

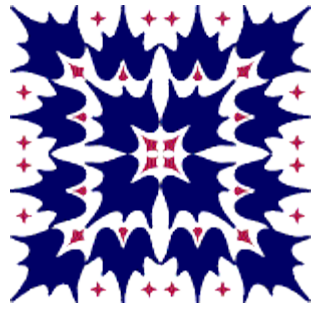


The Upper Triad Material

Topical Issue 3.1

Truth and Reality

The Quest for Realization



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Truth and Reality

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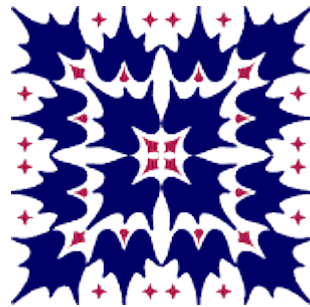
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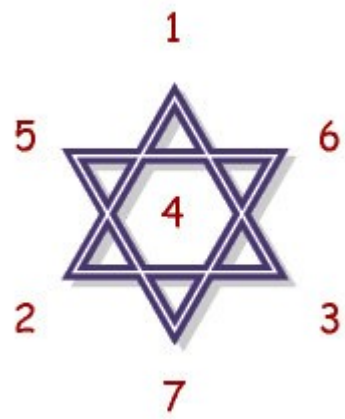
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Chapter 3.1

Truth and Reality



The Quest for Realization

- Truth and reality may not mean very much to people who are asleep in the mundane world of ordinary human endeavor. But truth and reality are absolutely essential for the spiritual student to understand, in principle, if the student is ever to awaken from this deep sleep and begin to perceive things more correctly. But what is true. And what is real. Inherent in human consciousness is the largely unconscious need to understand one's circumstances and purpose in life, to understand the universe and its relation to human existence, to experience and express one's life in meaningful ways, to evolve in consciousness, and eventually to achieve self-realization. Yet there are many problems and difficulties along the way, principally the unreliability of sense perception and the relativity of truth.
- Virtually all of humanity are encumbered in consciousness by virtue of reliance upon sense perception. The perception and eventual realization of truth and reality is a rather progressive process, depending much on experience and the gradual assimilation of that experience.

The Nature of Truth

Truth is an indication of reality, via perception, interpretation, and the capacity for understanding. The source of truth (in its unlimited or absolute form) is reality (God) itself, which is found in the realms beyond the illusionary world of personality, beyond the form-worlds of the physical, emotional, and mental planes. As reality existent in the mind of God, truth is untouchable by ordinary consciousness. But truth can be touched in part on various levels short of the constancy of God. Truth perceived on the various levels of consciousness (and through the multifarious perspectives) is truth constrained or limited to that level or perspective. Generally, the higher (deeper) (broader) the degree of perception, the more pure (and greater) is the essence of truth perceived. At the source, truth is a unified and coherent (singular) energy; on human levels, truth is (through dispersion and limitation) fragmented and colored (distorted) by human consciousness.

A particular truth (fragment) can be perceived, interpreted, and understood in a myriad of ways, depending very much upon the quality of mind and the plane or level (and method) of consciousness within which the truth is recognized. The comprehension of truth depends on the spiritual maturity of the student, the degree to which experience has been assimilated and transformed into quality (wisdom). The understanding and interpretation of truth depends also on the type and quality of the soul and personality rays. The highest contact with truth is a direct realization (on soul levels), uncolored by mind or emotion.

But the spiritual student is expected to recognize truth with every experience in life as well as to achieve such recognition on the highest possible plane. Truth can be perceived (by degrees) in response to external observations (sense impressions) though such must be abstracted from the illusion of the lower reality and sense-world. The voice of the silence (the spiritual intuition and the realization (awareness) of the contemplative self) is the internal means of truth perception, through the higher self (soul).

Truth can be found in all things and on all levels and through all perspectives. The aspirant must cultivate the discernment of truth uncolored by reaction to

the personality means. There is no authority for truth. Truth belongs to no one and to no group, but to all. The various personalities and groups are merely instruments and (lower) mechanisms. No truth is exclusive or confined to a single channel. Truth must (properly) be perceived without attachment to the person or organization through which a truth is (superficially) reached.

The truth discerned (and interpreted) by others should be respected. Each person perceives truth in a unique way; such perception varies so much that comparisons and judgments can only be biased (and relative at best). What is truth to one person may mean very little to another. But the student of life can learn from the experience of other persons. The beliefs of others need not be accepted, but those beliefs can be considered and respected. The student should feel no need to impress his or her views upon another, for each must discern truth for himself. Beliefs may be shared, but with the realization that each can only know that truth which is right for himself, and not that which is right for someone else. One should not cling to or be attached to beliefs or opinions; for in spiritual growth, beliefs should become clarified in or replaced by higher truths. An open mind should be encouraged that the student may remain adaptable (but not passive). As the conscious mind is improved, spiritual truths are further recognized and assimilated.

† Commentary No. 279

Truth and Uncertainty

One of the inherent problems of truth (knowledge) (understanding) in philosophy (religion) (science) is the paradox of certainty (uncertainty). Due to the conditional nature of manifestation and the inherent limitations (imperfections) of differentiated existence, an uncertainty principle governs any approach to truth such that no apparent truth can be known with (absolute) certainty. The appearance of (belief in) some absolute certainty suggests a lack of true (spiritual) humility (which in turn suggests some degree of personal glamour and/or illusion). The spiritual student must be satisfied with relative truth, understanding in accordance with consciousness, experience, and temperament. As consciousness increases, so does the capacity for understanding. But consciousness is ever relative, and the human experience is ever limited and subject to the necessary illusions of manifested existence.

Even if the individual consciousness is able to reach (true) transcendental (impersonal) levels, the realization obtained cannot be brought into the realm of conscious human understanding without being constrained somewhat. With a depth of intuition and a considerable capacity for correlation, discretion, and understanding, it is possible to embrace a great deal of knowledge with a considerable confidence which approaches certainty. But in wisdom, the esoteric student (scholar) recognizes the futility of absolute certainty, and remains relatively detached from even the most firm of his beliefs (realization).

Every presentation of truth (however highly inspired) remains an assertion, albeit founded in the greatest of minds and the greatest of consciousness. Every (perceived) (realized) truth constitutes (corresponds to) a belief, which may very well approach a very high degree of accuracy, but in the final analysis, it remains a belief regardless of its foundation. The greater truths are relatively free from personal energy (distortion), yet nevertheless incomplete and dependent on human means for communication. The human (objective) world merely complicates matters, for it is a world of appearance (reflection) (shadows), where every apparent thing or being (or experience) is a matter of necessarily limited perception (perspective). If some object is viewed in the most narrow way practicable, the knowledge realized will be incomplete (less than absolute), if only due to its lack of correlation with a greater scheme of things. And even if some object is viewed in the broadest sense practicable, the knowledge gained (realized) will still be incomplete, however universal, if only due to its lack of definition (specificity).

The spiritual student is urged to consider truth (knowledge) (understanding) in the context of a working body of knowledge (beliefs) well-founded in (inner) (sanctioned) experience and verified by consciousness (the enlightened union of mind and heart). But that body of knowledge (accumulation or system of beliefs) must remain relatively flexible (stable but not implacable); the student should accept some degree of uncertainty (open-mindedness) and allow his beliefs to deepen (through modification and expansion) in the light of new experience (realization). With relative confidence (discretion) (appropriateness), there can be no polarity (of right or wrong), only the freedom (humility) of consciousness that approaches truth (reality).

Truth is ever relative. Certainty is relatively impossible. The futility of certainty (arrogance) approaches certainty (illusion). Unquestionable proof cannot exist. Truth remains ever an internal experience. Life is filled with one paradox after another. Along the spiritual path, the student is urged to embrace the relativity of all experience and proceed with confidence.

† Commentary No. 562

Truth and Meaning

Truth is a much more synthetic quality (construct) than harmlessness (and comparable qualities) because it embraces, enfolds, and thereby transcends (without negation) the composite field. Thus while the first stage of the spiritual path (in this sense) involves primarily character-building (purification, qualification, integration, alignment, etc.) (of which harmlessness is representative and indicative (if not inclusive)), the second stage of the path involves primarily the quest for truth (and all of the refinement and qualification (and practice (service)) implied by that quest (which is, in a sense, simply a more subtle, more general form of character-building)).

The quest for truth is also (properly) much broader in the sense of the inductive influence of the consciously participating consciousness, in part due to the levels of consciousness involved, in part due to the evocation of forces affecting humanity in a broader, more general manner than is the case for the first stage which is more focused on the individual and the individual's contribution to humanity. The quest for truth (in the proper sense and context of the spiritual path) embraces adherence to (realized) truth, and that adherence (practice) is the real contribution of the seeker. Achievement of (realization of and adherence to) truth is the principal obligation of the spiritual student (from this perspective, service to humanity is quite synonymous with adherence to truth, for in realization comes inevitable practice (qualification)).

One dimension of truth is (the posture of) honesty in all respects. This allows greater realization of truth (conversely, dishonesty (conscious or otherwise) prevents or impedes the greater realization of truth). Another dimension of truth is the quest for knowledge (understanding) leading to the qualification of

consciousness and the incorporation of realization (wisdom). The process begins with the question of what is true? This leads to the successive questions of what is truth, how is it realized, and what does it mean? In this sense, the quest for knowledge is a preliminary endeavor that should properly lead (in turn) to the quest for wisdom (realization) and the quest for meaning.

It is not enough, ultimately, to achieve realization, for one must, ultimately, embrace the meaning of truth (wisdom), not merely how all things are correlated, but what it means in a much more profound sense. Of course the revelation (realization) of truth is successive and never-ending, and so is the quest for meaning, but (relative) success (progress) depends more on the incorporation of the value of truth than its pursuit. If one is merely fervent (about the quest) then one will necessarily lack the necessary balance (qualification), but if one truly values understanding (truth) (wisdom) (meaning), then one will be (become) properly qualified (conditioned by the value of truth) and this will then permit the assimilation and sharing (of the energy of truth (meaning) embraced. Merely fervently seeking (truth) (meaning) will impede that realization and assimilation, but seeking incorporation of truth (meaning) (value) provides a much more effective integration of the spiritual student and the path (life (lifewave)).

The true quest thus begins with harmlessness (proper demeanor) (the third ray), leads through the embrace of truth (the second ray) (incorporation of harmlessness), and eventually embraces meaning (the first ray) (incorporation of truth).

Truth and Wholeness

One of the problems with truth is that the human being can rarely (if ever) discern the whole truth of anything. Truth tends to be broader than the human ability to apprehend, in part because the human mind is so limited in both its experience and in its ability to accurately and reasonably interpret what is perceived, in part because there is simply far more depth and breadth to reality (wholeness) than anyone can fully appreciate.

Virtually all of the human experience thus far leads to conditioning of the personality (emotional and mental capacity) such that all of both external and internal experience is perceived largely superficially and interpreted accordingly. People tend to understand to the extent of their own conditioning, the extent of their first-and second-hand experience, the training of their intellect (mental capacity), and the largely unconscious application of bias and prejudice (however sincerely). All of this contributes to fundamental limitations in the embrace of truth. Truth perceived and understood is necessarily partial and limited in both depth and breadth.

