

The Creative Hierarchies

John F. Nash

Summary

The twelve Creative Hierarchies are frequently mentioned in the esoteric literature but rarely explained or even defined. This article draws upon the writings of Helena Blavatsky and Alice Bailey to offer insights into the meaning, purpose and relevance of the Hierarchies. It explores their correspondences with the planes and kingdoms of nature, and the Hierarchies' relationship with the Seven Rays.

Four of the Hierarchies achieved "liberation" in the first solar system but continue to influence us through a fifth which is in transition toward liberation. The lower seven are in active manifestation in the present solar system. Humanity is active in the fourth and fifth active Hierarchies (counting from above), the former representing "perfected" humanity and the latter humanity at large. Advance to the fourth Hierarchy is a process centered on the fourth, "crucifixion," initiation. Significantly, the Planetary Logos and the fifth *higher* Hierarchy are in the process of taking the fourth cosmic initiation, and the world shares in their suffering.

Introduction

The Creative Hierarchies are mentioned twenty-seven times in the books of Alice Bailey, written during the period 1919–1949, when she served as amanuensis to the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul. Several of the books comment on the Hierarchies; and two: *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (1925) and *Esoteric Astrology* (1951),¹ discuss them at length and provide detailed tabulations.

The present article collects and analyzes the most important statements regarding the Creative Hierarchies from Bailey's books and the brief references in Helena Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), where the Hierarchies were first mentioned. Significantly, the Tibetan

Master claimed to have provided some of Blavatsky's material. Bailey frequently drew upon Blavatsky's terminology, implying that readers were familiar with the earlier writer's work.

Communicating information about the Creative Hierarchies seems to have been part of the Tibetan's mission. Yet it is still far from clear precisely what the Hierarchies are and how they relate, on the one hand, to the kingdoms of nature, and on the other, to the Seven Rays. Much of the discussion is vague or cryptic, and occult blinds seem to have been planted in the texts. The message is that the topic is not to be understood on cursory reading but requires in-depth study and contemplation. Even then, certain information and explanations have been withheld, to be revealed at the third initiation or later. This is indeed an esoteric topic.

In the face of these challenges the article offers, to the extent possible, an accessible description of the Creative Hierarchies and how they fit into the larger picture of human, planetary, solar and cosmic realities. Its main objective is to stimulate further discussion. Bailey's work provides correspondences—not always consistent—between the Hierarchies, the Rays, the signs of the zodiac, and the planets. Brief remarks are made about these correspondences, but further study is called for. Research is most urgently needed to explore the Hierarchies' astrological significance, and other authors are encouraged to contribute.

About the Author

John F. Nash, Ph.D., is a long-time esoteric student, author, and teacher. Two of his books, *Quest for the Soul* and *The Soul and Its Destiny*, were reviewed in the Winter 2005 issue of the *Esoteric Quarterly*. *Christianity: The One, the Many*, was reviewed in the Fall 2008 issue. His latest book: *The Sacramental Church* was published in 2011. For further information see the advertisements in this issue and the website <http://www.uriel.com>.

What Are the Creative Hierarchies?

In *The Secret Doctrine* Helena Blavatsky stated: “[T]he Monads cycling round any septenary chain are divided into seven classes or *hierarchies* according to their respective stages of evolution, consciousness, and merit.”² The septenary chain of interest is the Earth Chain, and the Monads are the Divine Sparks, or fragments of Logoiic essence, that invest life in entities of all statures and all types within it. Among those Monads—possibly a small fraction—are the sixty billion that make up the human lifestream.³

Blavatsky stated that the seven Hierarchies are part of “twelve great orders.”⁴ She also used the terms “hierarchies of ‘Creators’”⁵ and “hierarchies of Creative Forces.”⁶ Several decades later Alice Bailey spoke specifically of twelve *Creative Hierarchies*,⁷ establishing the terminology and schema familiar today.

Based on Blavatsky’s statement and citations to follow, a Creative Hierarchy can be defined as a group of Monads at a particular stage on their evolutionary journey and active at a particular level of reality. “Activity,” in this context, refers to the awakening of consciousness, expression of creative potential, and response to the evolutionary impulse.

From this perspective we can compare the Hierarchies to classes of children in a school system. The American system provides an appealing analogy because it is divided into twelve grades. Children in each grade have age-appropriate experiences and opportunities to learn relevant lessons. If successful, they move up to the next grade. Using that analogy, we discover that humanity corresponds to children in but two grades. A tiny fraction have graduated to fourth grade (nine-to-ten years of age).

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Nearly eight billion—the current world population—are in third grade (eight to nine), for limited periods of time. The rest of the sixty billion are eligible for third grade but are waiting for positions to become available on a rotating basis.⁸ All other grades in the school system are occupied by members of nonhuman lifestreams.

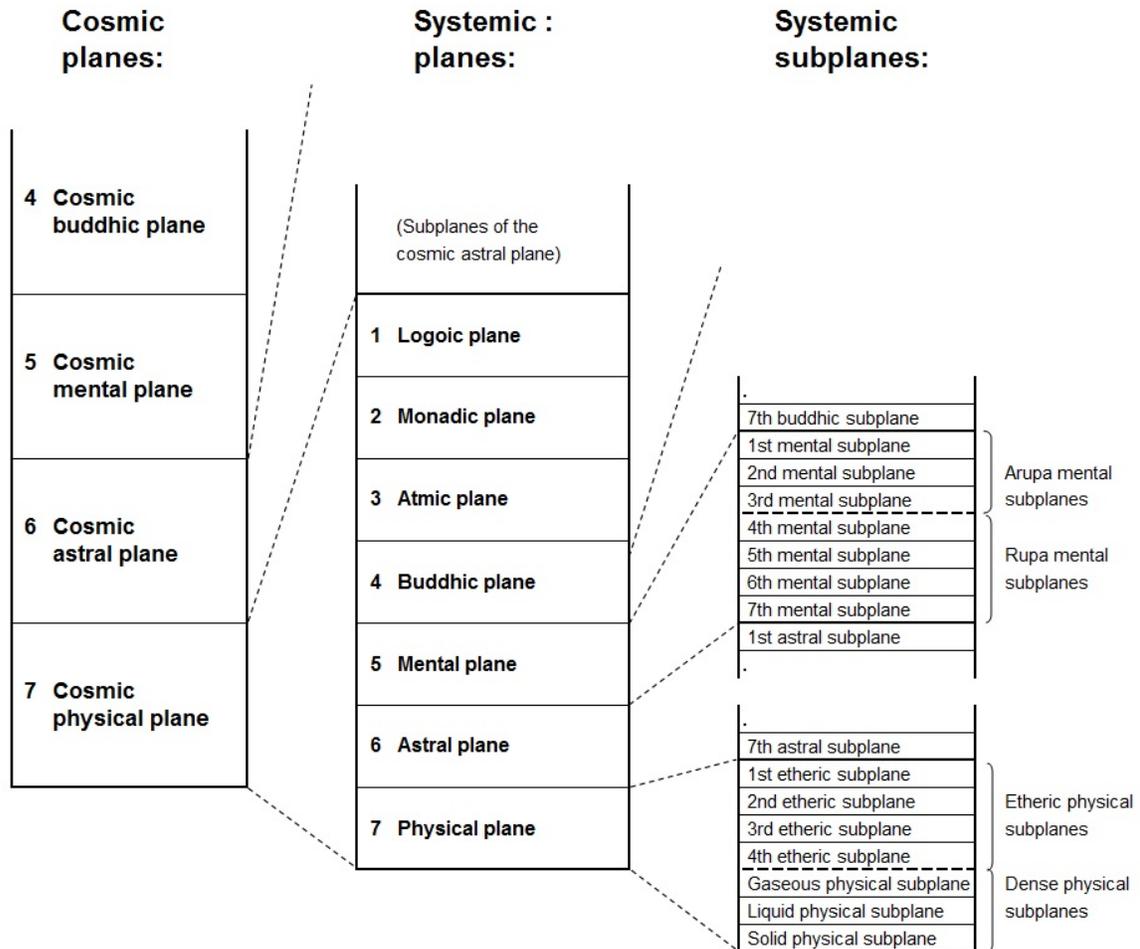
Complementary definitions of the Hierarchies will emerge in due course. The richness in meaning reflects how much we have been told of the Hierarchies but, more importantly, how much awaits our understanding as research continues and as the Masters reveal more information. Meanwhile, the very term *hierarchy* deserves attention.

