbolizing the spiritual through physical planes—to an endpoint on the base—symbolizing his or her physical body.

The following observations can be made about this third interpretation. 1) All people are united, because each one is connected by his or her sutratma to the All-seeing Eye. 2) A person progresses by moving along the Upward Way, which entails shifting his or her point of polarization upward, from a lower to a higher body, along the sutratma.¹¹⁹ 3) Thus a person’s illumination is gradual and is developed stage by stage as he or she moves towards the All-seeing Eye, which is a symbol of complete illumination.¹²⁰ 4) People shift their points of polarization nearer to the All-seeing Eye by becoming more like it, in the sense of becoming more of an observer of life, of others, and of themselves, so the All-seeing Eye is both a destination and a prototype.¹²¹ 5) All people are essentially equal, because they have the same destiny of reaching the pyramid’s apex.¹²² 6) But they do not have equality of inner understanding, because they are at different points along their paths.¹²³ 7) This image of humanity is the perspective of the planetary

Logos, because Formula Two portrays the pyramid from a position that is above the All-seeing Eye.

Conclusions

The preceding sections display our efforts to employ clues found in Bailey’s published writings and thereby decipher two of her symbolic formulas for initiation: Formulas One and Two. How accurate are our interpretations? Bailey gives brief summaries of “The Formulas from the angle of Discipleship,” as well as brief summaries of “The Formulas from the universal creative Aspect.”¹²⁴ These summaries could be used as standards of validity. Our interpretations do not resemble the summaries “from the angle of Discipleship,” but have some resemblance to those “from the universal creative Aspect.” Thus our work seems to fall in the latter category.

So that the readers of this article may judge for themselves the validity of our interpretations, here are Bailey’s summaries of Formulas One and Two “from the universal creative Aspect”:

Formula 1 . . . The transition from darkness to Light. Creation in the Light.

Formula 2 . . . Transition from the unreal to the Real. The nature of reality. Creation in time and space as understood in the three worlds.¹²⁵

Let us compare Bailey’s summaries with our interpretations, starting with Formula One. The first summary phrase, “The transition from darkness to Light,” corresponds to the formula’s first paragraph, which was interpreted as depicting the steps for building the antahkarana, and to the formula’s second paragraph, which was interpreted as depicting the release of the faculty of spiritual perception. Bailey speaks of “the darkness of ignorance.”¹²⁶ Prior to building the antahkarana, the disciple was identified with physical form and so was immersed in the darkness of ignorance. By building the antahkarana and releasing the faculty of spiritual perception, the disciple makes the transition to perceiving the intuitional plane, which our commentary on the first paragraph calls the “ocean of light.”

The second summary phrase, “Creation in the Light,” corresponds to the third paragraph of Formula One, which was interpreted as depicting the manifestation of the third eye. Our commentary on that paragraph shows that Bailey uses the “light of the Monad” to denote the monadic will and considers the intelligent will to be a reflection of the monadic will. Our commentary also quotes Bailey’s statement: “All white magical work is carried forward with a definitely constructive purpose, made possible through the use of the intelligent will ... The organ used is the third eye.”¹²⁷ Bailey speaks of “the creative work of white magic,”¹²⁸ so the second phrase, “Creation in the Light,” refers to the creative work of white magic that is brought about by the third eye in conjunction with the light of the monad.

Formula Two has three interpretations. The first summary phrase is “Transition from the unreal to the Real.” Bailey speaks of “truth or the real,”¹²⁹ so truth and error are synonyms for the real and unreal, respectively. The first summary phrase corresponds to our first interpretation, called the Lines of Techniques, because the four transitions depicted in this interpretation can be rendered as follows: a succession of approaches for contacting and conveying truths to people on the physical plane; gradual development of the capacity to live the life of spiritual perception, which reveals the truth behind all outer seeming; a steady, sequential process in which the monadic will burns up all subjective errors; and graded sequences that implement the divine plan, which involves, in Bailey’s words, “enunciating those new truths which should in the future guide human living.”¹³⁰

The second summary phrase is “The nature of reality.” Here, “reality” is taken as the divine reality, because Bailey speaks of “God, or the divine Reality, veiled by all forms.”¹³¹ Although the divine reality is veiled by all forms, Bailey says, “Through humanity on the physical plane, the nature of reality will be revealed.”¹³² The second summary phrase corresponds to the third interpretation, called The Pyramid of Humanity, because this interpretation indicates how humanity reveals “the nature of reality”: human beings on the physical

plane, which is the base of the pyramid, shift their points of polarization upward along the surface of the pyramid toward the All-seeing Eye at the apex, thereby becoming more like it and more illumined.

The third summary phrase, “Creation in time and space as understood in the three worlds,” corresponds to our second interpretation, called the Sun of Group Fusion. This interpretation illustrates steps for facilitating the integration and fusion of a group of people, thereby enabling them to function effectively in time and space. Moreover, this interpretation depicts each group member as analogous to a petal of the throat chakra, which is a center of creative activity. The third phrase mentions “the three worlds,” referring to the physical, emotional, and mental worlds. A group works in all three worlds, as Bailey explains: “It is not so much the active outer service of a group of disciples which is of major importance (though it has necessarily a vital purpose) as the coherent, integrated group thought which is so potent in effecting changes in the human consciousness.”¹³³

Consequently, our interpretations of Formulas One and Two do seem to match Bailey’s summaries “from the universal creative Aspect.” A subsequent article will provide our interpretations of Formulas Three through Six. As that article will show in detail, Formulas Three and Four depict progressive steps for using the antahkarana, Formula Five depicts steps for ascending in consciousness via the antahkarana, and Formula Six depicts activities that are brought about by this ascension.