Even where a person listens carefully and sees clearly and has a largely objective mind, there are still limitations to be faced. Many of these limitations can be transcended where the student is able to rely primarily on intuition, but even where intuition is clear, there are limitations in the ability of the mind to objectively understand the intuitive message. Thus a truth may feel “right” even without conscious or objective understanding. But the student should not presume to have complete or whole understanding of anything. For that presumption inhibits corrective understanding and inhibits further (broader, deeper) understanding.

Most people do not listen carefully. They hear what they want to hear. And most people do not see clearly. They see what they want to see. And most people do not think objectively (without substantive bias or prejudice) and logically, because there are usually assumptions made based upon experience (and conditioning) without even the realization that assumptions have been made (and that therefore any conclusions should be considered conditional

rather than factual). Few people undertake to consider the role of their own conscious or unconscious motives or intentions, which further complicate matters. Thus errors in thinking, compounded by other factors (experience and conditioning), lead to beliefs based upon assumptions and distortions of the truth. Facts are confused with assumptions. Conclusions are deemed absolute instead of more realistically being deemed conditional or tentative (allowing additional information or knowledge to be acquired and applied, thereby contributing to understanding). And the problem is compounded where a person takes action based upon this (necessarily) superficial understanding of what is true.

The solution to these difficulties is to gradually cultivate objectivity, to realize there are inherent limitations in thinking and perceiving and therefore in understanding, to understand that one is necessarily making assumptions based on limited experience, to refuse the too-human tendency to judge (with or without first-hand knowledge or experience (for either way there are limitations)), to rely on the intuition rather than the intellect, to accept any truth as conditional and tentative, thus allowing growth in depth and breadth, to be conscious in (of) making assumptions, etc. The student eventually reaches the stage of growth wherein (broad) understanding is valued over knowledge, and ultimately where (depth of) wisdom is valued over understanding. In wisdom there is never any need to judge. In wisdom is wholeness.

† Commentary No. 1168

Truth and Reality

Truth and reality may not mean very much to people who are asleep in the mundane world of ordinary human endeavor. But truth and reality are absolutely essential for the spiritual student to understand, in principle, if the student is ever to awaken from this deep sleep and begin to perceive things more correctly. But what is true? And what is real?

Inherent in human consciousness is the largely unconscious need to understand one's circumstances and purpose in life, to understand the universe and its relation to human existence, to experience and express one's life in meaningful

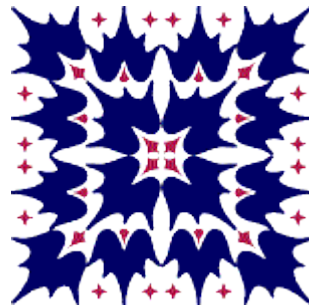
ways, to evolve in consciousness, and eventually to achieve self-realization. Yet there are many problems and difficulties along the way, principally the unreliability of sense perception and the relativity of truth. Virtually all of humanity are encumbered in consciousness by virtue of reliance upon sense perception. The perception and eventual realization of truth and reality is a rather progressive process, depending much on experience and the gradual assimilation of that experience.

The student begins this process of dealing with truth and reality while being asleep (blind), while being absorbed in the mundaneness of personality-centered (material, egoistic, self-centered) existence, while taking the outer circumstances and appearances for granted, while taking one's individuality (separateness) for granted, while unconsciously accepting these things as valid. But the ordinary ways of perceiving the world are a matter of deep conditioning, a consequence of being imbedded in the material world, without having access to the higher Self, to truth or reality. But through experience the student gradually realizes how unsatisfying are the worldly appearances, and begins searching for truth. Along the way the student attracts experience that reinforces the quest, all the while being subject to the inertia of material existence (including personality-centeredness and ego). But in the quest, there is progressive (subtle) realization.

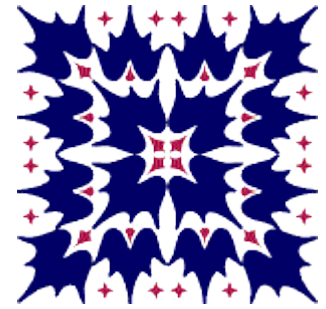
Thus being absorbed in the mundane (personality) world the student is almost impervious to the underlying truth and reality, but through various means (through typically fourth ray processes (conflict, contrast, pain, suffering)) the student gradually begins to perceive the underlying reality, first emotionally or intellectually, without really understanding, but by wrestling with truth, or what appears to be true (or not), later on more consciously, as the connection with the higher Self (which lives, relatively, in truth and reality) is developed. But in order for this to occur, the student must become prepared (purified, refined in consciousness) and must overcome much of the conditioning (barriers) that leads to and sustains absorption. And the student must be committed to truth, to being honest with oneself and others. It is a matter of values. Without the value of truth, (proper) realization is not possible.

The underlying truth is simple. Things are not in fact what they appear to be. The world of ordinary human experience and expression is merely a shadow of

the underlying reality, a reflection of something more real. Truth is not absolute. Reality is not an absolute. Truth is relative and perception is unreliable. The real world is something that cannot be grasped, but can be experienced, progressively. To see clearly is a great blessing, but one must first be willing and able. One must be able to deal with both relativity and uncertainty. One can never be really sure of anything. One must embrace the wholeness of truth and yet see only part of the truth.



Section 3.11



Truth

- Truth is an indication of reality, via perception, interpretation, and the capacity for understanding, based on experience. Truth can be found in many ways and in many forms. Truth can be found through experience, through study, and through realization. Truth can be found in philosophy, religion, science, and art, which are but aspects of one coherent and inclusive truth having no inherent conflict or contradiction. But truth is relative, at least so far as human perception of truth is concerned, because perception is limited and partial, subject to conditioning, bias, and interpretation.

Harmlessness and Truth 1

The demeanor (posture) (value practice) of harmlessness and the quest for truth are both noble and realizable goals for the spiritual student. But care should be taken not to excuse one for the other or to suffer the respective associated deceptions (misconstructions).

In the first place, harmlessness is more a demeanor and posture than it is an absolute practice. As a practice, the posture of harmlessness is (inversely) limited by the extent of awareness and realization. One can achieve and maintain an effective posture of harmlessness and still (more or less passively (involuntarily) (coincidentally)) be an instrument or catalyst for apparent distress. Within any karmic domain, all consequences are warranted. Therefore what is relatively important for the spiritual student is the posture of harmlessness that qualifies all activities and attitudes (thinking and feeling) so that no harm is intentionally or carelessly or unnecessarily inflicted (within the domain of one's awareness (which should necessarily be cultivated, refined, and gradually expanded)). Lack of awareness is a mitigating factor, but lack of earnestness in achieving (an) awareness (of consequences of (potential) actions) is not an acceptable position for the spiritual student. The spiritual student should care enough to be (become) aware of his activity (on whatever levels) and the effects (and potential) of that activity.

On the other hand, the concept of harm should be carefully considered in its karmic context, beyond the apparent (secular) meaning. From the occult standpoint, any deliberate, careless, or unnecessary imposition (apparent or otherwise) is a potentially harmful exercise (and particularly for any such exercise which limits or injures the personality instrument (on any level)) for the perspective of the one who so imposes, while for the one who is imposed upon there is naught but warranted consequences within the scope and consistency of karma. The fact of that karmic warrant in no way excuses any imposition. One should therefore exercise prudent (sensible) (non-oppressive) care in all activities, and where imposition is reasonably necessary (consider the awkwardness of such a karmic position) one should proceed nonetheless gently (with appreciation for the sacredness of all life).

Harmlessness is sometimes (falsely) used as an excuse for dishonesty. But in fact there is nothing inconsistent about harmlessness and honesty (the embrace of truth). One can always remain silent, knowing that any presumption is the responsibility of the one who presumes, but one should be careful not to mislead by remaining silent. In the final analysis, one should be honest in all respects, and open wherever there exists an appropriate responsiveness to openness (with mutual understanding and respect) (without imposition of ideas). The real crime is deception (including self-deception), so one should be careful in both dimensions (the practice of harmlessness and the embrace of truth) to become aware of (and overcome) deception.

In a sense, harmlessness is a precursor to truth. One cannot really (fully) embrace (the quest for) truth until an effective awareness (realization) (posture) of harmlessness (the consequential dynamics of the forces of human conscious and unconscious activity) is achieved, and until that achievement has become an effective qualification of consciousness and has fallen below the threshold of normal waking-consciousness. Any unfounded presumption of harmlessness will undermine the quest for truth, since the refinement of consciousness is a necessary prerequisite for the realization of (higher) (relative) truth.

† Commentary No. 687

Harmlessness and Truth 2

Of the three major endeavors within the spiritual path (namely (1) the adherence to truth, (2) the practice of harmlessness, and (3) service), service is the least understood by aspirants to the spiritual life; the concept of harmlessness is reasonably well understood (by virtue of its practicality) and increasingly so as the aspirant matures; and adherence to truth is not only poorly understood by aspirants but aspirants' belief in their understanding of adherence to truth generally greatly exceeds their real understanding of it.

Truth is revealed progressively as the student grows and deepens in the spiritual discipline and as the student becomes more and more qualified (refined). Adherence to truth is a more complex matter in which experience

tests the student's ability to discern truth and the means and practice of adherence to the truth that is revealed, discerned, and relatively understood. In addition to the distinction between truth and adherence is the distinction between being honest with oneself and being honest with others. Virtually everyone is self-deceived to some extent, but on the spiritual path one must be determined to virtually eliminate self-deception (lack of self-honesty), as a prerequisite to proper external expression (honesty in regard to others) and proper internal expression (self-honesty leading to rapprochement with the soul). The spiritual student (who is endeavoring to embrace the spiritual path) as well as the aspirant (who seeks to embrace the spiritual path) generally greatly underestimate the importance of honesty (and adherence to truth).

One of the reasons for that underestimation is the attention of the mind of the student to other, more apparently pragmatic matters, such as the practice of harmlessness. Harmlessness is nonetheless quite important, and as the student learns more and more of occult (spiritual) (cosmic) law and discerns more and more (better) the causal processes and cause and effect relationships, then the student is better able to practice harmlessness. The practice of harmlessness builds (proper) character and helps in the process of refinement (albeit not sufficiently in itself except in the sense that all of the preliminary (spiritual) disciplines and endeavors are considered aspects of the harmlessness (as they are, as well as being aspects of adherence to truth and service)).

But often enough students see (albeit improperly) a conflict between harmlessness and truth and choose harmlessness over truth. In practical matters it is psychologically easier (for most people) to practice perceived harmlessness than it is to be honest (this is also true in more subtle ways). Harmlessness is often the excuse used to justify "white lies" and other forms of dishonesty. But (in truth and harmlessness) (in theory and practice), there is no actual conflict between truth and harmlessness (while conflict does indeed exist between harmlessness and dishonesty). The student should always endeavor to be true (honest) as well as harmless, never undermining one for the other, and true to oneself as well as to others, withholding comment where necessary in order to remain true (and harmless). In practical matters (of honesty) one must have the courage to be truthful (openly where appropriate) (and withholding comment where appropriate). One is never obligated to answer questions or to

comment upon the demand or expectation of others. With gentleness, one can properly refuse (and have the courage to face the consequences of that refusal).

It is better to be honest (harmless) than to be dishonest (albeit perceived (improperly) as harmless), for dishonesty (even in apparently inconsequential matters and ways) is harmful, for it creates a barrier between the mind and the soul, that fosters self-deception and inhibits the discernment of truth.