A hierarchy implies “vertical” stratification or ranking, in which some units are represented as “above” or “below” others (direction, of course, being no more than a metaphor). Stratification in the context of the Creative Hierarchies can be understood in at least two ways.

It can be understood in terms of Monads’ urge to express their creative potential through descent into form. The forms are lives in their own right residing on lower levels of reality. For example, the human Monad births a soul, and in turn the soul assembles lower vehicles from devic and elemental substance. During embodiment in the present globe and root races, our vehicles extend down to the dense physical plane.

Alternatively, stratification can be understood in terms of different stages of development among Monads in a given Hierarchy or spanning multiple Hierarchies. The human lifestream descended into matter and now, carrying with it the wisdom of the ages, is ascending again toward spirit. But individual human entities range in consciousness from what Bailey called “animal-man” to Christ and beyond.

Figure 1. Cosmic Planes and Systemic Planes and Subplanes



The twelve Hierarchies themselves form a hierarchy, and Bailey explained that the “twelve creative Hierarchies are themselves but subsidiary branches of one cosmic Hierarchy.”⁹ Similar fractal patterns occur in other contexts; for example: “The seven planes of Divine Manifestation, or the seven major planes of our system, are but the seven subplanes of the lowest cosmic plane. The seven Rays ... are likewise but the seven subrays of one cosmic Ray.”¹⁰ The fractal pattern of the cosmic planes, systemic planes, and systemic subplanes is illustrated in Figure 1.

Bailey offered a musical analogy for the fractal pattern of Hierarchies:

They form but one chord in the cosmic symphony. When that sevenfold cosmic chord, of which we form so humble a part, reverberates in synthetic perfection, then, and only then, will come comprehension of the words in the Book of Job: “The morning stars sang together.” Dissonance yet sounds forth, and discord arises from many systems, but in the progression of the eons an ordered harmony will eventuate, and the

day will dawn when (if we dare speak of eternities in the terms of time) the sound of the perfected universe will resound to the uttermost bounds of the furthest constellation. Then will be known the mystery of “the marriage song of the heavens.”¹¹

Another statement attributed to the Tibetan Master places more emphasis on the timing of this cadence—and suggests that discord may underlie the very nature of manifest existence: “When the final great chord sounds, struck by the Master Musician, when the seven-fold arpeggio has become the grand dominant chord and sounds forth as one sound, the effect will be to call back again into the One, the circle of manifestation will be disrupted and pralaya will supervene.”¹²

The consciousness of the Monads in a Hierarchy is evolving, individually and collectively, toward the attainment of a particular Logoic goal. Synthesis at the planetary level and the “ordered symphony” and “final great chord,” at the solar or cosmic level, express the completion of an evolutionary phase—and most likely the attainment of a Logoic initiation. We shall see that the goal of the Hierarchies in the first solar system was to express Intelligence, and the goal of those in the present solar system is to express Love. The goal of Hierarchies in the third solar system can be expected to be to express Will.

Bailey emphasized the importance of *relationship*: “All such terms as planes, groups, creative Hierarchies, and centers are simply word modes of inferring relationship, interplay and mutual impression between the beings or the lives who make up the sum total of our manifested universe.” But she added that these relationships are “signs of our leading up to a planetary synthesis or a planetary integrity of a nature hitherto not even visioned by man.”¹³

The Creative Hierarchies are closely related to the Seven Rays, but Bailey warned that they should not be confused: “The ‘Rays’ are but the primordial forms of certain Lives who ‘carry in their Hearts’ all the Seeds of Form. The Hierarchies are the manifold groups of lives, at all stages of unfoldment and growth who will use the forms.”¹⁴ Over long periods of time,

Monads progress from one Hierarchy to the next, experiencing changes in Ray influence.

The Rays determine the Hierarchies’ qualities or forms. Bailey explained that “the Rays are the positive aspect in manifestation and pass down into negative matter, deva or hierarchical substance, thus causing certain evidences of activity. The Hierarchies are the negative aspect as far as the Rays are concerned and are responsive to Ray impulse.”¹⁵ In other words, the Rays are the active, “masculine,” elements of a functional polarity, and the Hierarchies are the receptive, “feminine,” elements.

The Rays also create further relationships or interconnectedness among the Hierarchies:

These seven hierarchies are veiled by the Rays, but each is found behind the veil of every ray, for in their totality they are the informing lives of every planetary scheme within the system; they are the life of all interplanetary space, and the existences who are expressing themselves through the planetoids, and all forms of lesser independent life than a planet.¹⁶

Monads clearly are to be understood in a very broad sense, even to include the “life of interplanetary space.” Meanwhile, the reference to planetoids and interplanetary space provides insight into the extent of a Planetary Logos’ domain of influence, or “ring-pass-not.”

The “originating Sources of the seven rays of our solar system” are the stars of the Great Bear, *Ursa Major*.¹⁷ We also read: “Sirius, the Great Bear and the Pleiades work through the medium of the twelve constellations, pouring their influences through nine of them in particular.”¹⁸ The twelve constellations define the zodiac.

Bailey frequently mentioned that the star system Sirius and the constellations of the Great Bear and the Pleiades are of great importance to humanity, Earth, and the solar system. She commented that the Great Bear has a positive—that is, masculine—energy, and the Pleiades have a negative, feminine, energy, adding: “Perhaps these two types of energy, one from the Pleiades and the other from the Great Bear, meet, and in their conjunction produce

that blazing forth in the heavens which we call our solar system.”¹⁹ This statement would seem to have alchemical significance.

The “seven sisters” of the Pleiades are mentioned three times in the Bible. *Job* comments on “the sweet influences of Pleiades.”²⁰ And in *Amos* we read: “Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night.”²¹ Bailey noted that the Pleiades “are connected with the Mother aspect which nurtures the infant Christ.”²² Evidently the Pleiades have a strong connection with the Hierarchies, and “the infant Christ” represents evolving human Monads. Bailey’s statement that the first initiation can be described as “the birth of the Christ” may be relevant in this regard.²³

Correspondences are to be expected between the twelve Creative Hierarchies and the twelve signs of the zodiac. Bailey explained that this is indeed the case, and that the correspondences have implications for humanity: “One thing which will later emerge, but which is at present impossible of elucidation, is the fact that the twelve Creative Hierarchies are all connected with one or other of the twelve signs of the zodiac and these all definitely affect the human family and the unit in that family also.”²⁴

The phrase “all connected with one or other of the twelve signs of the zodiac” is ambiguous. It could mean that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the Hierarchies and signs; but those correspondences had already been “elucidated” earlier in the same book. Alternatively, it could mean that all twelve Hierarchies have a special connection to a single, as yet undisclosed, zodiacal sign. In any event Bailey offered a cautious prediction:

A close study of the relations indicated in this new tabulation and a study also of the Hierarchies and the signs will cause a drastic revolution in modern astrology and one of most basic importance. More than this I cannot here indicate and more will not be possible until the present astrologers have done some concentrated work along the lines here designated.²⁵

The twelve Creative Hierarchies can be divided into higher and lower groups. They are shown in Table 1, which is based primarily on Tabulations I and II on pages 34 and 35 of Bailey’s *Esoteric Astrology*. In the upper group of five Hierarchies, four “achieved liberation in the first solar system”²⁶ and a fifth is “nearing liberation.”²⁷ The seven Hierarchies in the lower group are said to be in manifestation, or “active planetary expression,” in the present solar system. The meaning of the terms “liberated” and “active” will be examined in due course. The incarnating human entity extends over six of the seven systemic planes and, correspondingly, six of the seven lower Hierarchies. But human Monads are now in *active* expression in the fourth and fifth lower Hierarchies (counting from above), while our astral and physical bodies are animated by lives in the sixth and seventh.

Confusion may arise because three distinct numbering systems are used to refer to the Hierarchies. Bailey numbered the twelve Hierarchies in ascending or descending order, or the lower seven Hierarchies separately (Table 1). And she was in the habit of switching from one system to another without warning. “The fifth Hierarchy,” to take an example, might refer to any of three different Hierarchies, to be identified solely by context. In what follows, all Hierarchies—as well as all planes and sub-planes—will be counted from above.