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II (1955; reprint. New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1972), 246.

² *Ibid.*, 344.

³ *Ibid.*, 262.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 363-364.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 343-344.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 262.

⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar* (1922; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1974), 215.

- 9 Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II, 266.
- 10 Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (1925; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 117.
- 11 Alice A. Bailey, *The Light of the Soul* (1927; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1978), 389.
- 12 Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 117.
- 13 Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (1960; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 509.
- 14 Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem* (1950; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 179.
- 15 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 476.
- 16 Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II, 406.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 194.
- 18 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II (1942; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1981), 491-492.
- 19 Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (1934; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 250.
- 20 Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II, 625.
- 21 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 488.
- 22 Zachary F. Lansdowne, "Vedic Teachings on the Seven Rays," *Esoteric Quarterly*, Spring 2010.
- 23 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 514-515.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 515-518.
- 25 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I (1936; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 127.
- 26 Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II, 363.
- 27 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 517.
- 28 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 82.
- 29 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 64.
- 30 Charles Johnston, *Bhagavad Gita* (New York: J. J. Little, 1908), 162.
- 31 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 31.
- 32 Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation* (1922; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1974), 4.
- 33 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (1951; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 287.
- 34 Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 218.
- 35 Alice A. Bailey, *The Soul and Its Mechanism* (1930; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 111.
- 36 Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 190.
- 37 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 166.
- 38 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 495.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 475.
- 40 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 726.
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Toward Christian Renewal

Aaron J. French

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to introduce the reader to the types of esoteric Christianity that have developed out of the ancient mystery traditions of Greece, Egypt, and various other locales. Additionally, it seeks to demonstrate how incorporating these esoteric aspects into mainstream Christianity will produce a more informed participant of the Christian faith. By examining the rituals of the mystery traditions, principally those of death and rebirth, one can identify a connection between Christian practices and the ancient mysteries. In this article, the frayed ends of those traditions are found to reconstitute in the Christian religious system, particularly within its esoteric branches. The writings of Christian esotericists such as Richard Smoley, Antoine Faivre, Rudolf Steiner—and even the Universalist philosophy of Alain Badiou—are shown to reveal spiritual components absent from mainstream Christianity. Their work provides a roadmap to the true teachings espoused by Christ Jesus, i.e. that of self-apostleship or self-initiation.

Introduction

Christianity is an effectively organized system of beliefs, yet much of the religion—including its history, mythology, teachings, and symbolism—remains unknown to its practitioners. If we look to Paul of Tarsus, the goal of subscribing to the Christian beliefs is to become an apostle—to be utterly reborn into something new, a self-appointed harbinger of the “good news.” Alain Badiou, a French atheist and communist thinker, elucidates the process in a groundbreaking philosophical work *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, in which the author gets at the core of what it means to be Christian. On the other hand, it seems acceptable among members of the mainstream Christian community to consider themselves Christians without a true know-

ledge of the eventful impact of the Christ, nor what it means to become an apostle of the faith. Particularly eclipsed are the mystical origins of the religion, the history of transmissions from esoteric schools, which have poured themselves into the melting pot that is Christianity in its current form. These days simply stating “I am a Christian” seems to suffice. Nevertheless, there exists within the Christian religion a system of ideas, linking it to profoundly potent mysticism and esotericism. This system finds its roots in what is commonly known as the mystery traditions, and a proper understanding of their correspondences engenders a complete and utter renewal (what Paul referred to in Galatians 6:15 as becoming “a new creature”).

This is not meant to denigrate mainstream Christians, but rather to acknowledge the long tradition of mysticism in their very midst, as well as to draw attention to the works of Christian esotericists such as Richard Smoley, Antoine Faivre, and Rudolf Steiner. We would also draw attention to the Universalism of Alain Badiou, and additionally, the history of esoteric practices incorporated into Christianity and its various branches, including the neo-Gnostic churches, in the hope that members of the faith can take full advantage of them and enhance their spiritual life—ultimately becoming more informed Christians.

About the Author

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The article explores three subjects, which combine to form the complex picture of the esoteric structure of Christianity. Enhancing one's beliefs and aligning them in the proper way does not involve physical action, contrary to what some might believe. Mainstream Christians have been performing valid rituals and prayers for hundreds of years, so there is no need to devalue the solemnity of their devotion. The requirement, rather, is an acquisition of certain information not usually given to church members (knowledge about the ancient mysteries and esotericism), and a deeper understanding of the Christ-event (the crucifixion and resurrection), which would lead to conviction regarding the Christ-event itself, as well as the self-authorized apostleship espoused by Saint Paul in the New Testament. This practice of self-appointment may equate to the self-enlightenment and self-initiation systems popularized during the New Age Movement.

The Mystery Traditions

The intention here is to show the relationship between Christianity and esoteric methodology, for this relationship can shed light on the connection between Christian religion and ancient mystery traditions from ancient Egypt, Greece, and elsewhere. Once that connection is established, we can explore the idea that something might be missing from the exoteric practices of mainstream Christianity, and further propound what that something missing may be, as well as how to incorporate it into the mainstream traditions.