† Commentary No. 1033

Perception and Truth 1

One can make a distinction between what is true in fact and what is merely believed or perceived to be true. However there are a number of problems in these regards. (1) One generally fails to make that distinction between perception and truth, as one generally unconsciously equates what is perceived to be true to be actually true. (2) One can never really know what is (absolutely) true, because the nature of human experience (manifested existence) is dominated by relativity. Perception is a relative and partial process and perspective. Knowledge, understanding, and wisdom are all relative concepts. The human being is not omniscient and does not perceive the whole of anything and is therefore subject to very substantial limitations.

(3) All perception (and associated beliefs) is (are) biased by whatever one already believes (and by whatever other conditioning is in effect). Our beliefs and opinions (i.e., our (presumed) knowledge and understanding) serve to help in our experience and expression but also to hinder in the sense of that bias and resulting conditioning. If one believes something, then there is a tendency to interpret whatever one perceives to support what one believes, neglecting to some extent what may appear to be contrary to our beliefs and focusing largely on what appears to support our beliefs and values. We tend to see and hear and feel whatever we want to see and hear and feel. We tend to seek to be comfortable and “accept” whatever generates comfort and “reject” whatever lessens that comfort. This problem is exaggerated wherever beliefs become opinions, i.e., wherever one is attached to one’s beliefs. (4) One generally does not believe that one is biased, that one is attached to one’s beliefs, etc.

(5) The ego is a help and a hindrance. It is the ego or self-centered aspect of the lower (personality) consciousness that does whatever it takes to sustain its own (artificial) existence. It is the ego that makes judgments, has beliefs, forms opinions, etc. These things (judgment, beliefs) are relatively necessary to ordinary (practical) human existence (experience and expression) but become substantial hindrances to the spiritual student (who seeks to transcend these limitations of lower (personality) consciousness, in union with the higher). It is the ego that prevents or inhibits any realization that might threaten its own position and influence. (6) One normally fails to make any distinction between ego and (real) self. Most people operate as if they were their respective egos, without any realization that they are, indeed, something else (higher, deeper, more inclusive). In other words, what most people "are" is merely the most superficial part of what they truly are. That superficial part is still (relatively) real and useful, but it is not even a substantial part of the whole self.

(7) Tentativeness is relatively awkward for most people. Most people find comfort in being attached to beliefs, to things being right or wrong, one way or some other way, of things being settled or established with certainty, without gradation or relativity or tentativeness. But truth is, unfortunately, quite relative, and in order to be able to (effectively) embrace truth, one needs to embrace relativity and tentativeness, and transcend the whole arena of having opinions.

(8) There is a tendency of the ego to make relativity and tentativeness excuses for evading the truth as it could be more effectively understood and to use relativity as a means of justifying what one wants to believe or do rather than recognizing what is truly needed and appropriate and acting accordingly. Shades of grey do not convey the right to ignore the conscience.

Perception and Truth 2

There is relativity to truth. Since the whole is generally not regarded (and is not practically or practicably regardable), truth is relative and depends on the context of the truth being regarded and the context or conditioning (bias) of the person or consciousness regarding. That which is beyond one's experience is most difficult to properly perceive and interpret. The natural human tendency is to perceive everything in terms according to one's own previous experience and understanding (and beliefs), however limited (partial) and unrelated (and unrealistic) that experience and understanding (bias) may be.

There is also tentativeness to truth as it is perceived and embraced. Information may be regarded as true, as tentatively true, of undetermined truth, tentatively false, or false. The human tendency is to perceive something as either true or false. With some measure of honesty and objectivity, one can perceive something as being undetermined in truth. But, believing something as true or believing something as false is limiting and inhibiting of understanding. Believing something as true or believing something as false conveys inertia to deeper or broader understanding, even if what is believed is relatively correct.

For the spiritual student there is a more potent range of embracing truth, and that is to perceive something as relatively and tentatively true (or as relatively and tentatively false (or as undetermined in truth)). In this way the inertia of belief (which leads to having opinions or attachments to beliefs) and the inertia of conditioning are minimized (and eventually transcended) and the student is more able to remain open to deeper and broader understanding. However, to be effective in this regard one must learn to minimize the role of the intellect. If the ring of truth is determined largely by the intellect then all conclusions should be suspect. If the ring of truth is less conclusive and determined largely through intuition, then there should be some (tentative and relative) confidence.

The human being experiences normally primarily through a process that is largely unconscious, involving observation, perception, judgment, and conclusion. Perception is clouded and hindered or constrained by beliefs and conditioning. The intellect tends to judge and thereby convert beliefs into

opinions resulting in more substantial bias. However, the student who remains relatively open-minded, who is more conscious in observing and perceiving, and who tempers the process of judgment and conclusion, is more able to realize the truth. In this sense, perception with openness leads to realization, and perception with closed-ness leads to judgment and opinion.

The whole process is compounded further through the distinction between what one really believes and what one merely thinks one believes. What one believes is generally not the same as what one thinks one believes or what one professes to believe. What one really believes, one believes on unconscious levels and results in some appreciable extent of manifestation through character, temperament, and values, even while there is little conscious realization of same. For someone who is basically honest and uncontrived, what one believes consciously becomes what one believes unconsciously. Otherwise there is a growing tension between the two aspects of belief. In either case, the spiritual student should endeavor to be consciously aware of the subconscious dimension (beliefs, conditioning, and other biases) and to avoid "having" conclusive beliefs (opinions).

† Commentary No. 369

Sensitivity and Discernment

Two important aspects of awareness are sensitivity and discernment. Sensitivity is important because it contributes directly to the quality and extent (depth and breadth) of the awareness. Discernment is important because it provides (relative) discrimination of impressions and contributes to their validation (to the extent that the validation of impressions is even possible). Without the proper sensitivity and without a proper sense of discernment, awareness is likely to be limited to the objective (superficial) realm and/or compounded by unqualified imagination. But with proper sensitivity and discretion, well-founded in character, consciousness, and temperament, awareness is likely to be highly effective, and a boon to the spiritual student.

The proper, spiritual sensitivity does not include personal or emotional sensitivity. Personal (reactive) (defensive) (self-centered) (egoistic) sensitivity is not healthy in any spiritual sense, for it greatly complicates perception and

realization, and undermines the effectiveness of the spiritual student. Emotional sensitivity is similarly distractive, for the personality then tends to react in a rather unqualified fashion, being particularly vulnerable to external forces. Personal (emotional) sensitivity also encourages the unqualified imagination (which complicates the process of discernment). The spiritual student must be careful to properly overcome the (natural) tendency toward personal sensitivity, and endeavor to properly qualify the personality.

Proper spiritual sensitivity nicely complements the mental and intuitional abilities and training. Discernment is an integral part of that (proper) sensitivity and provides a dimension of intelligent insight and realization (mature responsiveness to impression (experience)). Proper sensitivity (and discernment) requires a reasonably well-disciplined (qualified) personality that is relatively mature (responsive to higher impression) (aligned with the soul). Many of the ordinary involvements (glamours) (activities) in the mundane world preclude the proper development and application of spiritual sensitivity (discretion) (awareness). Wherever a person is involved in (enchanted by) (absorbed in) mundane affairs, the proper sensitivity cannot be achieved or manifested. But with spiritual discipline (proper meditation) the student can work effectively in the mundane world while maintaining an effective awareness (sensitivity) (realization).

One of the necessary ingredients (for proper sensitivity) is the purification of the personality, transforming as much of the coarse vibrations (on every practical level) as possible to the refined character of the qualified personality. Psychic development, per se, is not required for spiritual sensitivity. Spiritual sensitivity is a great deal more than what is commonly considered psychic sensitivity (both in terms of spiritual maturity and in terms of depth and breadth of occult (objective) (subjective) (psychological) ability) (i.e., intelligent responsiveness to energies, psychological forces, etc.).

The proper spiritual sensitivity (awareness) (discretion) is a dispassionate compassion for all of life and manifestation, a guiding (non-compelling) realization and insight that moderates the life and activity of the spiritual student, and the capacity for interactive observation (as the spiritual student functions as the intelligent, sensitive observer and point-of-focus for intelligent, spiritual forces and energies). Where the occult sensitivity is properly coupled

with the spiritual intuition, the spiritual student becomes a potent presence (without involvement and without imposition) for constructive qualification of the environment.

† Commentary No. 1462

Sensitivity and Insightfulness

Sensitivity and insightfulness both expand and deepen to the extent that the lower nature is properly tempered and the ego and mind become relatively quiescent, allowing impressions to be embraced from a higher and deeper place in consciousness. This proper sensitivity should not be confused with personal sensitivity, which tends to be somewhat defensive and reactive and is based on egoism, nor with the (ordinary) psychic sensitivity in the sense of being able to see, hear, or feel things in the non-physical worlds. Proper sensitivity is spiritual sensitivity and emerges as a consequence of real growth in consciousness.

The truly spiritually sensitive person may or may not be psychic in the conventional sense of being clairaudient or clairvoyant, but the spiritually sensitive person is generally able to perceive the subtle realms rather keenly, intuitively and subjectively and qualitatively, sensing the character and quality of the various energies and forces (and people) that (who) are encountered, sensing the underlying reality (truth) (both content and context), and also sensing cause and effect relationships wherever pertinent. The most insightful spiritual student is one who is both heart-centered and impersonal, which is a rare combination of qualities and attributes (impersonal in the higher sense of being heart-centered but without being personality-centered). Head-centered methods can evoke to some extent the power of the divine nature, but only the heart-centered nature can evoke both the power and the quality (wisdom) of the divine nature.

With wisdom, the spiritually sensitive student is able to live in accord with the flow of life, even if it appears otherwise to those less able to sense these things (and who tend to mislead themselves on the basis of what they want to see and on the basis of superficial indications rather than underlying energies (truth)). The presence of ego precludes any real spiritual sensitivity. And the presence of

ego generally leads one to distrust or resent anyone who is actually sensitive and insightful, leading in turn to rationalization and (somewhat specious) judgment. Consequently, the spiritually sensitive person (student) tends to be relatively quiet and unobtrusive.

The ego does not really want to know or understand anything other than that which enables it to sustain and entertain itself. So the ego will not naturally embrace the truth about itself, evoking all sorts of defensive, evasive, and subtle barriers to prevent or inhibit realization. The spiritually sensitive person is one who has passed beyond the personality-centered stage, and therefore tends to be resented by those who perceive themselves as spiritual students but who are, in fact, yet personality-centered and largely driven by their own egos, even while being sincere, charitable, and dedicated (intellectually and behaviorally) to the path (and service).

The spiritually sensitive person is still human and imperfect, and may not realize how his or her talents are resented, but eventually one learns not to speak or share from insight unless there is a clear indication of appreciation and receptivity (and not merely proclamations to that effect, no matter how sincerely). This can be difficult because there is a natural forthrightness to the spiritual nature and this must be tempered with discretion and wisdom (and not rationally so). Of course one can never be entirely sure that one's insight is true (if one is sure then one is still functioning at the ego level). True spiritual sensitivity conveys true insightfulness and true insightfulness conveys both discretion and humility and wisdom.

The Quest for Truth

The quest for truth has exemplified the evolution of human consciousness from the very beginning, from the point where a person ceases to be (merely) an animal (merely inhabiting an animal body but wholly immersed in animal consciousness) and becomes (nominally) self-conscious (and therefore human) (still inhabiting an animal body, and even identifying with it, but with growing awareness of humanness).