The Higher Creative Hierarchies

The goal of the five higher Creative Hierarchies, which attained or approached liberation in the first solar system, was “Intelligence or Manas.” Indeed, the “five liberated hierarchies are in their totality the sumtotal of manas.”²⁸ The Sanskrit word *Manas* is derived from the verbal root *man* “to think,” and is believed to be the origin of our word “man.”²⁹ Bailey’s use of the word in this context draws attention to the higher Hierarchies’ importance to humanity and our challenge to express the mental nature.

Bailey commented that the names of the five Hierarchies are unknown, but their energies

Table 1. The Twelve Creative Hierarchies

No. from above	No. from above	No. from below	Ray	Name	Status	Sign	Planet
Overshadowing Principles:							
			I	The Universal Mystery			
			II	Celestial Virgin			
Higher Hierarchies:							
1		12	III		Liberated	Pisces	Pluto *
2		11	IV		Liberated	Aries	Uranus *
3		10	V		Liberated	Taurus	Vulcan *
4		9	VI		Liberated	Gemini	Earth *
5		8	VII		Transitional	Cancer	Neptune *
Lower Hierarchies:							
6	1	7	I	Divine Flames	Active	Leo	Sun
7	2	6	II	Divine Builders	Active	Virgo	Jupiter
8	3	5	III	Lesser Builders	Active	Libra	Saturn
9	4	4	IV	“Human Hierarchy”	Active	Scorpio	Mercury
10	5	3	V	“Human Personality”	Active	Capricorn	Venus
11	6	2	VI	Lunar Lords	Active	Sagittarius	Mars
12	7	1	VII	Elementals	Active	Aquarius	Moon

* By inference from *Esoteric Astrology*, p. 66.

can be described as “Intelligent substance,” “Unity thro’ [sic] effort,” “Light thro’ knowledge,” “Desire for duality,” and “Mass life.”³⁰ These terms are not explained, nor do they appear anywhere else in Alice Bailey’s or Helena Blavatsky’s writings.

The five higher Hierarchies are associated, respectively, with Rays III through VII³¹ and with the astrological signs of Pisces, Aries, Taurus, Gemini and Cancer. One might expect Aries to be the first, but Bailey explained:

Pisces is seen at the head of the list of zodiacal signs because it is governing the present great astrological world cycle of 25,000 years. It was also one of the dominant signs, influencing our planet at the time of individualization when the human kingdom came into being. It is basically re-

lated to the first or highest Creative Hierarchy which is, in its turn, related to the third Ray of Active Intelligence. It was the product of the first solar system. The development of illumination through an awakened intelligence is the first goal of humanity.³²

From information provided elsewhere in the same book, we infer that the five Hierarchies are associated, respectively, with the planets Pluto, Uranus, Vulcan, Earth, and Neptune.³³ The planets are products of the present, second, solar system, so these attributions can only relate to the Hierarchies as they are now, not as they were in the first system. The same may be true of the zodiacal signs or constellations. Although these are patterns and qualities of the “fixed” stars, we do not know whether they had the same significance in the first solar

system, or whether the constellations even existed. The comment concerning Pisces clearly refers to events in the present system and our current understanding of the sign's meaning.

Bailey declared that the first four Creative Hierarchies in the upper group achieved liberation in the first solar system. She did not define "liberation" in that context, but elsewhere she indicated that the term means the attainment of a state free from form;³⁴ that is, an *arupa* state. Importantly, it should be understood that "formlessness" is relative; what might be considered formless from a lower level of consciousness might appear to have form when viewed from above.

The "four Creative Hierarchies which have achieved liberation are now ... focused upon the cosmic astral plane; hence their potency even when out of manifestation."³⁵ "Their influence," she continued, "reached our Earth through the medium of the fifth Creative Hierarchy."³⁶

The fifth Hierarchy of "Mass Life" is associated with Ray VII and the sign of Cancer, It is said to be "in process of achieving final liberation, or taking its fourth Initiation, which is the cause of certain phenomena upon our planet which has merited our planet being called the 'Star of Suffering.'"³⁷ We also read:

[T]he planetary Logos of our scheme ... is midway through His career upon the cosmic Path of Initiation, and consequently is to take the fourth Initiation in this chain. Well may this globe, therefore, be considered the globe of sorrow and of pain, for through it our planetary Logos is undergoing that which the mystic calls "the Crucifixion."³⁸

Bailey did not specifically identify the fifth Hierarchy with the Planetary Logos, but their similar positions on the initiatory path might prompt that conclusion. In either case, it is unclear what she meant by "Mass Life."

The fifth Creative Hierarchy reportedly "will join the other four Hierarchies when the sixth Creative Hierarchy has measured up to cosmic opportunity."³⁹ This is an interesting concept:

an entity's ability to move up to a higher level is determined not only by its own efforts but also by the ability of lower entities to take its place. The "sixth Creative Hierarchy" would be the first *lower* Hierarchy.

Bailey commented that the fifth Hierarchy exists on the highest etheric level."⁴⁰ Presumably this is the highest *cosmic* etheric subplane. Significantly, in relation to the statement that the fifth Hierarchy is the channel through which the upper four Hierarchies influence Earth, this is our systemic Logoc plane.

The upper group of Creative Hierarchies are "related to the four rays which work as minor rays of Attribute under the great major third Ray of Active Intelligence."⁴¹ The first Hierarchy is said to be associated with Ray III, and the remaining members of the upper group with the Rays of Attribute. This statement raises an interesting question: Where are Rays I and II?

One might expect all three Rays of Aspect to appear explicitly in the upper group of Hierarchies, as they do in the lower. The most likely answer is that they precede the whole hierarchy of Hierarchies. They are not themselves Hierarchies but are the *Overshadowing Principles* in which the Hierarchies have their origin. Table 1 shows them in their respective positions.

Ray I is associated with the One whom Blavatsky described as "the Universal Mystery," "the eternally Self-Existent One," "the unmanifested Logos."⁴² Ray II is associated with the "Primordial," the "Heavenly or Celestial Virgin," "the immaculate Virgin-Mother, who is overshadowed, not impregnated, by the Universal Mystery—when she emerges from her state of Laya or undifferentiated condition."⁴³ The Celestial Virgin comes into manifestation at the beginning of a manvantara and passes out of manifestation at the end. She has attributes and is at least partially knowable; by contrast, "the Self-Existent One" remains eternally unmanifest, unknown and unknowable.

Blavatsky cited an ancient Japanese tradition that explained the emergence of the Celestial Virgin, or "Invisible Celibate," Mother thus:

“The male aethereal” (*Yo*) principle ascends and the female grosser or more material principle (*In*) is precipitated into the Universe of substance, when a separation occurs between the celestial and the terrestrial. From this the female, the mother, the first rudimentary objective being is born. It is ethereal, without form or sex, and yet it is from this and the mother that the Seven Divine Spirits are born, from whom will emanate the seven creations.⁴⁴

It is highly significant that Blavatsky assigned feminine gender to the first manifestation from the unmanifest Logos. She is a virgin “not impregnated, by the Universal Mystery,” yet she births the Creative Hierarchies. The Celestial Virgin’s association with Ray II is appropriate since the even-numbered rays have a feminine polarity.⁴⁵ *One*, origin of all the natural numbers, can be considered either masculine or presexual.

Bailey did not reveal the symbols of any of the Creative Hierarchies, “as they are known to Adepts.” But she listed the symbols of the five higher Hierarchies “accessible to disciples” thus:

1. A ball of green fire with three rays of rose.
2. A sphere, divided by a Tau [T], in colors green and silver.
3. A bird, with plumage dark and with the eye of radiant fire.
4. Two stars of vivid rose linked by a band of violet.
5. An ovoid of color indigo with five letters or symbolic words within its borders.⁴⁶

Bailey added: “These hierarchies are also classed together and viewed as one and are called in esoteric parlance: ‘The Lives of that which appeared, rotated and gathered to themselves the fifth aspect of Mahat.’”⁴⁷ *Mahat* is “the universal mind,” or “mind manifesting in the macrocosm.”⁴⁸

The unifying symbol of the five Hierarchies, “which signifies the liberation achieved and the gains attained in System One, takes the

form of a blazing altar of pure fire out of which is escaping a bird of green and gold plumage with five wings outspread. Above this symbol appear certain hieroglyphics in the earliest *Sensa* script signifying, ‘Still I seek.’”⁴⁹ Perhaps “seeking” captures a characteristic of the higher Hierarchies; seeking in the sense of curiosity is stimulated by Intelligence or Mind, said to be the goal of the higher Hierarchies.