More than likely, mystery traditions have existed since prehistory. However, one of the earliest places scholars encounter them is in ancient Egypt. Mortuary cults initiated their members into a secret body of knowledge, enabling them to experience a symbolic death, actually to venerate death, before passing into the afterlife following their *real* death. The wisdom and supernatural powers these initiates gained from their premature death experiences were incorporated into every facet of Egyptian society and culture: funerary rites, burial rituals, hieroglyphs, tomb carvings, the mummification processes, the construction of pyramidal structures, and cartographic postmortem texts such as the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*. This

knowledge was transmitted to the Egyptian people by a highly organized priesthood under the direction of the pharaohs who were advanced initiates.

Making the transition from ancient Egypt to ancient Greece we again find the practice of mystery religions in the Pythagoreans, Orphic cults, and the Dionysian and Eleusinian mystery schools. It was common practice among these groups to experience a premature death in which the candidate was given glimpses of the spirit world or the gods themselves, the end result being that of self-identification with the divine. Greeks initiated themselves into secret societies and therein acquired the wisdom of the cosmos.

The secret Pythagorean Society was formed in Greece around 400 BCE, and it was based on the belief that everything in the world could be represented as a relationship between the natural numbers. Plato said in his *Republic* that, above all else, Pythagoras was most famous for leaving behind him a way of life. The members of his school regarded him as a divine figure, sent by the gods to benefit humankind.¹

Those who were initiated into his school made solemn vows both to Pythagoras and to each other, and together they learned about reincarnation and the relationship between man and the cosmos. It is said that Pythagoras invented the musical octave, and that his followers referred to him as "the harmonic deity," halfway between the gods and man.²

The Orphic, Dionysian, and Eleusinian mysteries make up the more pastoral form of the Greek initiation rites, though no less secretive, and by no means less emphatic on the requirement that the candidate give up his or her old way of life. All of these initiation ceremonies offered rewards in the afterlife, as well as an enhanced version of their remaining existence on Earth. Orphism centered on the pivotal figure of Orpheus and the story of his journey to the underworld. Moreover, "Orphics affirmed the divine origin of the soul, but it was through initiation into the Orphic Mysteries and through the process of transmigration that the soul could be liberated from its Titanic in-

heritance [sinful portion] and could achieve eternal blessedness. Orphism stressed a strict standard of ethical and moral conduct. Initiates purified themselves and adopted ascetic practices (e.g., abstinence from eating animal flesh) for the purpose of purging evil and cultivating the Dionysian side [divine portion] of the human character.”³

The Dionysian and Eleusinian initiation involved a focus on a journey to the underworld, or the darker side of the soul, and the subsequent return to the divine portion, so that the candidate was thenceforward unafraid of death, and could unfailingly recall the event of initiation to revitalize that firm belief.⁴ In succeeding years, the Mithraic mysteries were practiced in the Roman Empire from about the 1st to the 4th centuries CE, and they involved the candidate partaking in a vast meal modeled after the Christian “Last Supper,” following a ceremony in which a bull was slaughtered. “Those who ate and drank of this Mithraic meal thus revitalized themselves with the elements representing the divine body and blood of the slaughtered bull.”⁵

Plato’s academy was even a type of lodge,⁶ with the inscription “Let None But Geometers Enter Here” etched above the entrance.⁷ Following Plato was his pupil Aristotle, who created the Lyceum based on Plato’s model, and although both of these schools “did not require an oath, dietary rule or secret initiation to be admitted,”⁸ they functioned under the lodge paradigm, with an aim to “educate disciples, philosophers who in the future would occupy positions of authority in the state and be guided by true philosophy.”⁹ As a result of this training, members obtained illuminating knowledge or *gnosis*. In this case: knowledge of the spirit world and the immortality of the soul. Initiates of the mystery traditions no

longer feared death, for they possessed a firm and definite knowing that life force did not end, but was merely transformed.

In addition to Egypt and Greece, other mystery traditions have flourished, such as the so-called

Gnostics, the Jewish Kabbalists, and the Manicheans of Persia. The ritual death initiations in the mystery tradition may possibly find the faintest echo in “born-again” conversion experiences of evangelical Christians. Christianity and the mystery traditions share a promise of immortality of soul following these death experiences. The linking with the Christ is meant to establish a firm bond with the divine, as the Christ is the Son of the Father, and after being reborn the faithful practitioner is now proposed to *live within*

the Christ. This intimate link is unique to Christianity, in contrast to other belief systems, but may well have its roots in the mysteries.

The Esoteric

The difference between exoteric and esoteric is best illuminated when the latter is explicitly defined, as was accomplished by Richard Smoley in his book *Inner Christianity*:

Knowledge that liberates consciousness is often described as *esoteric*. The word “esoteric” ... comes from the Greek *esotero*, which means “further in.” You have to go “further in” yourself to understand what this knowledge is about.¹⁰

For initiates of the mystery traditions, a proper understanding of this body of esoteric knowledge was gained by undergoing the premature deaths and the subsequent rebirthing in the divine—the same concept practiced and promulgated by Christ Jesus and incorporated into Christianity. This fact has been lost on many mainstream Christians, who feel the act of proclaiming the born-again quality suffices,

ignoring the longstanding tradition of the mystery schools, which demands a true and utter self-renewal, so that the proper link with divinity can be established.