The quest is underlying and overshadowing. All of the field of consciousness (and all of the field of human endeavor (experience and expression)), at material levels and above, is conditioned by evolutionary forces (purpose). As one evolves casually (gradually) (not consciously or deliberately) one eventually becomes aware of the inherent need to learn, the need to understand, to place life (experience) in some context, and eventually to glean (realize) the meaning of life. There are many guideposts along the way, much in the way of encouragement, and much in the way of challenges in consciousness.

The quest is an adventure, at first where a person more or less unconsciously embraces experience and learns from practical necessity, subsequently (gradually more and more) a matter of more conscious pursuit of knowledge (outer truth) (and the perceived benefits of knowledge), and eventually a matter of self-realization (embracing the truth within) (passing beyond seeking) (embracing true self-consciousness). The quest is a process of experience, assimilation, expression, and unfolding. At first there are unconscious and unrecognized motives, then more conscious, deliberate (self-serving) motives, and finally simply an embracing of the process as an end in itself.

But there are many barriers, distractions, entanglements, hindrances, pitfalls, and stumbling-blocks along the way, not the least of which is the grand illusion (of the substantiality (perceived reality) of the human being as an individual and the substantiality (perceived reality) of the (external) material world). The conditioning effect of the grand illusion, of one being so immersed in material and egoistic existence that one cannot see the underlying reality, is a quite formidable barrier. A person (the mind) tends to be attached to the (apparent)

reality of things that one (it) can see and feel in the outer world, and so realization tends to dawn (emerge) rather gradually. Learning to see beyond the senses, to discern the underlying reality (even to recognize the possibility of an underlying but non-outer-sensual reality) is very difficult. The mind is a great tool, but also a great dynamic-yet-inertial impediment. But somehow there is learning, and growth, and gradual realization of deeper things.

After one passes beyond the obvious, beyond what is merely apparent to the senses, to what is not so apparent, it is like peeling an onion. There are layers and layers of relative truth. Each layer embraced offers new insights as well as new perplexes. The student learns to not be attached to (necessarily relative) truth as it is known or understood, but to remain open to deeper, more inclusive truths for which the preliminaries are merely (ever) superficial. If one holds on to some (perceived) truth, then that holding on is preclusive. But as one learns to navigate along the way, to embrace the journey without attachments, then indeed is more obvious progress achieved. At least until one passes into that realm of non-progress, where one progresses through not-striving and not-seeking.

† Commentary No. 1440

Truth and Truth of Mind

There is truth, and relative truth, and there is the “truth” of mind. The actual truth is what it is, actually, regardless of what a person thinks or feels or believes or perceives to be truth. Thus in order to embrace or realize truth one must approach truth without any preconceived or underlying assumptions, beliefs, ideas, opinions, or other biases. And if one is not entirely honest with oneself and others, in all things and in all regards, then that relative lack of honesty serves as a (relative) barrier to embracing and realizing truth.

But the human being (and the mind) is (are) limited in ability. It is not really possible for the human mind to embrace actual (complete) truth. Because truth is, on its own level, of greater dimensionality (complexity) (simplicity) than the human mind is capable of embracing. So a person can at best perceive or realize truth in some relative fashion, according to his or her abilities and capacities (consciousness, intelligence), and subject to his or her biases and conditioning.

Virtually every aspect of truth that a person deals with is relative or partial, limited in some way or another. This relative truth is nonetheless valuable, as it serves as encouragement for learning and growing (and serving), so it behooves the spiritual student to overcome the more readily apparent human limitations (biases, opinions, habits of thinking) so as to better and more effectively apprehend relative truth.

One of the biggest (and most common) mistakes is to assume (consciously or unconsciously) that this necessarily relative truth is actual truth. Such assumption or clinging (attachment) then compounds the problem (of apprehension of truth) by inhibiting any broader or deeper appreciation of truth (learning). Knowledge is particularly dangerous because people tend to be attached to things that they believe they know, when in fact knowledge is even more relative than truth. In realizing that the truth that is apprehended is relative truth, the student allows refinement in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom (and thereby progress in learning and growing and deepening). Thus the spiritual student may “know” things but is not generally attached to what is known or even to what appears to be understood. There is ideally stability and coherence, even while learning and growing. One can be open and flexible (non-rigid, non-preclusive) while still adhering to the truth that is relatively understood.

Another relatively big and common mistake is to rely on rational or intellectual process (logic) to determine “truth” (which of course is not actual truth, but simply what is believed to be the truth). This truth of mind is not, ever, actual truth. Sometimes truth of mind is no less real than relative truth arrived at through other means, but it is inexorably less reliable than truth apprehended intuitively. The mind is a biased and conditioned instrument and is therefore (very) limited in its ability to embrace truth. If one relies on the intellect, even objectively and logically, there are necessarily involved assumptions and inferences and conclusions, consciously or unconsciously, which are merely assumptions, inferences, and conclusions. Not truth.

The highest truth is that which can be embraced through buddhi (intuition in the higher sense of relationship between (true) heart and (actual) soul). In buddhi, the mind is properly quiescent and simply reflects the higher impressions. What is then apprehended by the mind cannot be completely (or

accurately) verbalized, but it is nonetheless higher truth (than could or would otherwise be realized). Thus the student is encouraged to temper the mind, and open the heart. To truth.

† Commentary No. 1485

Truth and Awareness

Perhaps most people think that because they are self-conscious in the ordinary (superficial) sense, they have therefore awareness. But this is not awareness in the higher sense of perceptive realization. It is simply the crude awareness of the physical plane, dimmed by conditioning and one's expectations. It is also not the crude awareness of non-physical levels exhibited by untrained and unqualified psychics. True awareness requires some not inconsiderable development in consciousness, and not inconsiderable refinement of consciousness. And true awareness does not necessarily involve any form of psychic or super-physical awareness, which is after all, only a wider range of superficial awareness. True awareness is something much deeper. Much more based in quality of (higher) consciousness. Based in realization rather than perception.

One of the most significant keys to this (proper) awareness is embracing truth, being dedicated to embracing truth and actually embracing truth. It is not sufficient merely to be so dedicated or to believe that one is embracing truth. One must actually develop and embrace all of the prerequisites (such as honesty and humility) and be actually open to truth. Most people are not really open to truth, even though they are more or less honest. They think they are open-minded but in fact most people are simply conditioned to see what they want to see, whatever is comfortable to see. Most people do not realize that their illusions and their assumptions and their biases and their conditioning are all barriers to their being truly honest, with themselves and with others. And this is a great preclusion of (true) awareness.

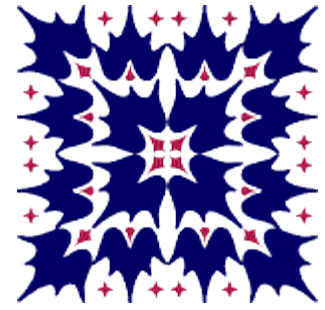
Knowledge is a barrier to awareness simply because most people are unconsciously attached to what they know, instead of being free to embrace the truth. Even understanding is a barrier to awareness, if one thinks one understands something then that is a barrier. If one is truly humble, then one is

not attached to either knowledge or understanding. A humble student has no opinions or other attachments or delusions. But most people suffer the ordinary delusions of physical existence, the illusion of the physical world, which is real, superficially, but actually merely only a shadow. Most people suffer the illusion of independence, of separateness, even if they believe otherwise. The barrier of (the illusion of) separateness is compounded by ego and personality-centeredness. An intellectual understanding of these illusions is helpful, a stepping-stone, but it is not the same as perceiving and realizing things without having the actual illusions.

Most people think that “little white lies” are not harmful, or that inaccuracies are not significant. But these are barriers to truth. And to awareness. Indeed, inaccuracies are not really significant any more than details are significant in some broader perspective, except to the extent that they undermine one’s ability to perceive the truth. Inaccuracies, exaggerations, distortions do undermine things, subconsciously. It does not mean that one must be always accurate, only that one must understand, really understand, that what one says may not be entirely accurate, i.e., being honest with oneself, striving to be as honest as one can be, is important. It is about overcoming one’s conditioning (illusions) (biases). Only if one is as honest as one can be is there then the possibility of greater realization.

The purpose of life is evolution in consciousness. And that evolution is perhaps best measured or manifested through deepening and broadening awareness, based on both honesty and humility.

Section 3.111



Aspects of Truth 1

- There are a number of aspects of truth. There is intuition, the basis of faith, faith and reasoning, reasoning and intuition. There is relativity. There is the mask of truth. There is a matter of self-evidence. There is the crisis of faith, and discernment, the ring of truth.

Intuition

Intuition is defined in the general (orthodox) sense as the power or faculty of attaining direct knowledge or cognition, without rational thought or inference; it also refers to the act of such apprehension and to the knowledge thus gained. There are three distinct mechanisms which can produce (apparent) intuition, though only one mechanism (buddhi) is the true (spiritual) intuition. The most common mechanism is that of astral (emotional) (psychic) sensitivity. The astral sensitivity is common to all human beings, in various degrees, though women are generally more sensitive in this respect than men due to the (female) polarization of the astral body. The astral sensitivity may resemble the (true) intuition, but depends upon the passive (psychic) processes of perception (coloring due to character (quality) of the aura), and is therefore largely undependable (or at least subject to misinterpretation).

The second mechanism that meets the orthodox definition is abstract mental cognition. By definition, the intuition does not depend on any (concrete) reasoning. But where the bridge (continuity) between the concrete and abstract minds is well-developed, the abstract mind (of the soul) can provide correlative insight to supplement more objective reasoning processes. Scientific (philosophical) insight (revelation) generally falls into this category and information obtained via the abstract mind is generally much more dependable than that obtained via astral sensitivity (perception) or reasoning (analysis) (logic); but the information gained via the abstract mind is still subject to interpretation by the concrete mind (and dependent on mental training).

The true (spiritual) intuition is a function of an even higher process and involves the second aspect (buddhi) of the soul rather than the third aspect (manas) (abstract mind). The true intuition is quite rare and depends a great deal on the (reasonably complete) refinement of the integrated personality with the soul. The spiritual intuition requires a considerable quality of consciousness (and a blend of the head-centered and heart-centered nature), while the second (lesser) mechanism requires only a well-developed (abstract and concrete) mental development (which does not necessarily imply any spiritual consciousness

(quality)) and the astral sensitivity requires essentially no qualification (though qualification is necessary to any useful sensitivity).

Buddhi involves a higher plane of consciousness than that of mental (manasic) or astral (emotional) experience, and is the most dependable (pure) mechanism since the personality (mind) must be properly trained and responsive (qualified) before the (true) intuition can flow.

True (spiritual) intuition is principally heart-centered (though mind must also be properly qualified) and provides the basis for (consistent) mystical experience (revelation) (self-realization) (for those who are qualified); it also provides occasional insight for those who are temporarily aligned (i.e., occasional mystical experience). True insight (intuition) is not communicable to others, for it is quite subjective and difficult to translate into objective terms. Drug-induced (pseudo-mystical) experience is astral (psychic) (personality-centered) in nature and unrelated to intuitional experience. True intuition is a communion of soul and purified mind. Real intuition is the basis of the heart, the second aspect (buddhi) of the soul, and is related to the (qualified) heart center. Communion implied by spiritual intuition is unimpeded by the personality or by any personality consideration. Although lesser (mental and emotional) experience predominates, students of all faiths (rays) are gradually cultivating the alignment (buddhi) which brings soul infusion.