Much concerning the symbols of the higher Hierarchies remains veiled. Bailey did not explain what the symbols meant; nor did she disclose what the “five letters or symbolic words” in the symbol of the fifth Hierarchy were. Writing for the Master Djwhal Khul, Bailey warned that any additional information about the symbols would reveal “much that it is deemed wiser to guard in secrecy.”⁵⁰ We recall that the names of the higher Creative Hierarchies were not revealed either.

A major reason for Bailey’s reticence, in these several instances, may be is that the Hierarchies are the “mediators between Spirit and matter” and “transmitters of force from sources extraneous to the solar system to forms within the solar system.”⁵¹ Occult practices invoking their names or symbols might summon dangerously powerful forces; we would literally be playing with Cosmic Fire. We may meditate on the symbolism of the Hierarchies, but any attempt to penetrate it intellectually would either be fruitless, until we have reached an appropriate level of initiation, or might inadvertently reveal privileged information.

The Lower Creative Hierarchies

Monads in the five higher Hierarchies are formless, or approaching that state, and presumably are fully conscious. By contrast, those in the seven lower Hierarchies are experiencing the descent into form and the gradual awakening of consciousness. Within a group of related Monads, consciousness may be awakened to different degrees because some members are evolving faster than others. Variations can be expected within any given Hierarchy and may be large enough that the monadic group is active in more than one Hierarchy.

Such is the case with the human lifestream and the deva evolution.

One of the factors shaping a Monad's experience is the plane on which its associated Hierarchy is situated. Bailey commented: "Full expression and consciousness on each and every plane is the objective, remembering that each plane with its varying states of consciousness is equally a part of the divine Life. What is lacking as yet with the majority of aspirants is a synthetic consciousness and the capacity to hold and register continuity."⁵² A better understanding of the Hierarchies might remedy what is lacking.

Typically, a Hierarchy is anchored on a plane lower than the Monads' "own plane." Tension between them contributes to the impulse for evolutionary progress. To illustrate, human Monads reside (as their name implies) on the monadic plane. The most advanced members of the human family are in the fourth Hierarchy, which resides on the buddhic plane, while the rest of us are in the fifth Hierarchy, on the mental plane. But we all feel, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, the "pull" of the Monad, urging us forward on our journey.⁵³

According to Alice Bailey the lower Creative Hierarchies bear the names: "Divine Flames," "Divine Builders," "Lesser Builders," "Human Hierarchy," "Human Personality," "Lunar Lords," and "Elemental Lives." They are associated, respectively, with the signs Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Capricorn, Sagittarius and Aquarius, and with the Sun, Jupiter, Saturn, Mercury, Venus, Mars and the Moon. They correspond in direct numerical sequence to the seven Rays (Table 1).⁵⁴

The sign, planet, Ray—and perhaps the name—shape the experience offered by the Hierarchy with which they are associated. In the school analogy they provide the learning opportunities appropriate to the particular age group; the plane on which the Hierarchy lies is the classroom.

The stated correspondences among signs, planets and Rays call for a number of com-

ments. First, the planets are neither the exoteric nor esoteric rulers of the associated signs. For example, the exoteric and esoteric rulers of Aries are Mars and Mercury, respectively; but its "hierarchical" ruler is said to be Uranus.⁵⁵ The hierarchical ruler is described as the planet to which an initiate of the third or higher degree is expected to be responsive. Bailey explained: "The forces of these Hierarchies ... sweep into and through the initiate and awaken those major group responses which eventually give him systemic consciousness and make him a world server in Aquarius and a world savior in Pisces."⁵⁶

Second, the signs listed in Table 1 are not in their naturally occurring sequence in the annual cycle. Sagittarius is placed between Capricorn and Aquarius, rather than between Scorpio and Capricorn. The sequence is cited in two separate tabulations in *Esoteric Astrology*,⁵⁷ discouraging any suggestion of a typographical error. A note attached to one of the tabulations concedes that "[m]uch in this chart may seem obscure and even erroneous" but predicts that an explanation will be revealed as a mystery of initiation. Information from both tabulations is incorporated into Table 2 of the present article.

Third, the Rays associated with the seven lower Hierarchies are not, in every case, the same as those assigned to their hierarchical ruling planets (Table 2). The first Hierarchy is associated with Ray I, whereas its ruling planet, the Sun, is normally associated with Ray II. The seventh Hierarchy is associated with Ray VII, but its ruling planet, the Moon, is associated with Ray IV.⁵⁸

One way to explain the ambiguities in Rays is to recall Bailey's assertion that the Sun and Moon both veil hidden planets.⁵⁹ Vulcan, a Ray I planet, "is spoken of sometimes as being veiled by the Sun."⁶⁰ Similarly, "the moon is spoken of in the ancient teaching as 'veiling either Vulcan or Uranus'";⁶¹ Uranus is a Ray VII planet.

Table 2. The Lower Hierarchies: Rays, Signs, and Planetary Rulers

No. from above	No. from below	Ray *	Name	Sign	Hierarchical Ruler	Ray **
1	7	I	Divine Flames	Leo	Sun	II
2	6	II	Divine Builders	Virgo	Jupiter	II
3	5	III	Lesser Builders	Libra	Saturn	III
4	4	IV	Humanity	Scorpio	Mercury	IV
5	3	V	“Human personalities”	Capricorn	Venus	V
6	2	VI	Lunar Lords	Sagittarius	Mars	VI
7	1	VII	Elementals	Aquarius	Moon	IV

* Associated with the Hierarchy
 ** Associated with the Hierarchical Ruler

Alternatively, we could turn to Bailey’s statement that each planetary Logos has both a “personality” Ray and an “egoic” Ray, and that these are “in esoteric conflict.”⁶² Perhaps Rays I and II are the Sun’s soul and personality Rays (respectively or otherwise), and Rays VII and IV are the Moon’s. Bailey offers a hint relating to the Sun: “Hercules, the Sun-God, had a first ray soul, a second ray personality.”⁶³ But there is no “Lunar Logos,” and no suggestion can be found in the literature that the Moon might have a Ray VII soul or personality.⁶⁴ In any event, speculation on the planets’ soul and personality Rays is not encouraged. Writing for the Tibetan Master, Bailey warned darkly: “Too much accuracy and too detailed information is not at this time good for humanity, which is yet too selfish to be entrusted with it.”⁶⁵

Again, we are faced with a number of occult blinds and must await our own progress on the initiatory path or the Planetary Hierarchy’s judgment that humanity is ready to receive more accurate or consistent information. Setting aside these difficulties, however, we can examine the seven lower Creative Hierarchies

collectively and individually to glean what information is currently available.

According to Bailey the “Rulers of the seven [lower] Creative Hierarchies” are the “seven Rishis of the Great Bear.”⁶⁶ These Rulers appear to be the great Lives from whom the seven Rays originate. As noted earlier, the Hierarchies’ qualities or forms are determined by the Rays, which emanate from the Great Bear.⁶⁷

Bailey did not list symbols of the lower Hierarchies “accessible to disciples,” but she stated that they are “all enclosed in a circle denoting limitation and the circumscribing of the Life.” Bailey added:

All these hierarchies are Sons of Desire, and are paramountly an expression of the desire for manifested life of the solar Logos. They receive their primary impulse from the cosmic astral plane. They are also the expression of a vibration emanating from the second row of petals in the logioic Lotus on the cosmic mental plane.”⁶⁸

The statement that the lower Hierarchies express a vibration “from the second row of petals in the logioic Lotus” deserves special

attention. By analogy with the human egoic lotus, the petals of the second row are the Love Petals.⁶⁹ Bailey drew attention to “a direct stream of energy flowing through” the “logoic twelve-petalled egoic lotus,” the “solar twelve-petalled lotus,” the “planetary logoic heart, also a twelve-petalled lotus,” the “twelve-petalled human egoic lotus,” and the “twelve-petalled heart center in a human being.”⁷⁰ The Solar Logos unmistakably expresses the Second Aspect of Love-Wisdom, and the number *twelve* seems to be fundamental in the way it flows down to humanity.