However, for reasons which history has made clear, the esoteric forms of Christianity have been secretly and lovingly nurtured in many underground streams. In recent times, it has been nurtured by Rudolf Steiner and his Anthroposophy, Anna Kingsford, Annie Besant, Arthur E. Waite, and Geoffrey Hodson. The qualities needed for any tradition to be considered *esoteric* are six fold, as put forth by Antoine Faivre, French esotericist and scholar, and also one of the first Religious Studies professors to discuss esotericism in an academic arena. Faivre's six essential components for a practice to be called esoteric are listed below:

- 1) Correspondences
- 2) Living Nature
- 3) Imaginations and Mediations
- 4) Experience of Transmutation
- 5) The Praxis of Concordance
- 6) Transmission

These components and their relevance are summarized as follows.¹¹ By *Correspondences*, Faivre refers to the correlation between realms of the spirit (or Heaven) and all the material parts of the universe. This relates to the creative powers of the Word, or *Logos* (Greek for *word*), and the first passages of the Gospel of St. John. In the case of Anthroposophy, Steiner takes the Word in the first passages of St. John and reverts to the Greek, taking the following passage “the word (*Logos*) was with God, and the word (*Logos*) was a God” to mean that the structuring power inherent in the *Logos* is indeed the functionality of the Christ—His purpose is structuring our thoughts in the manner of clear thinking—*Ordo ab Chao*, or “Order Out of Chaos”—so that we might approach the spirit world correctly during this time, and not be diverted by fantasy.¹²

By *Living Nature*, Faivre suggests that spirit exists in all matter, organic and inorganic. In other words, that everything is alive and spir-

itual. We find this prevalent in the Christian concept of Creationism, which posits that the world was created by God and that evidence of His hand is discernible everywhere. Referring to John 1:3, “All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” Nature is therefore, like a vibrating cosmic string, which manifests the creative powers of the Word, or the *Logos*, in everything. Referring to Steiner again, the hierarchical system of angels in his Christian philosophy work downward through the One, or God, through various spirits of form, astrality, and etheric forces, until reaching the physical world where everything that is “made” becomes an expression of the divine.¹³

Imaginations and Mediations refer to the use of images and symbols (imaginative works), such as the Christian iconography, and how these images mediate events on the physical plane from spiritual realms. We need only consider the power of the symbol of the crucifixion to find this component in Christianity. Arthur E. Waite implemented the Rose Cross symbol, the cross with a blooming rose at the center, for his esoteric Christian order *The Fellowship of the Rosy Cross*, and he also incorporated other Christian symbolism into the Rider-Waite Tarot deck, which he co-created with Pamela Colman Smith.

The *Experience of Transmutation* is Faivre's term for the transformation of a thing from its lower state into a higher one (i.e. from a sinner to a saint), usually by means of the death processes. The Christ most explicitly embodies this in the resurrection on the third day, a state Christians should endeavor to emulate, and which, according to Rudolf Steiner, is the fore-running condition that all human beings will eventually achieve by developing their spiritual constitution and receiving the Resurrection Body, i.e. immortality. Transmutation is also the end result of alchemy, in which a base metallic substance (such as lead) is elevated to the state of gold. Christians endeavoring to live like the Christ are thought, in esoteric circles, to pursue a similar state of spiritual elevation.

By *The Praxis of Concordance*, Faivre refers to the common denominator found in all religions; that all religions spring from the same

source. In Freemasonry, specific rituals are performed as to forge a common chain of union within all religions, and even theosophist Annie Besant, who authored *Esoteric Christianity, or The Lesser Mysteries* helped to develop a Co-Freemasonry in order to accentuate this spiritual commonality. Sadly, this may be the area where mainstream Christianity is most lacking, as other forms of religions are often thought of as spiritual enemies, to be avoided rather than studied and compassionately accepted.

Finally, Faivre's *Transmission* refers to the practice of spiritual knowledge being promulgated by means of a teacher, which in Christianity relates to the importance of church and clergy, while in esoteric circles transmission is accomplished, as mentioned, by way of graded initiations, such as is practiced in Freemasonry. Intimate imparting of specific information ensures the information will have the desired *esoteric* effect, rather than a superficial, exoteric one. Christ did the same thing and is the proper example by which to follow, as is recounted in *Matthew 13:10-11*: "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

In summary, incorporating Faivre's six essential components into Christian practice can help to foster the turning of one's attention "further in" to that esoteric place, which is our personal link to the divine, and which, following the born-again experience, is meant to be properly nurtured and developed. Exoteric forms of Christianity place their focus on the afterlife, on immortality in Heaven, but when we look at this ideological belief esoterically a greater understanding emerges. The faithful assert that they gain admission into the afterlife by repenting for their sins. However, that is an exoteric interpretation. The word repentance comes from Greek *metanoia*, which more literally means something like a "change of mind or direction"—in this case, directing "further in."

In his book on inner Christianity, Smoley explains the significance of *metanoia* in the following passage:

In ordinary life, attention is directed outward, toward the world of sensations, thoughts, and feelings. With a certain shift in attention, the mind is directed within, toward the center of being, beyond all thoughts and representations, where God meets the individual self ... changes are likely to develop organically out of an increase in consciousness. As you see and understand more of the inner worlds, love, kindness, and compassion become more spontaneous and natural.¹⁴

The Subjective and Saint Paul

A crucial component needed for Christianity to be esoterically effective is an emphasis on the subjective experience of the divine, which must occur on the very deepest psychological level. For all the mystery traditions of Egypt and Greece, this was the purpose of the premature death ritual: to create a living and subjective experience within the initiate, to which he might refer back on occasion and reflect. Reverence toward the subjective was thought to enhance the "I" or the inner part of a person, helping to strengthen and develop it. In esoteric Christianity, this is the motivation of Christ's mission on Earth. We may even posit that the voice Moses heard in the burning bush alluded to this mission: I AM THAT I AM—which actually points to this emphasis on the subjective, or inner form, as the true practice of Christianity.