† Commentary No. 441

The Basis of Belief

The human lifeform is somewhat unique in this planetary scheme in the sense that of all the (few) self-conscious species, only the human being has not achieved self-realization and must therefore depend on lesser means of cognition. Lesser species depend on instinct and other forms of unconscious direction, while greater (and some parallel) species depend on more direct realization. But for the human being there must be some recourse to believing, either through some sense of faith, reasoning, and/or proper intuition.

Because of the complications of perception and reasoning, the problem of illusion (glamour) (maya), and the problem of proof (i.e., that nothing is provable) (i.e., that every belief however compelling or convincing cannot be proven one to another but only to oneself), every human being must necessarily develop a personal (relatively unique) body of beliefs, conscious and unconscious, that tend to influence the human activity (motivation, thinking, feeling, action). Though specific beliefs may be significant in themselves, the basis of belief (for any particular individual) is essentially more significant, because the basis determines to some extent the quality and relative credibility of the belief system and indicates the next stage of evolutionary development and qualification.

For all practical purposes, physically polarized people have no significant basis of belief; they still act largely on an instinctive basis and are largely dominated by external forces. Emotionally polarized people depend to some extent on faith and to some extent on reasoning (depending on mental development) as a basis for belief and are generally largely influenced by external forces (e.g., mass consciousness and the beliefs inherent therein) (which are partially emotionally based and partially mentally based). Mentally polarized people depend primarily on reasoning as a basis of belief and are generally somewhat influenced by mass consciousness (world opinion) (prevailing illusion). Intuitively polarized people depend primarily on the proper (spiritual) intuition as a basis for belief, but normally also to some extent upon qualified reasoning, and are largely free from external influences.

Most people are somewhere between an emotional polarization and a mental polarization and subject to faith and reasoning, while some (few) are somewhere between a mental polarization and an intuitive polarization, and subject to reasoning and intuition. For each basis (faith, reasoning, intuition) (kama, kama-manas, manas, manas-buddhi, and buddhi) there are problems (limitations) that determine the effectiveness of the basis for any individual belief system. These problems include the degree or extent of knowledge and understanding implied (and the nature of knowledge (i.e., one cannot really know anything, one can only believe, through some basis)), the degree or extent to which that knowledge is first-hand (and the degree of passivity implied), the relative strength of the belief (e.g., being rigidly held, moderately held, or loosely (tentatively) held (and the stability thereof)) and the degree of adaptability,

consistency, broadness, relativity, and coherence (objectivity (subjectivity)), and the degree of truth (reality) embraced.

Due to the relative nature of truth and reality, one of the most important considerations is the potential of an individual (given his basis of belief and attributes thereof) to progress both his beliefs and his belief basis. It is only as one's beliefs are allowed to broaden (become generalized) (become more inclusive) and as one becomes more and more devoted to (and responsive to) truth that a person can truly deepen and grow.

† Commentary No. 442

Faith and Reasoning

Those who are unable to reason clearly for themselves are necessarily dependent on faith as a basis of belief. In a sense, faith is superior to reasoning since it is so much less complicated by ego and the self-deception potential of the ego, but in most respects, faith is less satisfactory than reasoning and must ultimately be sacrificed (as reasoning must in its turn be sacrificed in favor of buddhi and self-realization).

Faith implies belief in things for which there is no proof (so in a sense even reasoning and intuition imply some faith, and the overwhelming devotion to God necessary to self-realization is a faith based upon higher, inner guidance, but never validated by proof in any sense other than personal), or confidence "even where there is no evidence of proof."

Where faith is based on instinct or feelings (kama) it is generally sufficient for one who is physically or emotionally polarized but nonetheless relatively blind compared to reasoning. Faith is typically a recourse to external forces, unconsciously in the sense of the mass-consciousness (world glamour), more consciously in the sense of acceptance of beliefs (tenets) (truth) imposed or asserted by some supposed external authority.

The problem of faith is, therefore, largely the problem of an inability to think for oneself and arrive at reasonable conclusions (beliefs). Recourse to external authorities may be fine for one otherwise unable to reason and evaluate

concepts, ideas, principles, etc. on their own merits, but is wholly unsatisfactory for the spiritual student (in which case the basis of belief is as important or more so than what is actually believed). There are no external authorities; the only acceptable authority is the God-within, necessarily the soul, its quality, and the self-realization implied therein. External sources may provide useful information, but simple acceptance based upon some supposed credibility is unwarranted. What is warranted is a careful consideration of all experience and all inputs, evaluated in light of inner wisdom (at best) or at least qualified reasoning. Faith based upon kama or kama-manas is one thing (inadequate for the spiritual student); faith (knowledge) (understanding) based upon manas or manas-buddhi is another thing, for such faith (born of reason and/or proper intuition) is far more likely to be closer to truth (reality) and far more likely to help in personality development and progression (the evolution of consciousness) than the faith based upon external means.

Reasoning (manas) has its own problems and albeit superior to faith (kama) in many respects, reasoning is still not entirely sufficient for the spiritual (esoteric) student. Proper reasoning depends on the quality, character, discipline, experience, and training of the mind (i.e., the objective and subjective (concrete and abstract) mental abilities). Reasoning can be heavily biased or prejudiced by feelings (kama) (personal energy). Reasoning is generally subject to the intentions of the ego, whether or not consciously recognized. The ego can (and will tend to) dominate the reasoning processes (logic, correlation, assessment, etc.) to result in what it (the ego) wants to obtain (i.e., a person believes what he wants to, regardless of evidence to the contrary). The ego, like the astral body, seeks to sustain its own level of domination (self-justification). One can improve the reasoning process (i.e., improve the objectivity and impartiality) only by purifying and qualifying and training the entire (integrated) personality, developing an impersonal approach to the consideration of all experience and developing an (almost) overwhelming love of truth and a willingness to adhere to the truth thus perceived.

Reasoning and Intuition

While the problem of reasoning for the emotionally polarized is the degree and extent of the bias due to kama (desire) (astral vulnerability), the problem of reasoning for the mentally polarized is the degree and extent to which the mind (ego) is allowed to exert its independence (domination). Though potentially a tremendous instrument of experience, the mind is inherently self-deceptive in its natural (undisciplined and unqualified) state. Reasoning is to some extent a necessary basis of belief for most spiritual students; the mind (mental abilities) can be improved with discipline, qualification, and training, but there are some basic limitations (e.g., the material or separative nature) that are virtually impossible to overcome completely.

Therefore the recourse of the spiritual student is to gradually develop the spiritual intuition (buddhi) in order to provide a basis of self-realization and validation of truth. Unfortunately (in the superficial sense, fortunately in the sense of challenge, difficulties, and potential for progress), no truth is absolute in the practical or operational sense and no means of testing for truth is absolute or infallible. But with the proper development of the spiritual intuition (through purification, integration, and elevation of the waking-consciousness), it is possible to irradiate the mind such that a deeper sense of knowledge and understanding results.

One of the necessary ingredients for effective buddhi-manas is a properly and well-developed sense of discernment, for every mental impression must properly be tested, challenged, and weighed according to the degree of alignment (of personality and soul) achieved and the corresponding degree of impersonality (quality of consciousness) embraced. Without an integrated (purified) (aligned) personality, even well-developed discernment is insufficient. Besides discernment, impersonality is (absolutely) essential, for the presence of personal energy will invariably distort any impression of (from) higher consciousness. The potential for self-deception is considerable, particularly where the student lacks impersonality and a highly objective sense of discernment.

While reasoning is generally considered an objective process, and intuition a more subjective one, the proper (qualified) alignment results in highly objective impressions (necessarily impersonal or otherwise highly suspect) (e.g., intuitional telepathy is inherently objective, even though subjective energies are encountered and abstract concepts embraced). The student must always be on guard for personal energy (desire) (bias) (distortion thereto) and egoic deception (the mind masquerading as the intuition). The student must also discern between astral impressions, mental impressions, and intuitive impressions (or at least be able to discern sufficiently the quality of every impression). Many people wrongly attribute feelings (astral or emotional impressions) to the intuition thereby gaining false confidence (credence).

In the final analysis, whether by qualified reasoning or intuition, all impressions and conclusions must be considered tentative in all respects. To the extent that they are discerned as qualified they can be considered less tentative, but the nature of the path (evolution) is such that tentativeness and relativity are necessary ingredients. There are effectively no absolutes. One can have reasonable confidence but not infallibility. With self-realization comes considerable ability (e.g., higher forms of discernment and correlative insight), but the self-realized student still remains necessarily the final arbiter of his basis of belief and beliefs thereof.

† Commentary No. 540

Relativity

The basic premise of relativity is that in the realm of manifestation there are few if any absolute (invariant) measures and all things are relative, i.e., depend upon the relative perspective of the viewer. That perspective depends on position, values, character temperament, spatial, spectral, and temporal factors, etc. For all practical purposes, the manifested universe is the domain of relativity and the unmanifested universe (the void) is the absolute domain.

Although relativity is a practical reality and must be considered in all things experiential, relativity is also part of the world illusion (of individual, separate existence). The absolute offers nothing in return but the (unmanifested) existence of the absolute itself. The domain of relativity (the exercise of relative

perspective) offers everything experiential and evolutionary, for everything that deals with life, consciousness, or form is necessarily relative and not absolute. The very concept of an absolute consciousness is a paradox, since the absolute is beyond consciousness (consciousness being a transient of manifestation).

Another premise of relativity is that nothing within the manifested universe is a linear phenomenon, that every process and every perception is relatively biased and essentially non-linear (appearances notwithstanding). This means that much of the presumed (observable) universe that appears linear is in fact, non-linear, that incremental experience, perception, and time (space) are all non-linear (having non-equal increments or non-linear variation in parameters). Much within the domain of relativity is naturally logarithmic or exponential (depending on perspective). Much within the domain of relativity is multidimensional and correlative in some matrix sense.

In the realm of relativity, every state of being is "dependent for existence on or determined in nature, value, or quality by relation to something else" (existence is a function of relationships as well as an intrinsic function). Relativity also implies complete interdependence and affords no (real) independent existence (i.e., that freedom and independence are relative phenomena, that all things are necessarily relatively bounded (unbounded) (depending on perspective)). The problem then of relativity is the transient or relative nature of all referents. If one is to cope with (accept) the relative reality of a relativistic manifestation, then one must appreciate the relative stability of things dynamic (i.e., the underlying patterns and structures that are relatively more "concrete" than the more transient phenomena). This also means that attachments are quite futile and that flexibility (adaptability) is necessary for progress. But one must remain (relatively) stable (coherent) if one is to progress at all, and therein rests the key to (relative) evolution. That key is dynamic stability (coherence). Those who are relatively incoherent are relatively lost. Those who are inflexible are subject to dissolution. But those who are relatively coherent and able to proceed sensibly in the face of relative phenomena are able to evolve much more effectively.

The eventual paradox of living in a relativistic domain is that one must ultimately view things relativistically and at the same time begin to embrace the absolute (which is necessarily indescribable). Progressive meditation leads

to (relative) detachment (freedom from matters mundane) and successive realization of relative absolutes (that each higher level of (arupa) consciousness is absolute relative to that which is lower, but merely relative to that which is higher). It is the nature of the absolute to recede, and it is the nature of the evolving lives to approach that absolute.