We are told that a Solar Logos “has His main focal point on the cosmic mental plane,” though his origin is on a higher cosmic level.⁷¹ The cosmic mental plane has a strong connection with the star Sirius.⁷² We also read that the causal body of a Planetary Logos lies on the third subplane of the cosmic mental plane, “while that of the solar Logos and those of the three Persons of the logoic Trinity are upon the first subplane.”⁷³ The following quote is also of interest:

The planetary Logos works—as far as His manifestation, the Earth, is concerned—from cosmic mental levels; all that is manifested through His Creative Word is His focused thought and His fixed mental intention. In order to create a material world, He directs His thought from what can be regarded as the concrete levels of the cosmic mental plane; the whole process is one of precipitation, consolidation and irradiation.⁷⁴

As noted, four of the higher Hierarchies reside on the cosmic astral plane, They influence us via the fifth higher Hierarchy which resides on the first cosmic “etheric” subplane—that is, our logoic plane.⁷⁵ The first *lower* Hierarchy also resides on the systemic logoic plane, establishing the potential for considerable interaction between the two.

The seven lower Hierarchies are paired numerically with the systemic planes: the first Hierarchy lies on the logoic plane, the second Hierarchy on the monadic plane, and so forth. Because of the fractal pattern that governs the planes, the seven systemic planes can be

viewed as subplanes of the cosmic physical plane (Figure 1). We have already seen that the first systemic plane, our logoic plane, is the first cosmic etheric subplane, or “first cosmic ether.” To cite two more examples: the fourth systemic plane, our buddhic plane, is the fourth cosmic ether; and the sixth systemic plane, our astral plane, is the cosmic “liquid” physical subplane.

The Lower Hierarchies in Detail

The First Three Hierarchies

The first lower Creative Hierarchy, to quote Helena Blavatsky, “is composed of the divine Flames, so-called, also spoken of as the ‘Fiery Lions’ and the ‘Lions of Life,’ whose esotericism is securely hidden in the Zodiacal sign of Leo.”⁷⁶ Alice Bailey referred to them as “Divine Flames,” “Divine Lives,” “the burning Sons of Desire,” and “the Sons of Necessity.” Bailey added: “It is said of them in the old Commentary: ‘They burned to know. They rushed into the spheres. They are the longing of the Father for the Mother. Hence do they suffer, burn, and long through the sixth sphere of sense.’”⁷⁷

Not surprisingly, the first Hierarchy is associated with the fire element and the color orange.⁷⁸ It is associated with Leo and the Sun, and with Ray I—though the Ray of its planetary ruler is Ray II.⁷⁹ As noted, Ray I may be the Sun’s “Egoic Ray,” or it may come into play because Vulcan, a Ray I planet, is veiled by the Sun. The First Ray would be appropriate for the first Hierarchy, progenitor of the other six lower Hierarchies, though in this case it is mediated by Ray II, the Ray of the Solar Logos.

The first Hierarchy is anchored on the logoic plane, sharing that plane with the fifth *higher* Hierarchy, the conduit for energy flowing from the four liberated Hierarchies. In turn, the first lower Hierarchy serves as the conduit for energy flowing to the lower systemic planes and their respective lives.

The second Creative Hierarchy is referred to as the “Divine Builders Conferring Soul” or “Burning Souls of Desire.” It is anchored on the monadic plane. The second Hierarchy is

associated with Virgo and Jupiter, Ray II (unambiguously), the element “ether,” and the color blue.⁸⁰

Among the denizens of the second and third Creative Hierarchies are the archangels and angels: members of the deva evolution whose consciousness is higher than our own. They have “passed beyond the human stage altogether.”⁸¹ The lower devas: nature spirits and elementals, are found in the sixth and seventh Hierarchies.

The second Hierarchy, we are told, is “closely allied with the Great Bear,” “the source of monadic Life.” But Bailey emphasized that its lives “are not the Monads; They are far higher.” The second Hierarchy “is the influx into our system of those Lives who in the first solar system remained on their own plane, being too sinless and holy to find opportunity in that very material and intellectual evolution.”⁸² Yet we may question whether the second Hierarchy is composed *entirely* of Monads from the first solar system.

A likely senior member of the second Hierarchy is Mary the mother of Jesus. “[F]inding the seven paths open before her,” to quote Theosophist Charles Leadbeater, she “chose to enter the glorious Deva evolution and was received into it with great honor and distinction.”⁸³ Or in the words of fellow Theosophist Geoffrey Hodson, Mary “left the human kingdom altogether and entered the Angelic Hierarchy, being naturally moved to do so, knowing that with Her nature She could best help onward the evolution of human beings and animals as a Member of the Angelic Hosts.”⁸⁴ Certainly, traditional Christianity regards Mary, the Immaculate Conception, as “sinless”; but it is hard to think of her as a product of the first solar system.

It is highly significant that the second Hierarchy is associated with the sign of Virgo and with the color blue: the color of Mary’s robes in many recent apparitions. Moreover, to place Mary in the second Hierarchy would create an appropriate correspondence with the Ray II “Celestial Virgin” who birthed the five *higher* Hierarchies.

Broad support exists among teachers in the trans-Himalayan tradition for belief in the World Mother, and the belief that Mary now holds that office. But it should be noted that Bailey dismissed notions of a World Mother as purely symbolic, adding:

Such an individual has never existed in our particular planetary life, though the avatars of a previous solar system, expressing itself through planetary life, always took this form. But not in this solar system.... This symbolism has come down from the far-off period of the Matriarchate, which had a religion that recalled the ancient ways of the earlier system and in which period of time Lilith symbolized the World Mother, until Eve took her place.⁸⁵

The issue is discussed elsewhere and readers are referred to relevant literature.⁸⁶

The third Creative Hierarchy is called the “Lesser Builders Conferring Form” or “The Triple Flowers.” It is associated with Libra and Pluto, Ray III, and the color Green.⁸⁷ The third Hierarchy is associated with the water element and is anchored on the atmic plane.

Blavatsky commented that the third Hierarchy “corresponds to the Atma-Buddhi-Manas: Spirit, Soul and Intellect, and is called the ‘Triads.’”⁸⁸ Bailey found the third Hierarchy “peculiarly interesting,” noting that its members are

“Triads” for they hold in themselves the potencies of triple evolution, mental, psychical, and spiritual. These Triads of Life are inherently the three Persons and the flower of the earlier system.... They are the eight-fold points awaiting opportunity to flame forth. They are the devas who are ready for service, which is to give to another hierarchy certain qualities which are lacking. This Hierarchy is regarded as the great donors of immortality whilst themselves “standing aloof from incarnation.”⁸⁹

She added that they are “Lords of Sacrifice and Love ... but They cannot pass out of the logic etheric body into the dense physical vehicle.”