Paul of Tarsus, originally named Saul of Tarsus prior to his mystical experience, had a literally blinding vision of Christ on the road to Damascus. He underwent the classic death and born-again experience, leading to a direct communication with the divine, establishing his own subjective link to God. Paul, a staunch adherent of Jewish Law, had been heading to Damascus in order to confront the Christian cults practicing there; but after his vision, instead of returning to Jerusalem or continuing on to Damascus, he retreated into Arabia for

three years. Not much is known of Paul during this time, but it can be supposed that he was developing and nurturing his inner connection with Christ. When he does return to Jerusalem, he proclaims himself a “new creature,” a person wholly reborn in Christ, who no longer accords obedience to Jewish Law, but has found his liberation from all spiritual authority in the sole fact that Christ has been brought back from the dead. Paul held so fast to this belief, adhering to its proclamation even in public and placing all importance on the Christ-event, that it eventually became, for him, the only possible means of salvation.

In his provocative book on Saint Paul, French philosopher Alain Badiou delineates the course of Paul’s intellectual development, from ardent Pharisee and follower of Jewish Law, to becoming the passionate proclaimer of Christ’s resurrection. As Badiou rightly points out, following Paul’s subjective experience of the divine, the burgeoning apostle was utterly reborn, a “new creature,” liberated from material bonds of the flesh by clinging to the subjective truth that Christ had been raised; in other words, by having unshakable faith.

As Badiou explains:

Faith publicly acknowledges that the subjective apparatus commanded by the law is not the only possible one. But it becomes apparent that faith, confessing the resurrection of one man, merely declares a *possibility* for everyone. That a new assemblage of life and death is possible is borne out by resurrection, and this is what must be declared ... Faith says: We *can* escape powerlessness and rediscover that from which the law separated us. Faith prescribes a new possibility, one that, although real in Christ, is not, as yet, in effect for everyone.¹⁵

Thus, Paul’s belief was that everybody, in effect, was dead and living in sin, so long as they held to a blind observance of the law. The only possibility of liberation, of *real life*, was the subjective experience of Christ’s resurrection, which, for Paul, was freedom from materiality and rebirth in spirituality. That this possibility was available to *all* people, regardless of herit-

age, class or creed, meant that to become an adherent of the Christian faith was to become an apostle. But what does becoming an apostle involve? Certainly, it does not connote becoming a prophet in an Old Testament sense of the word where an individual awaits signs and symbols from a supernatural or divine being. Neither is it the same as becoming a wise man in the Greek sense of mastering the logical application of reason. In order to become an apostle, as Badiou says,

... it is not necessary to have been a companion of Christ, a witness to the [Christ] event. Paul, who claims his legitimacy from only himself, and who, according to his own expression, has been “called to be an apostle,” explicitly challenges the pretension of those who, in the name of what they were and saw, believe themselves to be guarantors of truth. He calls them “those who are most esteemed,” and seems, for his own part, not to share this esteem. He also adds, “What they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality” (Gal. 2:6). An apostle is neither a material witness, nor a memory.¹⁶

So what, then, is it? It is the living proclamation of Christ risen from the dead, a subjective truth that is available to all people, that lives in the proclaimers’ souls, and grants freedom from flesh and everlasting life in spirit. Badiou, a communist and atheist, offers an intriguing angle, in that he reveals how Paul likens the Christ-event to a communistic *coup d’état*, an overthrowing of the old rule and a founding of a new system—a self-governing system, in this case—in which *event* as a historical fact speaks for itself. Such an event is similar to marking and celebrating a day of independence or the establishment of a socialist regime in a newly liberated country, in which the *event* from then on serves as the *continuing renewal* of the free condition. For the Pauline Christians, the Christ-event had happened; Christ was resurrected; therefore, those who kept faith *in that event* could also be resurrected. There was no proving or disproving, no arguing or rebutting—only a subjective proclamation of the event—which itself granted all the validating authority needed.

Thus, “When Christ dies, we, mankind, shall cease to be separated from God, since by filiating Himself with the sending of his Son, He enters into the most intimate proximity to our thinking composition.”¹⁷ In other words, proclaiming Christ dead on the cross and resurrected is all the authority needed, all the saving grace required, all the work necessary, for the deed is done and the historical event is held, subjectively, as true. So therefore, liberation in spirit is accessible to every person, as long as they reach out and claim it, necessitating the famous statement by Paul in Galatians 2:20: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

As we can see, Paul was truly a different person after his experience on the road to Damascus, and he was able to draw on this subjective visionary experience for the rest of his life. Indeed, his vision guided the content of his thinking from then on. This account of Paul harkens back to the mystery school traditions, whose rites were intended to give the candidate a direct experience of God, and thus obliterate any and all fears about death. Clearly, this is the driving force behind the beliefs in Christianity, along with Christ’s command that we all love one another. Sadly, the vision-granting emphasis on the subjective, the rebirthing rite’s culmination, is missing from mainstream Christianity, as those who experience oneness with God and mystical visions are often shunned or castigated. Such instances of suppression may have their purpose. However, a proper understanding of these experiences may be lost to outer forms of the religion, which could explain why “unsound” or “crazy” mystical events have not been properly managed.