† Commentary No. 552

The Mask of Truth

From one perspective the human objective is a greater, deeper, broader realization of truth, and the achievement of all of the psychological changes implied by that realization (or at least implied by the process leading to that realization). The psychological changes (qualitative changes in character (consciousness) (temperament)) are necessary in order for the human mind (and its sponsor (the soul)) to be able to embrace the dynamic process of progressive revelation, but (in truth) the objective of truth in the most direct sense is to bring about those psychological changes in the first place, for such are the stepping stones to the real objective (which is inclusion (soul infusion) (the rapport of oneness (not merely an appreciation that oneness is real))).

The problem of course is that the human mind (and even the human soul on its level) is considerably limited in its ability to properly perceive and to properly interpret what is perceived. The world (universe) (within and without) is vastly deeper and broader in each of the human dimensions of perception and is more properly perceived in vastly more dimensions than the few currently (and partially) embraced by human consciousness. The nature (necessity) of evolution (in consciousness) is (necessarily) one of progressive achievement, of developing a capability for experience (expression) on some level and in some (relatively measured (limited)) manner, learning more from the process of achievement than by the experience of that which is achieved (except in the sense that it is involved in the next phase of the process). The quest then in this sense is the expansion and refinement of the human ability to acquire and interpret knowledge, recognize truth (the relative significance (integration) of knowledge or information) and the transformation of that knowledge (truth) into wisdom (quality of consciousness).

Truth is however also of nature progressive, for the limitations of human perception and understanding define the measure and manifestation (character) of truth that can be embraced. In short, truth is masked, and the perception (realization) of truth is a matter of recognizing truth within the mask. With realization comes progressive revelation, as masks within masks are recognized, as truths within truths are realized, as the partial vision is made more whole, broader and deeper and therefore more inclusive. To succeed in this quest (process), one must embrace the idea of progressive revelation, of refinement in consciousness, of broadening and deepening one's own view of that which is perceived, interpreted, recognized, and realized.

To succeed in this quest one must not become attached to that which is perceived or to that which is achieved, for attachment serves mainly to sustain limitation, while recognition of relative values allows for change and progress (of course one should not hold values so loosely that there is little of significance realized, one must simply learn what one can and move on to more inclusive perspectives (although somewhere along the way service replaces the quest for truth (without preclusion))).

The mask of truth is a necessary protection and balance, to allow the progression of steps that in turn allow assimilation and adjustment (incorporation of wisdom). There are no short cuts to truth or wisdom. All must be earned and no stages can be skipped (although some can work and progress more rapidly (but never rapidly) than others and some can embrace several stages at once). With wisdom (soul realization) (inclusion) the esoteric student is able to more readily recognize the masks and their truths and achieve more effective assimilation and deepening.

Self-Evidence

As one progresses upon (or toward) the spiritual path, more and more of the ancient wisdom (esoteric philosophy) becomes self-evident, rather than being merely (intellectually) understandable (or not as the case may be). That which is self-evident requires no proof or explanation; it is simply recognized as true, comfortably accepted (if not understood), and (subconsciously) integrated within the student's value system. The objective of the spiritual student in this regard is two-fold: to naturally improve the capability for self-evidence, and to preclude or minimize the element of self-deception or presumption.

Self-evidence is, in a sense, simply the practical consequence of wisdom (insight) (understanding), the ability to perceive valid correlation or correspondence, to recognize the appropriateness of a particular teaching (or to recognize the limitation(s) of a particular teaching). Wisdom is the result of experience assimilated (by the soul) and incorporated as conscience and understanding. That wisdom (understanding) may or may not be directly or consciously drawn upon by the mind (personality), but is at least subconsciously available to the relatively refined and responsive mind. Self-evidence (proper perception of truth) is improved and deception (presumption) (distortion and misrepresentation of truth) is precluded or minimized to the extent that the various stumbling blocks of the personality are properly overcome.

For the spiritual student of buddhi-manas (intuitive polarization) there is conscious and verifiable self-evidence. Such a student has necessarily overcome the stumbling blocks of the personality and functions mentally and intuitively, unimpeded by attachments or personal bias. Such a person does not necessarily understand everything (for experience is generally not complete and the faculties may not be completely developed) but such a student will simply know the relative extent of understanding (i.e., self-honesty is paramount). For the mentally-polarized, the relative quality of consciousness (extent of refinement and self-mastery) determines the talent or ability for self-evidence. Such a student may or may not be able to bridge between the abstract and concrete mental faculties or respond to occasional intuition.

Such a student may or may not be (as the case may be) biased by opinions and other attachments that preclude or distort the perception of truth, and such a student may or may not have personal bias to contend with. All of these things (opinions, mental attachments, ego, dependence upon rationalization, self-interest, lack of humility, lack of discretion (discrimination), personal bias (interest), mundane or intellectual absorption, etc.) are all relatively detrimental to the clear perception and appreciation of truth.

While the self-evidence of the unrefined mentally polarized person is generally precluded or distorted by the self-interested mind, the self-evidence of the emotionally polarized person (refined or otherwise) is generally precluded by emotional bias (attachments), the lack of mental integration, and the lack of discernment. In the context of self-evidence, emotionally polarized and unrefined mentally polarized students generally suffer a considerable extent of self-deception and presumption of understanding. The solution is achieved through attention to conscious refinement (and adherence to the path) and the cultivation of relative humility. If the mind is not filled with preclusions (thoughts) and the emotions are clear and unassuming (without desire or attachment), then the student can achieve some essential degree of humility and freedom from personal bias such that intuitional insight and mental realization (self-evidence) can begin to dominate the waking-consciousness.



The Crisis of Faith

Inevitably and periodically in the progressive development and service of the spiritual student there are crises of faith to test and challenge the place and perspective of the student in relation to the path and its energy flow. Some of the crises are evoked as consequences of false or unrealistic (and therefore unrealized) expectations, while some are meant to test the student's faith and resolve.

In either case, the underlying issue is the relationship of the student's faith to the energy flow of the path. Any expectation that is inconsistent with the purpose, proper methodology, and quality (objectives and character) of the flow

will be partially or fully unrealized, depending on the measure of inconsistency. Inconsistencies generally arise from the ego or personality nature which has its own ideas about virtually everything. If the student is personality-centered and under any substantive ego inducement, then the ideas, priorities, purpose, methodology, and quality of the student's approach (activities) (development) (service) are likely to be to some extent at variance with the path and what is intended for the student. But with humility and intelligent (rather than independent) approach (acceptance of consequences (opportunities)), some greater measure of consistency with the path (its flow) is achieved.

The wise student has no expectations other than that all will work out as it must. As the student places his higher faith in God (the soul) (the spiritual path) rather than himself (personality) and his lower faith in his own ability to be responsive to the higher, then independence (separateness) (personality-centeredness) is gradually overcome and adherence is gradually achieved. But that faith must be real and not contrived by the self-deceptive ego (personality). If the student has wants (desires, expectations) other than adherence to the path, then the student is misled by those wants. If the student is relatively free from wants (personal or noble) and attachments (opinions) (beliefs), then the student is relatively free to live within the energy flow of the (spiritual) path.

The student's faith should come from (God) within and as a consequence of and measure of respect for the soul (and not the ego). That (effective) faith should not be blind or without general understanding and selfless resolve. Without specific or unrealistic (self-centered or self-initiated) expectations, the student still needs a measure of faith in the higher order and his own (necessarily humble) relationship to that higher order and a measure of resolve (determination) to rise above the mundane aspects of personality and life in the lower worlds in order to serve more effectively in the context of the path.

Faith, humility, intelligence, and acceptance go hand in hand with the sensible approach of the student to the path (and as the student continues indefinitely upon that path). Difficult circumstances, personal failures, and other challenges do not disrupt the proper faith of the spiritual student, but they do (properly) cause the student to question his faith (is it proper), his commitment (is it well-founded), his motives and methods (are they proper), etc. The student must ever be open to new ideas and willing to learn from every opportunity (but with

intelligent consideration and without carelessly giving up one's place and perspective). Thus the crisis of faith offers the dispelling of false (unrealistic) (personal) expectations and/or the opportunity for renewal of proper commitment (faith) and continued loosening of ego (personal) (personality) influences.

† Commentary No. 824

The Ring of Truth

As the student advances in the dharma of the path, he (she) is progressively better able to discern truth. To the extent of the relative responsiveness of the mind to the intuition (of the overshadowing and underlying (indwelling) soul), any statement or thought presented to the mind can be tested by the intuition and will have a certain subtle ring of truth or otherwise. Of course the soul is not interested in the affairs of the personality, but the mind that is in (some) contact with the soul does have its thoughts (impressions) naturally tested by that association. That (energy or quality) which is "true" or pure will be qualitatively and subjectively accepted by the soul, while that which is not "true" will be (naturally) rejected by the soul (and realized by the mind in the "ring" of that relative consistency). However, there are a number of pitfalls for the unwary that lead to a false sense of discernment.

One such pitfall is the natural rationalization of the (concrete) mind (personality) (ego) that can proceed without conscious deliberation and without the conscious awareness of the (waking-consciousness of the) (unwary) student such that the student mistakes the result of subconscious rationalization for true intuitive discernment. The mind (ego) of the aspirant (or disciple) may often attempt to masquerade as the intuition (particularly where there is hope or expectation, wherein the mind provides encouragement irregardless of the truth (i.e., the ego reveals (the mind hears) whatever one wants to be revealed (heard))). Even if the mind deliberates consciously, there is no intuition (higher insight) (discernment) in any (concrete) mental process and the results of any rational or otherwise concrete mental process should be suspected. Deliberate concrete (rational) (reasonable) mental activity can still be useful (particularly in the absence of intuition), but should not be mistaken for true insight. Any time

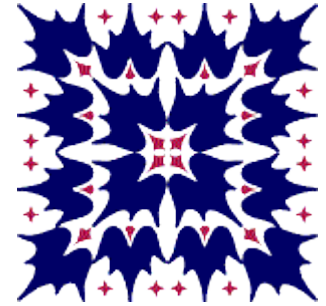
a person actually thinks about some subject, then whatever intuitive capability a student might otherwise have is thereby preempted.

Another pitfall is the false attribution of discernment to the (emotional) instincts of the lower self (personality). Instinct is the lower correspondence of intuition and can in many cases reveal or present some insight or (lower) realization to the mind. In some cases the information thus presented is accurate and reliable, but in other cases (and times) it is not. Thus the (results of) instinct (are) is not consistent (actually the instinct is consistent, but the ability of the aura (emotional or astral body) to accurately convey the instinct to the conscious mind and the ability of the (emotionally biased) mind to interpret the received impressions is seriously limited).

Thus both the emotions and the concrete mind tend to distort the (lower) abilities of the personality in the discernment of truth. The ring of truth in such cases (where there is emotional or mental bias) is hollow (potentially misleading or false) and not real. But where the emotions are tempered (refined) and the mind is pure (clear) (quiet), then the ring of truth (of intuition) can be impressed upon the conscious mind and the student can thereby (potentially) "feel" the (necessarily relative) truth of anything.

The ring of truth is "true" (rather than apparent or deceptive) only where there is no hope or expectation and only where there is no concern for personal or mundane factors. The ring of truth "works" only from above (unsolicited by the mind or heart) and not from below (where there is personal interest). The properly wary (qualified) (trained) student learns not only to discern truth (relatively), but to discern the relative truth of the "ring" of the truth so discerned (i.e., the ring of the ring of truth).

Section 3.112



Aspects of Truth 2

- There is also the dawn, the relationship between justice, law, and truth, and a matter of gullibility. There is an occult basis of beliefs. There is concision and there are the three gates.