The Triads, to which Blavatsky and Bailey both referred, bear some resemblance to the *Nirmanakayas*, “perfected beings who renounce Nirvana ... and choose a life of self-sacrifice.”⁹⁰ Nirmanakayas dwell in the spiritual triad, as we dwell in the lower vehicles. These perfected beings originated in the human lifestream, but, like Mary, they may have made the transition to the deva evolution. Also, like Mary, they are normally considered to be products of our present solar system.⁹¹

The Fourth and Fifth Hierarchies: the Human Hierarchies

Esoteric writers often assert that humanity is the fourth Creative Hierarchy. Indeed, Bailey herself might have given that impression when she wrote of “the fourth Creative Hierarchy, the human kingdom.”⁹² But the assertion is over-simplistic, even presumptuous; and it is not supported by the great volume of Bailey’s teachings. The fourth Hierarchy resides on the buddhic plane. Most of us are still in the *fifth* Hierarchy, focused on the mental plane.⁹³

In broad terms the fourth Hierarchy is the kingdom of souls, and the fifth the realm of personalities. We are, in the words of the psalmist, created “a little lower than the angels”⁹⁴—to which many people have added “... and a little higher than the apes.” Bailey explained that the fourth Hierarchy is

the group wherein the highest aspect of man, his “Father in Heaven” finds place. These lives are the points of fire who must become the flame; this they do through the agency of the fifth Hierarchy and the four wicks, or the two dual lower hierarchies. Thus, it can be seen that where man is concerned, the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh hierarchies are, during the cycle of incarnation, his very self. They are the “Lords of Sacrifice” and “Lords of Love,” the flower of Atma-buddhi.⁹⁵

Atma-buddhi (Sanskrit: *atman* “self” + *buddhi* “spiritual soul”) is the “divine-spiritual part of a human being. The ... higher duad.”⁹⁶

The fourth through seventh lower hierarchies, the “lower quaternary,” represent the dense physical body (plus the fourth ether) of the

Solar Logos.⁹⁷ Blavatsky noted that the sixth Hierarchy “remains almost inseparable from man, who draws from it all but his highest and lowest principles, or his spirit and body.”⁹⁸

Bailey’s comment that the four lowest hierarchies are man’s “very self” provides the clearest example of the descent of Monadic force through forms on multiple planes. Our Monad’s “own plane” is the monadic plane; we are currently focused on the fourth or fifth Hierarchy; and our mental, astral, etheric, and dense physical vehicles are built from the four lower Hierarchies. In its entirety the incarnating human entity is an expression of life extending over the immense range of six systemic planes.

The fourth Creative Hierarchy is referred to as the “Human Hierarchy,” “Initiates,” and “Lords of Sacrifice.” It is associated with Scorpio, Mercury, and the color yellow.⁹⁹ Its plane of activity is the buddhic plane. No element is assigned to either the fourth or fifth Hierarchy.

Blavatsky declared that the Fourth Hierarchy “is the highest group among the Rupas.... It is the nursery of the human, conscious, spiritual Souls. They are called the ‘Imperishable Jivas,’ and constitute, through the order below their own ... the great mystery of human conscious and intellectual Being.”¹⁰⁰ *Rupa* means “in form,” or in some sense “embodied.” *Jiva*, “a living being,” is somewhat ill-defined. Sometimes it is used synonymously with Monad, but here it seems to connote “soul.”

Those of us on the path of aspiration or discipleship, or on the early stages of the initiatory path, are striving toward the fourth Hierarchy and receive help from higher entities, whose work on our behalf involves individual and collective sacrifice. They include the Masters and our Solar Angels. Bailey commented:

The Lords of Will and Sacrifice come down into manifestation, sacrificing their high position and opportunities upon the higher planes of manifestation in order to redeem matter and raise the lives by which it is informed (the lower Creative Hierarchies) to the status of Themselves in so far as They constitute the fourth Creative Hierarchy. This is the subjective purpose, underlying

the sacrifice of these divine Lives Who are ourselves essentially, Who are qualified by knowledge, love and will, and animated by ceaseless persevering devotion.¹⁰¹

Advancement to the fourth Hierarchy is a process spanning the third, fourth and fifth initiations. The third initiation frees the individual from the authority of the personality. At the fourth initiation, the individual repudiates not only the personality but all that is material and all that relates to the world of appearances. Bailey declared:

It is instituted during every fourth round, and its peculiar interest lies in the fact that the emphasis for the fourth Creative Hierarchy in every fourth chain and globe during the fourth round is laid upon the fourth initiation, that of the Crucifixion. The fourth Creative Hierarchy is the great expression of the conscious will and sacrifice of the Solar Logos, and the great symbol of the intelligent union of spirit and matter. Hence the fourth initiation, with its presentation of these cosmic truths, and its epitomizing of the purpose of this fundamental sacrifice, has a pre-eminent place.¹⁰²

The fourth initiation typically involves great suffering, and in Christian esotericism it is often termed the “crucifixion initiation.” As noted earlier, the Planetary Logos and the fifth higher Hierarchy are in the process of attaining the fourth cosmic initiation, and the pervasive suffering in the world is a consequence thereof.

The fourth-degree initiate appreciates the full potential of the antahkarana, only to discover that it is no longer of service. In Bailey’s words:

One tremendous experience is vouchsafed to the initiate at this time; he realizes... that the antahkarana has been successfully completed and that there is a direct line of ener-

gy from the Spiritual Triad, via the antahkarana, to his mind and brain. This brings to the forefront of his consciousness the sudden and appalling recognition that the soul itself, the egoic body on its own level, and that which for ages has been the supposed source of his existence and his guide and mentor, is no longer needed.¹⁰³

Monads in the five higher Hierarchies are formless, or approaching that state, and presumably are fully conscious. By contrast, those in the seven lower Hierarchies are experiencing the descent into form and the gradual awakening of consciousness.

Reaching the fourth Hierarchy is the culmination of a long process of development of the human soul. For long eons the Solar Angel—whose point of contact is the egoic lotus, or causal body—serves as our “soul,” investing us with consciousness, urging us forward on our evolutionary journey, and orchestrating the construction of lower vehicles at the beginning of each incarnation.

Our own human soul gradually gains coherence and permanence, capable of spanning incarnations, and by the third initiation is ready to take over the Solar Angel’s responsibilities. At the fourth initiation the causal body is destroyed and the Solar Angel departs.¹⁰⁴

What happens to the human soul is a matter of controversy. Some authorities suggest that the soul is absorbed into the spiritual triad, while others insist that it loses individual identity or is annihilated. Supporting the argument for the soul’s survival in some fashion is the recognition that a soul is the inevitable “result of the union of spirit and matter.”¹⁰⁵ Moreover, it appears that even Planetary Logoi have soul Rays, implying that they also have souls.

At the fifth initiation the “fires” of personality, mind, and higher self merge “with the Divine Flame.... Matter has been correctly adjusted to spirit, and finally the indwelling life slips forth out of its sheath which forms now only a channel for liberation.”¹⁰⁶ The fifth initiation completes the transition to the fourth Hierarchy. In Bailey’s words, the individual “stands in his buddhic sheath,” “Master in the three worlds.”¹⁰⁷ It will be recalled that the buddhic

plane is the native plane of the fourth Hierarchy.

The fifth Hierarchy is called the “Human Personality.” It is associated with Capricorn, Venus, and the color indigo.¹⁰⁸ The fifth Hierarchy seems to echo some of the qualities of the first. Both are associated with the fire element. The lives of the fifth Hierarchy, to quote Bailey, are “called ‘The Hearts of Fiery Love.’”

[T]hey save through love, and in their turn these lives are peculiarly close to the great Heart of Love of the solar Logos. These great redeeming Angels, who are the Sons of Men on their own true plane, the mental, are ever, therefore, pictured as taking the form of twelve-petaled lotuses—this symbology linking them up with “the Son of Divine Love,” the manifested solar system, which is said to be a cosmic twelve-petaled lotus, and with the logoc causal lotus, equally of a twelve-petaled nature.¹⁰⁹

The fifth Hierarchy is anchored on the mental plane, the fifth systemic plane. The soul’s point of contact is the egoic lotus, or causal body, on the second or third mental subplane,¹¹⁰ and the personality’s highest point of contact is the mental unit on the fourth mental subplane. “[U]nder the law,” we read, the fifth Hierarchy is “a distributor of energy to the fifth subplane of each plane in the system.” Bailey added: “This hierarchy wields, as we know, the dual aspects of manas, one in the three worlds and one which makes itself felt in higher spheres.”¹¹¹

The fourth and fifth Hierarchies are associated, respectively, with Rays IV and V. Elsewhere Bailey states that the human kingdom is governed by Ray IV, in terms of “experience,” and Ray V in terms of intellect.¹¹² Certainly the Ray IV quality of Harmony through Conflict is evident in humanity’s long evolutionary journey. Ray V has been of particular importance during the fifth root race—and even more important in the fifth subrace—with its emphasis on the development of intellect. The fourth and fifth Hierarchies are

the “Seekers of satisfaction” and the cause of the second fall into generation, the fact behind the taking of a lower nature by the

Ego. The fourth and the fifth Hierarchies are the ninth and tenth [of all twelve Hierarchies], or the “Initiates” and the “Perfect Ones.” All human beings ... evolve through a graded series of initiations.... This they achieve through a “marriage” with the order next to them, the fifth. They are then completed or perfected, and it is owing to this occult fact that the fourth Hierarchy is regarded as masculine and the fifth as feminine.¹¹³

The statement that we attain initiation through a “marriage” with fifth-degree initiates is evocative. Notions of a gender polarity between struggling humanity and the higher entities who seek to help us provide an interesting perspective on the relationship with our Adept mentors. On the other hand, assignment of the masculine gender to the fourth Hierarchy might seem to support traditional—and, in the view of many commentators, anachronistic—assumptions that attainment of the fifth initiation requires a male body and that Masters necessarily have male “personas.”