Smoley highlights a passage illuminating the emphasis on the subjective in *Inner Christianity*. The quote comes from Thomas Merton, the celebrated twentieth-century Trappist monk:

...the superficial, external self which we commonly identify with ... is not our real self. It is our “individuality” and our “empirical self” but it is not truly the hidden

and mysterious person in whom we subsist before the eyes of God. The “I” that works in the world, thinks about itself, observes its own reactions and talks about itself is not the true “I” ... It is at best the vesture, the mask, the disguise of that mysterious and unknown “self” whom most of us never discover until we are dead.¹⁸ [Here we see that the author is aware of the contemplative tradition.]

Conclusion

In the West, and much of the rest of the world, Christianity remains a driving societal force. Yet we can see from this elucidation that much of its inherent power and emphasis on the subjective experience, or inner world, has been polluted, lost, or forgotten—particularly among mainstream Christians. The true origins of the faith have been misplaced, misinterpreted, and misrepresented. However, in some esoteric circles the inner form of Christianity is on the rise, a positive symbol that true Christian practice is approaching more people. The various Rosicrucians and Martinists, to say nothing of the Gnostic traditions and contemplative branches of Christianity (such as monastic orders), as well as the Pentecostals’ emphasis on a direct personal experience of God through baptism with the Holy Spirit—are all proof that esoteric Christianity is starting to free itself from the mist-shrouded underground. Indeed, as with Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophy and Waldorf schools, esoteric Christian ideas are reaching more people, even in younger age groups. What is more, popular neo-Gnostic churches such as the Gnostic Church of L.V.X. in New York City, the *Ecclesia Gnostica* in Los Angeles, and the Liberal Catholic Church, center their practices and ritual services on the sacraments, which are viewed by their members as being successors of the ancient mysteries. By recalling initiation rituals and philosophical beliefs taken from the mystery traditions of ancient Egypt and Greece, these new forms of worship introduce people to the ideas of esoteric Christianity, and hopefully their popularity will continue to increase, so mainstream

Christians can eventually find their way to these ideas.

In the end what is required is the proper understanding of Biblical stories, Christian iconography, particularly the words of the Christ and their esoteric meaning, and an emphasis on the subjective experience of the resurrection. Only by cultivating such an inner mood, such a definite *knowing* of the divine, can we fully understand the Christian religious experience as it was intended to be experienced—i.e. esoterically.

¹ John Dillon and Jackson Hershbell, *Iamblichus, On the Pythagorean Way of Life* (Toronto, CA: Scholars Press, 1991), 14.

² David V. Barrett, *A Brief History of Secret Societies* (New York, NY: Carroll & Graf, 2007), 9.

³ *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, 6th edition, Columbia University Press, 2012. Also see <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/society/orphic-mysteries.html>. Last accessed June 31, 2013.

⁴ “Eleusinian Mysteries,” . http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleusinian_Mysteries. Last accessed July 9, 2013.

⁵ Marvin W. Meyer, *The Ancient Mysteries* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1987), 8.

⁶ Florian Ebeling, *The Secret History of Hermes Trismegistus: Hermeticism from Ancient to Modern Times* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 129.

⁷ Victor J. Katz, *A History of Mathematics: An Introduction* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1993), 67.

⁸ “The Academy Versus The Lyceum”-*The Thin Tweed Line*. <http://www.humanstudy.org/history/2012-03-pauley-b.html>. Last accessed July 9, 2013.

⁹ “Plato’s Academy.” <http://ptta.pl/pef/haslaen/a/academyplato.pdf>. Last accessed July 9, 2013.

¹⁰ Richard Smoley, *Inner Christianity: A Guide to the Esoteric Tradition* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2002), 2.

¹¹ Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1994), 10-14.

¹² This is a general summation of Steiner’s complex esoteric Christian philosophy. Anyone interested in pursuing his ideas further is directed toward Steiner’s *Christianity as Mystical Fact* and *The Christian Mystery*.

¹³ See *The Spiritual Hierarchies and the Physical World; Reality and Illusion* by Rudolf Steiner, Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1996.

¹⁴ Smoley, *Inner Christianity*, 5.

¹⁵ Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 88.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁸ Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York, NY: New Directions, 1962), 7.

Book Reviews

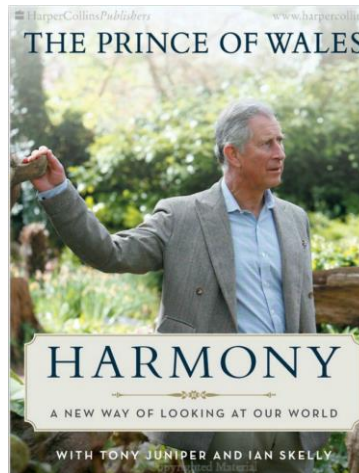
Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World, by Charles, Prince of Wales, with Tony Juniper and Ian Skelly. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2010, 330 pages, hardcover. List price US\$29.99.

Public figures sometimes allow their names to be attached to publications to gain publicity or promote worthy causes. Accordingly, we might easily assume that Tony Juniper and Ian Skelly actually wrote *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World* and that the Prince of Wales added his name to identify himself with the work and lend support. Or we might conclude that the prince developed the concept of the book but then found two qualified men to write it.

In the present case, however, there is little doubt that Charles actually drafted or dictated the text. His linguistic style is immediately recognizable, and we know that he has a deep, personal interest in environmental issues that feature heavily in the work. The two associates could have been fully occupied finding the beautiful photographs, securing reproduction rites, creating other graphics, and editing the text. The outcome is a handsome book that can grace any coffee table. Yet it is also a serious work that calls readers to respond to its message.