The Dawn

Dawn is the first appearance or beginning of something, e.g., in the physical sense of light from the sun in the morning (the emergence of light) and in the psychological sense of the beginning of perception or understanding, the growing of light, symbolized in the physical dawning of light from the sun (and associated revitalization). The dawn traditionally represents commencement or beginning. But metaphysically, the dawn (additionally) illustrates timelessness in a number of different ways.

In the physical sense, the dawn is normally perceived as a regularly recurring phenomenon in time, i.e., from the point of view of someone embedded in time and space, the dawn appears each morning and has some modest duration, such that one naturally thinks of each dawn as a separate event. But in fact, even physically, there is but one dawn, and that dawn has existed since the beginning of physical planetary manifestation (rotation). If one views the planet from a distance, one can see that only one dawn is being manifested and that that dawn continuously progresses around the planet, with one complete cycle per day. What the individual normally calls the dawn is therefore more properly referred to in time and space as the interaction of one's consciousness with that (singular) dawn, each such interaction being a discrete event, with the (singular) dawn being a continuity.

What this physical example conveys, potentially, is the realization of natural delusion (of separateness), that one normally perceives things in a very limited manner, with the mind interpreting each moment in the light of previous experience and conditioning. But with a broadening of the mental perspective, and a deliberate effort to overcome one's conditioning (mental habits and instincts), one can perceive a greater reality (greater light) (which is ever more integral). The habit of thinking in spatial-temporal terms is self-limiting, for in the next order of reality one naturally integrates over the spatial and temporal factors to a realization of spacelessness and timelessness. Even the presumption of time-ordered cause and effect relationships is overcome in that higher order.

Similarly, one can view the dawn in terms of consciousness, so that in the self-limiting sense the dawn occurs periodically as one becomes (hopefully) progressively more enlightened (self-realized), and in the not-self-limiting sense (the student having achieved some measure of self-realization) the dawn is a continuous experience of enlightenment, without recourse to either spatial or temporal discretion. Or in other words, in the self-limiting sense one gets absorbed (distracted) (entangled) in mundane (personal) (secular) affairs while in the not-self-limiting sense one remains free from such absorption, being continuously aware of (through) the light from within.

The dawn not only illustrates timelessness but leads (potentially) to a progressive sense of union, helping to overcome the instinctive sense of individuality (ego) and associated separateness and separateness. In the dawn (light) is found the soul or higher self of love-wisdom. In the dawn is revealed the continuity of humanity and of all life. In the dawn is revealed the glory and majesty of the logos and the realization that each and the logos are one. The dawn is thus the light of the soul and the light of the logos. But the dawn conveys more than light, for it also conveys associated love and life (power (for good)), for the many are seven and the seven are three and the three are one. The dawn is the beacon of light and love and power. The dawn is That. The dawn is All.

† Commentary No. 1067

Justice, Law, and Truth

One of the problems associated with conventional forms of "justice" is the emphasis on law and procedure at the expense of truth. The reason for this emphasis is that "law" and associated procedures in law are relatively more easily defined, recognized, and understood in some more objective sense than is truth. In principle, and to a large extent even in practice, laws protect people through equal opportunity, equal application, etc. Laws are, however, still subject to interpretation and variability (bias) in implementation (via police and other agents of the justice system).

Human-based law is inherently biased by virtue of the role of personalities in establishing law, e.g., ego, vested interests, utilization of law to bring about

some related objective, however noble. Where there are many laws and/or numerous competing jurisdictions and interests, there arises a complexity in interpretation and implementation (and understanding). Ideally, human-based law would be relatively simple and straight-forward, both in intent, content (basis), and implementation. But that would require more noble (less personality-centered) law-makers and implementors. The emphasis should be on establishment of a relatively simple system of what is or what is not considered "acceptable" behavior through some consensus, with sufficient consideration for minority interests (i.e., not merely an imposition of majority interests, but an implementation of equitable and fair and reasonable standards).

In practice that is extremely difficult to do in any form of democracy, where personalities have competing interests, values, etc. Some other forms of government would afford easier implementation of such a system of justice, but are generally more subject to other abuses (e.g., a benevolent dictatorship is still a dictatorship). Freedom of expression is still an important ingredient in human experience, but it needs to be tempered somewhat by broader, less personal interests. A "good" system affords individual expression while protecting the broader interests of society as a whole.

The problem of truth is that it is not generally provable, while in principle "law" is more objective. In some societies, law is used to compensate for other potential abuses rather than dealing with those abuses directly, e.g., the notion of evidence wrongly obtained being not allowable seeks to discourage wrongful obtaining of evidence, but in fact also allows for the dismissal of pertinent information (truth). Ideally, persons acquiring evidence wrongfully would be appropriately prosecuted (to discourage abuse), while such evidence (truth) would remain admissible (encouraging "justice") (i.e., in principle, "all" evidence should be admissible (if evidence is not pertinent, then it should not affect the outcome)). But again the problem is human limitation, e.g., emotional and intellectual biases and how those biases affect judgment.

On the other hand, in the world today (and for the foreseeable future), human-based law is the only practical recourse. As humanity evolves as a whole, these processes and systems will improve, with emphasis on truth and justice rather than law and procedure (and eventually these systems will not even be needed).

As truth is more easily and truly discernable, and not merely a matter of perceived truth (such as it is), then any reasonable system of law will be relatively easy to implement. With relatively broad powers of realization (i.e., conscious, intuitive recognition of the truth of something), reliance on judgment will not be needed. And the diversity of competing interests will be replaced by a diversity of contributive interests within some commonality of prudent interests.

† Commentary No. 1073

Gullibility 1

Gullibility is the condition or phenomenon of being easily deceived or duped. The problem of gullibility is compounded by the relativity of what constitutes gullibility and by the inability of a gullible person to recognize sufficiently before the fact that he or she is indeed gullible in some sense or scope. Other factors or problems in gullibility include the unconscious passiveness associated with being emotionally polarized (i.e., not thinking “reasonably”) and the presumptuousness of judgment (intellect) (i.e., thinking as a limitation in itself).

Insofar as metaphysical or religious beliefs are concerned, gullibility is particularly relative, in the sense of someone judging someone else as gullible by virtue of perceived differences in beliefs and/or values. For example, a Christian fundamentalist may view anyone who is more metaphysically-inclined to be gullible, while someone who is metaphysically-inclined might view the Christian fundamentalist as being gullible. When in fact, one or the other, or neither, or both, may be gullible. Thus gullibility is relative and a matter of personal judgment. People tend to project their own beliefs and values upon others, even unconsciously, judging people according to the apparent measure of adherence, without appreciation for the diversity of experience and diversity of values that lead people to see things differently.

This is particularly true of what appear to some as visionary and revolutionary concepts. And people tend to judge as preposterous ideas that are beyond their own experience, oftentimes being not even considered on their own merit. But others’ beliefs are (tend to be) often dismissed by virtue of emotional and associative judgment, e.g., (falsely) believing that a person who shaves his or

her head is deluded and anything he or she believes and says is preposterous (because he or she shaves his or her head, not because the beliefs have been considered). In truth, there is not necessarily any cause and effect relationship between head-shaving (or anything else) and legitimacy of beliefs. A person's beliefs are meaningful, at least to that person. And no one has the right to judge another, or his or her beliefs. Judgment is always presumptuous and often (and generally) fallacious to some extent.

One who chooses not to judge is more likely to realize that each person's perspective has some validity and meaning, and that apparent differences in beliefs are not necessarily substantive, i.e., one can focus on the common elements rather than apparent differences and one can recognize that the terminology varies from one religious system to another and yet in many cases the same beliefs are being presented, in different ways perhaps. Those who judge others tend to be (thereby) separative. Those who choose not to judge others tend to be (thereby) more inclusive and appreciative of others. And those who become truly inclusive and non-separative transcend both the sense of ego and the sense that there are any others.

Respect for others' beliefs is very important in adherence to truth. If one allows the judging perspective to take hold, then one is thereby substantially limiting the extent (depth and breadth) of (truth) realization that is possible.

Ultimately, gullibility is a personal matter and a non-issue. One should simply seek to be as reasonable and realistic about what one believes as one can. If one focuses on the quality and value (and relative meaningfulness) of some prospective belief, then one can (gradually) discern the relative truth for oneself. Believing something by virtue of some presumed authority or claim is simply not conducive to learning to discern the truth for oneself.

Gullibility 2

In the more practical sense, gullibility is a matter of unreasonable basis of belief. People tend to believe things according to their own pre-existing belief system (conditioning) (expectations). People tend to believe what they want to believe, regardless of evidence to the contrary. At the other extreme are those who believe nothing, but at that extreme of complete non-gullibility there is just as much impediment to growth and realization as there is at the wholly gullible extreme.

In the middle, between these two extremes of gullibility and non-gullibility, is provisional belief, of non-passive open-mindedness that allows much in the way of possibility and little in the way of certainty. In this way, beliefs are provisional and tentative. The student does not cling to (these) beliefs and is therefore able to expand and deepen the experience leading to understanding, i.e., provisional and tentative beliefs facilitate but do not preclude understanding, while attachment to (non-provisional) beliefs constitutes considerable impediment to deeper, broader understanding.

Most of what a person believes is based on personal experience. That personal experience includes very considerable conditioning. People are generally trained by experience (conditioning) to trust their senses, to believe what is apparent to the senses, to believe what they are told by whoever is deemed to be an authority, etc. These processes are quite valuable throughout much of human evolution in consciousness, but at some point, trusting the senses and trusting others' authoritative testimony become limitations to growth in consciousness. The problem is that the senses are misleading, particularly for people who are emotionally-polarized. The senses strongly tend to convey to a person what he or she wants to sense (feel) (believe) rather than what is necessarily true. The problem of the senses is compounded by the mind or intellect, which manipulates sense impressions according to either the person's overall expectations or according to the self-presumed needs of the ego, particularly for people who are mentally-polarized and/or who are head-centered. Thus reliance on the senses and reliance on one's own judgment are limitations.

Many people believe in accordance with cultural conditioning or majority consciousness (where the majority is defined as the majority of the group of people with whom one identifies). If one perceives that “everyone else” believes something, and therefore it must be true, then one has erred substantially, for truth does not require people to believe it. Truth (in this sense) is what is actually true, not what is merely believed. Likewise recourse to presumed authority can be quite misleading. The only presumed authority is the ego. The ego may be sincere, may even be genuine, but is not necessarily nor generally so. Knowledge and understanding are relative at best, and so reliance on authority (real, claimed, or presumed) is inherently limiting. Just because a person has all of the “right” (claimed) (presumed) (even real) credentials, has published extensively on a subject, etc., does not in any way necessarily mean that that person’s beliefs are any more valid than any other person’s. A person may have considerable experience, knowledge, training, etc., and still not fully understand or comprehend significance. Thus nothing is necessarily true on the basis of someone’s claims or demonstrations.

The (spiritual) student is urged to think for himself (herself), in consideration of whatever ideas are presented, relying predominantly on his (her) inner sense (conscience) (the ring of truth), to consider all beliefs provisional (tentative) and relative.

† Commentary No. 1233

The Old and the New

The underlying force of evolution in consciousness is quite progressive. It urges growth and deepening through experience and expression, ever onward and upward. But growth is based on assimilation, and how a person approaches assimilation, how a person believes, what a person wants, determines the effectiveness of that assimilation and therefore the effectiveness of growth.