The Sixth and Seventh Hierarchies

The sixth Hierarchy is said to comprise the “Lunar Pitris,” “Lunar Lords” or “Sacrificial Fires.”¹¹⁴ The seventh Hierarchy comprises the “Elemental Lives,” “The Baskets of Nourishment,” and “The Blinded Lives.”¹¹⁵ The sixth and seventh Hierarchies are associated, respectively, with Rays VI and VII.

Blavatsky commented that the sixth and seventh Hierarchies “partake of the lower qualities of the Quaternary.” Their lives are

conscious, ethereal Entities, as invisible as Ether, which are shot out like the boughs of a tree from the first central group of the four, and shoot out in their turn numberless side groups, the lower of which are the Nature-Spirits, or Elementals of countless kinds and varieties; from the formless and unsubstantial—the ideal thoughts of their creators—down to the Atomic, though, to human perception, invisible organisms. The latter are considered as the “Spirits of Atoms” for they are the first remove (backwards) from the physical Atom—sentient, if not intelligent creatures.¹¹⁶

Here, Blavatsky seemed to include not only natural but also “artificial elementals”: that is, thoughtforms created by human activity.

Bailey offered the following information about the two Hierarchies, emphasizing the roles they play in relation to the Planetary Logos as well as to ourselves:

These sixth and seventh Hierarchies which provide the substance forms of the three worlds have a vital use and a most interesting place. From the logoc standpoint, they are not regarded as providing principles, but from the standpoint of man they do provide him with his lowest principles. They hold the same relation to the Logos as the dense physical body does to man, and all that concerns the evolution of man must (in this particular place) be studied as going on within the physical, logoc vehicle. They deal with the display of physical energy; with the working out in the physical vehicle, of all divine purposes, and with the physical organization of a certain great cosmic Life.¹¹⁷

She added that the sixth and seventh Hierarchies are the lowest residue of the previous solar system:

[T]he energy of that matter (liquid, gaseous and dense) which the vibration of the logoc permanent atom (on the plane *adi*) attracts to itself in the building of the divine form. For purposes of clarification and of generalization, it might be noted that the seventh Hierarchy is the life or energy found at the heart of every atom, its positive aspect, and the sixth Hierarchy is the life of the forms of all the etheric bodies of every tangible object.¹¹⁸

Adi literally means “first” or “primal.”¹¹⁹

The sixth Hierarchy is associated with Sagittarius, Mars, and the color red.¹²⁰ It is associated with the water element, and its lives are anchored on the astral plane, or the cosmic liquid physical subplane. The sixth Hierarchy is the domain of the nature spirits that animate the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms; they also animate the cells of the human body. Nature spirits are swept into activity by the

Builders of the second and third Hierarchies, or by our own Solar Angels. One might expect the vegetable kingdom itself—that is, aside from its animating devas—to be associated with the sixth Hierarchy, but the literature provides no information on where the animal and vegetable kingdoms fit into the Hierarchical structure.

The seventh, or lowest, Hierarchy is associated with Aquarius, the Moon, and the color violet.¹²¹ Like the first Hierarchy, it seems to be under the influence of two Rays; the seventh Hierarchy is numerically associated with Ray VII, but the Ray of its planetary ruler, the Moon, is Ray IV (see Table 2). As noted, the Moon sometimes is said to veil Uranus, a Ray VII planet.

The seventh Hierarchy is associated with the earth element, and its lives reside on the physical plane, or the cosmic solid physical subplane. Its lives comprise the raw material from which physical forms are built. The seventh Hierarchy may be an exception to the notion of lives extending down to lower planes, but it should be remembered that elementals are on an involutionary arc, and the physical plane is the goal of their present phase of development.

Conclusions

The writings of Helena Blavatsky and Alice Bailey establish that the Creative Hierarchies can be understood in three ways, as:

- A classification system of Monads in the body of the Solar Logos, based on where they are on their involutionary/evolutionary journeys.
- A way of understanding the Logoc Life in its diversity.
- Cohesive groups of Monads, at particular stages of development, serving as centers of force originating from outside the solar system.

Four of the twelve Hierarchies attained liberation in the first solar system but continue to influence us through a fifth, which is in process of achieving liberation. “Liberation,” in this context, is interpreted as freedom from form. The lower seven Hierarchies are current-

ly in manifestation—that is, creatively active in relative levels of form. The second and third lower Hierarchies encompass the higher devas, or angels, while humanity spans the fourth and fifth.

Hierarchy implies “vertical” stratification. This can refer to the different stages of awakening among Monads of the same group. Or it can refer the descent into form—a process that placed Monads in the Hierarchies where they are currently active and may also bring them into contact with neighboring Hierarchies.

Each of the lower Hierarchies resides on one or other of the seven systemic planes. Typically, a Hierarchy resides on a plane lower than the Monads’ “own plane.” Inter-plane tension contributes to the impulse to evolve, and the gap narrows as consciousness is awakened and the Monads express their creative potential. Meanwhile, the evolving Hierarchy may receive help from Hierarchies on higher planes, or it may sweep lower Hierarchies into activity to further its own—and their own—development.

Human Monads reside on the second, monadic, plane, but humanity’s present phase of development extends no higher than the buddhic plane. Advanced members of the human family, like the Masters, have reached the fourth Hierarchy, which resides on the buddhic plane. The rest of us remain in the fifth Hierarchy, anchored on the mental plane. During incarnation, our mental, astral and physical vehicles are built from lives that share the lower reaches of the fifth Hierarchy and lives native to the sixth and seventh Hierarchies. In response to monadic impulse, transmitted via the soul, we yearn to advance to the fourth Hierarchy and can receive help from its denizens.

Themes running through Bailey’s commentary on the Creative Hierarchies are renunciation and sacrifice. For us, advancement to the fourth Hierarchy is a process spanning the third, fourth and fifth initiations. But our greatest challenge is the fourth initiation, when we renounce the lower self. Typically, the fourth initiation involves great suffering, prompting Christian esotericists to call it the “crucifixion” initiation.¹²² On a higher level, the Planetary

Logos and the fifth higher Hierarchy are taking the fourth *cosmic* initiation, and all lives on Earth share in their suffering.

Correspondences exist between the Creative Hierarchies, the signs of the zodiac, the planets, and the Rays. The planets assigned to the zodiacal signs, in the context of the Hierarchies, are distinct from the signs’ exoteric and esoteric rulers. Moreover, the Rays associated with the first and seventh Hierarchies are ambiguous. The two Hierarchies themselves are assigned to Rays I and VII, but the Rays of their respective planets, the Sun and Moon, are Rays II and IV. It turns out that Rays I and VII are the Rays of hidden planets that the Sun and Moon “veil.”

The purpose of this article has been to draw attention to an area of esoteric studies which has received little attention beyond the texts where it was first revealed. What is presented here is no more than a starting point. Much more research needs to be done, particularly to address astrological aspects of the Hierarchies. Esotericists versed in esoteric astrology have opportunities to contribute much to our collective knowledge.

Research is challenging because occult blinds seem to have been planted in the texts. Bailey herself conceded that critical information is withheld until the third initiation, or later, because it cannot yet be entrusted to humanity at large. Clearly, we are working at the limits of what is currently permitted to be known, and all of us must tread lightly to avoid inadvertently disclosing privileged information. Higher guidance should be sought to avoid the dangerous scenario in which insights by different writers could be pieced together and used for unlawful purposes.

¹ Alice Bailey made her transition in 1949, but several of her books were published posthumously.

² Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I (Krotona, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1888), 171. Emphasis added.

³ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (New York: Lucis, 1925), 579.

⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, 213.

⁵ Ibid., 426.
⁶ Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. II (Los Angeles: Theosophical University Press, 1888/1993), 33.
⁷ Blavatsky used the term “Celestial Hierarchy” to refer to higher beings in general.
⁸ If we are humbled to learn that we are only in third grade and face many more years of school, we might consider that an enormously longer time will be needed to reach the “twelfth grade” in a real world of the Creative Hierarchies.
⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation Human and Solar* (New York: Lucis, 1922), 4.
¹⁰ Ibid., 3-4.
¹¹ Ibid., 4. Parenthesis in original.
¹² Mary Bailey, *A Learning Experience* (New York: Lucis, 1990), 61. This quote is from a section headed “Extracts from D.K.’s Instructions to A.A.B. during 1919.”
¹³ Alice A. Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle* (New York: Lucis, 1950), 124.
¹⁴ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1194-1195. Elsewhere she stated: “A ray is but a name for a particular force or type of energy, with the emphasis upon the quality which that force exhibits and not upon the form aspect which it creates.” Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. 1 (New York: Lucis, 1936), 316.
¹⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York: Lucis, 1951), 703-704.
¹⁶ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1196.
¹⁷ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 85.
¹⁸ Ibid., 112. For an in-depth study of the Pleiades see Maureen T. Richmond “The Pleiades,” *The Esoteric Quarterly* (Summer 2019), 13.
¹⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Consciousness of the Atom* (New York: Lucis, 1922), 157.
²⁰ *Job* 38:31. All biblical references herein are from the King James Bible.
²¹ *Amos* 5:8. Orion’s belt, one of the most familiar features of the constellations, points toward the Pleiades. In the other direction it points to the star Sirius.
²² Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 201.
²³ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. 1 (New York: Lucis, 1944), 717.
²⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 334.
²⁵ Ibid., 334-335.
²⁶ Ibid., 36.
²⁷ Ibid., 33.
²⁸ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1197.

²⁹ G. de Purucker, *Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary*. Online: <https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/etgloss/etg-hp.htm> (Last accessed July 31, 2019).
³⁰ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 34.
³¹ Ibid.
³² Ibid., 37.
³³ Ibid., 68.
³⁴ See for example Bailey, *The Consciousness of the Atom*, 62.
³⁵ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 33. Even though the four highest Hierarchies have achieved liberation, tension presumably continues between them and cosmic evil, which is also centered on the cosmic astral plane. See Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis, 1957), 688.
³⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 36.
³⁷ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1197.
³⁸ Ibid., 384.
³⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 33.
⁴⁰ Ibid.
⁴¹ Ibid., 37.
⁴² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, 88, 216.
⁴³ Ibid., 88, 215. Emphasis removed.
⁴⁴ Ibid., 216-217. Note that in these teachings the masculine gender is assigned to the One from whom the Celestial Virgin proceeds. “Ascends” seems to be a reference to the procreative act.
⁴⁵ John F. Nash, “A Study of Gender, Part I: Gender at the Human and Higher Levels,” *The Esoteric Quarterly* (Fall 2017), 61-89.
⁴⁶ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1225.
⁴⁷ Ibid.
⁴⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *The Light of the Soul* (New York: Lucis, 1927), 15.
⁴⁹ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1225.
⁵⁰ Ibid., 1224.
⁵¹ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 38.
⁵² Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York: Lucis, 1934), 324.
⁵³ Until the third initiation there is no conscious connection between Monad and personality, so the Solar Angel provides the upward “pull.”
⁵⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 35.
⁵⁵ Ibid., 68. The hierarchical ruler is also called the “unconventional” ruler.
⁵⁶ Ibid., 268. For a discussion of the planetary rulerships see Maureen T. Richmond, “The Threefold Rulership System in Esoteric As-

- trology,” *The Esoteric Quarterly* (Winter 2018), 53-72.
- 57 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, Tabulation II, p. 35, and Tabulation VII, p. 68.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 66, 513, 649.
- 59 See for example, Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. 1, 335.
- 60 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 393.
- 61 *Ibid.*, 13.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 335. Precisely what “Ego” and “personality” mean in that context is unclear. In humanity, the personality is sacrificed at the fourth initiation.
- 63 Alice A. Bailey, *The Destiny of the Nations* (New York: Lucis, 1949), 38.
- 64 It is hard to imagine that the Moon has a soul Ray—or even a soul—since it is a dead planet.
- 65 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 335.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 270.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 85.
- 68 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1225.
- 69 Our egoic lotus is centered on the second (systemic) mental subplane. See Bailey, *Initiation Human and Solar*, 141.
- 70 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 47.
- 71 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 272.
- 72 *Ibid.*, 571.
- 73 *Ibid.*, 532. It is unclear why the Solar Logos, who has far surpassed the fourth cosmic initiation, would still have a causal body.
- 74 Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. 2 (New York: Lucis, 1955), 385.
- 75 Terms like “first cosmic etheric subplane” and “cosmic dense physical subplane” have no literal meaning, but they draw useful attention to the fractal pattern of the cosmic planes, systemic planes, and their respective subplanes (Figure 1). Appropriate correspondences may also exist with the systemic etheric and dense physical subplanes.
- 76 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, 213.
- 77 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1197. This section of *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* is reproduced in Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, beginning on page 39.
- 78 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 35.
- 79 *Ibid.*, 35, 68.
- 80 *Ibid.*, 35.
- 81 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1201.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 1197-1198.
- 83 Charles W. Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), 288.
- 84 Sandra Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary: The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson* (Manila, Philippines: Theosophical Publishers, 1988), 268.
- 85 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (New York: Lucis, 1953), 362-363.
- 86 See for example John F. Nash, “The World Mother: Teachings of Helena Roerich and Geoffrey Hodson” *The Esoteric Quarterly* (Winter 2006), 35-46; “Adept, Queen, Mother, Priestess: Mary in the Writings of Geoffrey Hodson,” *The Esoteric Quarterly* (Winter 2019), 37-65.
- 87 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 35.
- 88 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, 218.
- 89 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1198-1199.
- 90 Bailey, *Initiation Human and Solar*, 222.
- 91 Blavatsky distinguished this use of the term *Nirmanakaya* from Buddhist usage: “the body ‘in which a Buddha or a Bodhisattva appears on earth.’” Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary* (Krotona, CA: Theosophical Publishing House, 1973), 231.
- 92 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II (New York: Lucis, 1942), 63.
- 93 With regard to the school-system analogy, it should be noted that grades are numbered from the bottom up. Thus the fifth Hierarchy corresponds to third grade, and the fourth Hierarchy to fourth grade.
- 94 *Psalms* 8:5.
- 95 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1200.
- 96 Purucker, *Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary*.
- 97 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1202.
- 98 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, 222.
- 99 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 35.
- 100 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, 218-219.
- 101 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 116-117. Parenthesis in original.
- 102 Bailey, *Initiation Human and Solar*, 94-95.
- 103 Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and The Initiations* (New York: Lucis, 1960), 695.
- 104 For a discussion of the soul and its development see: John F. Nash, “The Solar Angel,” *The Beacon* (March/April 2001), 7-14; “The Human Soul,” *The Beacon* (January/February 2003, 6-10 & March/April 2003, 6-10. See also John F. Nash, *The Soul and Its Destiny* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2004), chs. 7-9.
- 105 Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 158.

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- ¹⁰⁶ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 47.
¹⁰⁷ Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 16-17.
¹⁰⁸ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 35.
¹⁰⁹ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1204.
¹¹⁰ The causal body of “average man” is located on the third mental subplane. But the causal body expands, and its center moves to the second subplane, in advance of the fourth initiation. Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation* (New York: Lucis, 1922), 3; 29-33. See also Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 532, 542-543, 578.
¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1205.
¹¹² Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. 1 (New York: Lucis, 1936), 412.

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- ¹¹³ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1200.
¹¹⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 35.
¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*
¹¹⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, 221. Parenthesis in original. Capitalization of whole words removed.
¹¹⁷ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1207.
¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*
¹¹⁹ Purucker, *Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary*.
¹²⁰ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 35.
¹²¹ *Ibid.*
¹²² Indeed, Jesus is believed to have attained the fourth initiation at the crucifixion.