More surprising is the range and depth of knowledge of the ageless wisdom displayed. Even if the associate authors supplied much of that knowledge, the prince must, at the very least, have consented to the prominent place it occupies in the book. More likely the esoteric content reflects his own beliefs and worldview. What comes across to this reviewer is that Charles is an esoteric student in his own right and has read a broad spectrum of the literature.

Harmony is an ambitious work. It summarizes threats to the planet and human society, including uncontrolled industrialization, unsustainable growth, depletion of natural resources, poor urban planning, disconnect among people, and the ugliness too often seen outside our home and car windows. The book's thesis is that these problems stem from the disruption of harmony between man and nature.



The author traces the disruption—the “great divorce”—back to Thomas Aquinas’ teachings on the distinction between Creator and creation [pp. 148ff]. Historians of theology might dispute that assertion, arguing that controversies over creation versus emanation and creation from nothing (*ex nihilo*) can be found in the writings of Augustine and earlier church fathers, even in the Hebrew Bible.

Be that as it may, a fairly clear trail runs from scholasticism, through humanism, the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution to modern materialism. The plight in which we now find ourselves is summarized thus:

The dominant world view only accepts as fact what it sees in materialist terms, and this opens us up to a very dangerous state of affairs, not least because the more extreme this approach becomes, the more extreme the reaction tends to be at the other end of the scale, so that we end up with two fundamentalist, reductionist camps that oppose each other. On the one side, a fundamentalism secularism and on the other, fundamentalist religions [p. 9].

Charles quotes from the Gospel of Mary Magdalene to identify both the problem and

the solution: “Attachment to matter gives rise to passion against Nature. Thus trouble arises in the whole body; this is why I tell you: be in harmony” [p. 31]. He is optimistic that we can learn once more to be in harmony and that to do so could yield profound results:

I find . . . that if people are encouraged to immerse themselves in Nature’s grammar and geometry—discovering how it works, how it controls life on Earth, and how humanity has expressed it in so many great works of art and architecture—they are often led to acquire some remarkably deep philosophical insights into the meaning and purpose of Nature and into what it means to be aware and live in this extraordinary Universe. This is particularly so in young people and the results of such immersion are as heartening as they are surprising [p. 9].

The author urges us to explore sacred mathematics, art and architecture, along with their interrelationships and correspondences with the natural order. Most of his examples will be familiar to esoteric students, though this reviewer learned of a few new ones. Charles insists that we apply them anew in the structures, systems and institutions we create. We must recapture the ancient wisdom, which he considers to have been part of divine revelation. Moreover, revelation is ongoing if we adopt the right attitude and prepare ourselves appropriately. Revelation, Charles declares, “comes about when a person practices great humility and achieves a mastery over the ego so that ‘the knower and the known’ effectively become one” [p. 13].

Charles identifies the Egyptian goddess Ma’at as an important protagonist in the battle between harmony and chaos. Ma’at, he explains, was “daughter of the Sun god Atum-Ra and the feminine counterpart to Thoth, the divine mind whom the Greeks called the Logos—the Word that begets Creation.” Without her, “the entire universe would fragment and collapse into the primordial chaos from which it had come” [pp. 93-94]. Harmony is seen in the ancient temple at Çatalhöyük, Turkey; Islamic decorative art in Cordoba, Spain; the architec-

ture and stained glass of Chartres Cathedral; the paintings of Botticelli; and the violins of Stradivarius. In his discussion, the author moves effortlessly from Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, eastern religions, and Australian aboriginal culture to the writings of Jalaluddin Rumi, John Dee, William Blake, and J.R.R. Tolkien.

Like his father, the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Charles is well-known for his views on modern architecture. He makes an interesting point about the special responsibilities that architects bear:

I have never made it my habit to go around criticizing the artwork people choose to put on their walls, even if I do not like it. After all it is their business. But architecture is a different matter. It, in large part, defines the public realm and therefore helps to define us as human beings. It affects our psychological well-being because it can either enhance or detract from a sense of community [p. 134].

Charles is scathing in his criticism of the “Brutalist” school of architecture, which he declares “seem[s] deliberately to summon up chaos rather than conjure harmony” [p. 135]. Significantly, he notes, few architects of the school actually live in their own creations; rather they choose more traditional homes.

The author sees the ageless wisdom expressed, not only in art and architecture, but also in the ways primitive peoples interact with their environments—ways that are respectful of the Earth and conserve natural resources. On his own estate, he has put many of their methods into practice, while also developing new sustainable techniques of organic food production. He mentions Rudolf Steiner’s work on biodynamic farming [p. 162].

Charles criticizes the layout of modern cities, in which residential, business, shopping and recreation zones are separated from one another. In consequence, commuting to work and even going to a restaurant or visiting friends requires long travel and, in turn, increases dependency on non-renewable energy sources. Furthermore, socio-economic classes,

and in many cases ethnic groups, are segregated, exacerbating societal divisions.

An experiment in reversing that trend is the “walkable” town of Poundbury, Dorset, created on land owned by the Duchy of Cornwall (Prince Charles is the duke):

Poundbury comprises high-density, mixed-use buildings; workshops, offices, local services, private housing and social housing—even factories—are all placed next to each other. . . . Squares and streets are designed to have timeless, more traditional proportions and are given a vernacular identity by the careful use of local materials. And, as a result, its residents tell me that the place feels as though it has a soul and a heart [p. 240].

The experiment may turn out to be more successful than Celebration, Florida, developed in the 1990s by the Walt Disney Company.

Charles concludes the book with these words:

[W]e stand at an historic moment. We face a future where there is a real prospect that if we fail the Earth, we fail humanity. To avoid such an outcome, which will comprehensively destroy our children’s future or even our own, we must make choices now that carry monumental implications. It is beholden upon each and every one of us to help redress the balance that has been so shaken by re-founding our outlook in the firmer set of values that are framed by a

clearer, spiritually intact philosophy of life. Only then can we hope to establish a far more sustainable economic system; only then can we live by more rooted values, and only then might we tread more lightly upon this Earth, the miracle of creation that is our privilege to call “home” [p. 325].

Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World demonstrates that people in the highest echelons of society—Charles is heir to the British throne and Supreme Governor-to-be of the Church of England—are conscious of the threats to our environment and are prepared to take remedial action. It also suggests that people at those levels are absorbing esoteric knowledge and are in a good position to influence others.

Many people will read the book because the Prince of Wales’ name appears on it; others may avoid it for the same reason; still others may decide to read, or not read, it for reasons unrelated to its authorship. People ought to read the book. It is well-conceived and sensitively written, and it sends a timely, relevant message both to those who may be new to the key concepts and to those already familiar with the concepts. This reviewer does not hesitate to recommend *Harmony* to readers of *The Esoteric Quarterly*.

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The Seven Wisdoms of Life; a Journey into the Chakras, by Shai Tubali and scientifically edited by Nir Brosh, M.D. MSI Press, 2013.

Numerous books have been written about the chakras, but this one offers a very practical approach that beginners and advanced students alike can appreciate. The author, Shai Tubali, simplifies the vast amount of information available on the chakras in order to make it more accessible to the general reader.

The author states that everything in the book comes from his own direct experience and that his focus is on the psychological and transformative aspects of the chakra system rather than the mystical and esoteric. Perhaps this partially explains his curious statement in the introduction that the soul is a “romantic idea.” Nevertheless, Tubali feels that we need to become sensitive to this subtle anatomy in order to perceive the inner worlds.

Tubali maintains that spiritual capacity is not inherent in humanity but formed out of the brain’s struggle to learn and understand. He goes on to say that the chakras “reveal the story of human evolution and the hidden structure of the human unconscious.” In modern times, our chakra systems are more burdened and unbalanced than ever. This book is meant to help us with the enormous task of clearing and aligning the chakras or centers.

Beginning with the basics, Tubali provides an overview of the chakra system, describing its physical layout, defining terms and explaining the purpose and functions of the chakras as well as the subtle anatomy in general. With this foundation, we are prepared to enter into a detailed study of each of the chakras, a study that comprises the bulk of the book.

Each chakra is introduced in turn, first with a description of its location in the etheric field and its general orientation within the chakra system. Then we are introduced to the basic psychological themes that are of concern to that particular chakra. In the case of an unbalanced chakra, indications are given as to the

psychological reactions this imbalance might cause, and solutions are offered in order to work toward balancing the chakra.

Tubali explains that an individual has four levels of functioning depending upon whether the chakra is 1) imbalanced, 2) “functional” (working but still distorted), 3) balanced (but without full spiritual capacity), or 4) awakened (working in full spiritual capacity). He describes the typical behavior a person might manifest according to the level of chakra development attained. Tubali also explains that each chakra has an age range during which time it should become developed and balanced.

Often a chakra may be unbalanced due to trauma, and according to Tubali, there are traumas that are common for each of the chakras. Knowing what traumas are typically associated with a given chakra can be helpful in understanding one’s own behavior.

Furthermore, people are normally focused through a particular chakra, and that is how they filter their experiences in life. Depending upon their focus, they will exhibit a definite personality type. The author describes these personality types for each chakra and indicates the type of happiness experienced by someone with that chakra focus, as well as the way one finds meaning and purpose in life. Additionally, he describes possible psychosomatic disturbances that may arise due to an imbalance in the chakra. While there is clearly some truth behind the personality characterizations offered here, as with all such generalizations, there is a tendency for them to come across as caricatures.

Although the chakras are independent agents to a certain extent, each with their own agenda, they are also part of a system, and as such they interact with each other depending on their degree of integration. Tubali describes these interactions for each chakra and explains the role each of them plays in the process of kundalini circulation for self-spiritualization. In an appendix, the author gives a more detailed description of the journey of kundalini along the chakras.

At the end of each chapter on the chakras, there are recommended practices that can be undertaken to keep the chakras healthy and balanced. To aid us in this practical work, Tubali provides questionnaires in an appendix for chakra personality type evaluation and chakra imbalance evaluation. Although the book is very well organized, it would have been helpful to have an index.

Shai Tubali developed a practice called the White Light method, which he says enables people to use their subtle anatomy and chakras for psychological and spiritual balance. His method also teaches spiritual transformation and spiritual therapy. Tubali studied the chakras and subtle anatomy through the Yogic Nityananda tradition as presented by

Dr. Gabriel Cousens, who is known from his work in Arizona at The Tree of Life retreat center along with his books on the raw or living food diet. This book is dedicated to Gabriel Cousens.

As a way of summing up the importance of studying the chakras, Tubali says that the chakra system is the most accessible system of our subtle anatomy, and thus it is the most practical vehicle to discover the hidden layers of consciousness. He states that we can use the chakras as keys for perfect balance and conscious transformation.

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