In this process of growth there is a natural struggle between old beliefs and old values and new beliefs and new values. As one grows, old beliefs and old values get challenged by new, broader experience, and new beliefs and new values enter the picture. But this does not mean that all old beliefs and old values are wrong, or that all new beliefs and new values are right. There also needs to be some

discrimination, some process of valuation in which the value of a belief or value, and the context of a belief or value, is placed into perspective. More properly, (genuine) new beliefs are more inclusive and allow for the context of old beliefs (and allow those old beliefs that continue to be relevant to continue as part of the belief system).

Much of what is progressive thinking is just a refinement of previously poorly-understood principles. For example, in theosophy there is a basis of knowledge pertaining to root races that has been misunderstood by many to infer racial superiority for the so-called "advanced" races or "advanced" natures. As the issue is more properly understood, there is not (properly) a rejection of the principle of root races, but a refinement of understanding and placing the role and contribution of each race into some broader perspective. Other teachings (and values) depend very much on the place of consciousness of the student, e.g., some students need teachers, others are better able to learn and grow without relying on external authorities. Some students are in the ego-building stage and others are in the ego-transcending stage.

But there is also an inherent struggle of ego and the desire of a person and how that desire affects the belief system and determines how a person relates to experience and opportunities. Thus many people who are otherwise metaphysically-minded and/or spiritually-oriented believe things because those beliefs support what they want to believe rather than what they need to believe in order to go beyond their current stage. Sometimes people will reject "old" teachings because the old teachings do not allow them to fully rationalize or justify what they want (e.g., the ego will naturally rationalize and justify anything that it needs to maintain control, and feeling threatened by spiritual practice (discipline) will naturally invent "new" values that allow a person to sustain the desired self-indulgence).

Teachings (knowledge) (principles) (understanding) (values) serve a purpose. Some teachings endure for the entire period of human evolution (e.g., the role and value of "love") while other teachings serve for a while and are then overtaken in significance as a person can understand a broader context (e.g., authoritarian religion is replaced by non-authoritarian (self-centered) "religion" which is subsequently replaced by genuine inner experience). There are no really "new" teachings, but only some that seem new. New teachings may be genuine

(progressive) (encouraging evolution in consciousness) or they may be simply whatever is needed to rationalize and justify one's desires (which is counter-evolutionary and inertial even while appearing to be "progressive"). Ignoring claims of external authority, the truly progressive student learns to discern truth for himself (herself), and beliefs and values are embraced according to their actual value in consciousness and context.

† Commentary No. 1241

The Occult Basis of Beliefs 1

One might wonder how various "fringe" (minority) (non-mainstream) (unconventional) beliefs become so convincing for those who embrace them. A person generally believes something that is self-evident or reinforced through culture, that is, substantiated by the senses, through experience, observation, education, conditioning, etc. Beyond that, a person generally believes something that is either appealing or reasonable or both, through wanting something to be true or by rationalizing its truth, particularly if there are (respected) others who embrace that belief. Beyond that, even, a person believes something because it can be discerned as true, or relatively true, through (enlightened) intuition.

But there is also a psychic or occult basis for beliefs. When a person believes something, that "belief" is actually created on non-physical levels, i.e., in substance on the astral (emotional) and concrete mental planes. If it is a strong belief, with emotional attachment or strong rationalization, then it tends to persist, otherwise it will gradually decay and eventually dissolve. If others believe the same thing or similarly, then that "belief" is reinforced in its psychic basis. Any such "belief" is then available to someone who is susceptible (either non-thinking or thinking along similar lines). In other words, there is a resonance.

This is also the way that paranoia works. Fear strengthens itself through attraction of resonant substance from (mainly) astral and (to some (lesser) extent) concrete mental levels. Whenever a thought-form (belief) is vitalized by emotion (e.g., fear) and/or reinforced through some collective embrace (larger numbers of people), then people who are susceptible to that "energy" are

naturally attracted to that belief and its associated peoples (cult). People who are well within the mainstream tend not to be susceptible, which also means that the learning experience (open-mindedness) is generally somewhat inhibited (in the mainstream). But people who are alienated in some way, through pain or suffering, through oppression, through emotional or mental illness, etc., from the mainstream, tend to be more amenable to unconventional beliefs because their psychic basis is different, they are more open to external impression, less conditioned by conventional thinking. This (being asleep on some fringe) is not necessarily any more (or less) healthy than being asleep in the mainstream.

Of course the main problems of beliefs are attachment (wanting to believe something) (feeling secure in "popular" beliefs) and lack of objectivity (lack of ability to discern the truth). So it is hard, even for the trained occultist, to discern the underlying truth from within the framework of his or her own conditioning and psychic environment. And there are so many vitalized (emotionalized or rationalized) thought-forms of various "feelings" and "ideas" that prey on the human personality consciousness. And some are actually quite valuable, e.g., the ideas of sexual equality and racial equality have always been "true" but were not widely embraced until their respective thought-forms became sufficiently vitalized so that sufficient numbers of people could "embrace" them comfortably.

But many of the "ideas" floating about the astral plane have no substantive basis, although each has a genesis. For example, there are many cataclysmic thought-forms that susceptible people can inadvertently embrace, that are based on historical events or imaginary events rather than the intended future. The wave of belief in alien contact, etc., similarly, has a basis in fictional (imaginary) accounts mixed up with the reality of deva lives.

The Occult Basis of Beliefs 2

Fictional accounts are actually “real” in the sense that they are created substantially and therefore “exist” on the astral and concrete mental planes, and as people read these accounts, or hear the story or watch the film, the astral-psyche basis is reinforced. In other words, there are aliens on the astral plane, but they are artificial creatures, created and vitalized through (human) thought-forms. And devas are real. But most people cannot discern the difference (and people who happen to believe something that is true are not therefore necessarily intelligent, mature, or insightful, and conversely, people who believe in something false are not therefore necessarily unintelligent, immature, or lacking insight) (the new age movement is almost filled with people who are generally (but not necessarily) gullible, inconsistently insightful, and relatively immature).

The problem is compounded by the fact that if someone believes something, even tentatively, then from that point onward there is a tendency to semi-consciously or unconsciously interpret experience and observation in a way that reinforces the belief. Coincidences tend to be over-interpreted, etc. Observations are distorted. That which does not support the belief is conveniently (unconsciously) discounted or ignored. This “halo” effect (and its opposite) or bias is really quite widespread. For example, people who are generally predisposed to see other people as fundamentally “good” will have their beliefs reinforced through experience, and are more likely to be not disappointed in others, while people who are predisposed to be pessimistic will similarly have much of their expectations fulfilled. Bias is inherently and creatively self-fulfilling.

Another problem is that of promotional ideas (e.g., advertising, preaching). Sometimes a company may create a market for its product through advertising, or manipulating the mass thought-form such that people perceive the need or desire for something that they would otherwise not have needed or desired. The promotion (promulgation) of religious or political beliefs (values) can follow the same pattern. Most people are emotionally-polarized and simply do not (much) think for themselves (even while believing that they are thinking for

themselves), and so can relatively easily be manipulated into believing something or buying something or embracing some practice or behavior.

This is fundamentally a problem of ethics, and the proper occultist is very averse to engaging in any form of advertising or promotion and (somewhat) averse even to the atmosphere created by advertising or promotion. The proper occultist (spiritual student with sufficient and proper training) is mentally or intuitively polarized, has learned to transcend much of his or her conditioning, and is simply not (very) susceptible to external (artificial) forces (thought-forms).

The solution of course is the cultivation of discernment and objectivity through non-attachment. If one is committed to discerning the truth, and refuses to have opinions, then it becomes progressively easier to see what is real and what is not real. But becoming free from the conditioning of mainstream or conventional "thinking" is not an easy undertaking. There is tremendous inertia in the form of mass (collective) thought-forms. And "waking-up" also constitutes a form of separation from the collective (lower) consciousness, and conveys difficulties in its own right. But there is a thought-form of "waking-up" that conveys a gentle encouragement to those who are susceptible, and it is necessarily growing.

† Commentary No. 1292

Concision

Throughout history there have been numerous attempts, some successful, some less so, to simplify religious and/or spiritual philosophy (theosophy) and practice into something relatively more concise and relatively easy (for most people) to apprehend. In most instances this process of concision is undertaken by one who does not fully comprehend the material (philosophy) (principles) (theosophy) sufficiently to avoid losing substance and focus in the process, and the result is relatively limited in its import to some cultural context. But in some cases there is inspiration and viable consequence (broader import).

Thus there have been a number of really quite successful concisions. Most are relatively concise on more than one level, i.e., a superficial concision for common

practice and a more subtle (esoteric) (more symbolic) framework for those who have the proper keys (i.e., who are suitably prepared through previous experience (conscience) (education and training) and who have a well-developed intuitive sense) and can go deeper into the material (without being burdened by detail or by superfluous words). Some poignant examples are the ten commandments (Christian), the ten precepts (Buddhist), the entire Bhagavad Gita (Hindu), and the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

Clearly some of these efforts are more concise than others, and some are relatively more natural and relatively more “inspired” than others. But what matters is the quality of the content and the relative simplicity of the teaching. A spiritual teaching that embraces many procedures and rituals and rules is more likely to be relatively ineffective, and the student is relatively more likely to get lost in the relatively superficial details, e.g., performing a ritual without really appreciating the context and purpose and import, or focusing on some practice to the exclusion of other (needed and meaningful) practices. Similarly, the depth and breadth of detailed theosophical teachings, while potentially conveying great value and potentially evoking much insight, is vastly more than one generally and really needs. At the other extreme, if one were to suggest that focusing on (God’s) love should suffice, as love is all-embracing, even though true, the ordinary student is not likely to see much beyond the superficial element of love to love in its higher, deeper sense. Thus focusing on love is necessary but not sufficient. And (comprehending) theosophy in its entirety is potentially sufficient but not necessary.

The golden rule, the ten commandments, and/or the ten precepts would seem to suffice for most people, while the Yoga Sutras (or something comparable) would seem to suffice for most deeper students. This is not to say that one concision necessarily works equally well for all students, but some are relatively more potent than others (for some people and circumstances), and some are relatively more generally potent than others. But anything (concision) that is relatively clear and concise is thereby relatively potent, and if the formula is both concise and comprehensive then so much the better.

There are of course both concisions (collections of precepts or aphorisms) and frameworks. Some frameworks are relatively natural than others, some are relatively compact, some are relatively comprehensive. Of the more natural,

more concise, more comprehensive frameworks is that of the seven rays. There is a depth and breadth to the seven rays, but there is also a fundamental (and fundamentally concise) quality to the seven rays. And concisions naturally derived within the seven rays framework are relatively more potent than others, especially if there is correlation with the three primary rays rather than with the seven rays in their broader context.

† Commentary No. 1293

Three Gates

One of the more potent concisions is based on the framework of three primary rays (i.e., in realization that there are three fundamental rays or energies in the universe and that all things belong to one or another of the three (seven) rays). The concision called "three gates" acknowledges and demonstrates what is ultimately necessary and sufficient to reach self-realization and communion (with the God-Christ (soul) within). Of course it is concise and simple only (and truly) in principle. In practice there is a lot of work (undertaking) to be realized within the three gates.

In a sense, all paths of evolution in consciousness lead ultimately to the same place, by various means and passages (methods and experiences), but generally embrace one or another of the three gates, for a while sufficient to achieve progress in that dimension, and ultimately through all three. Thus the three gates are in fact three dimensions or aspects, to be embraced sufficiently individually and (ultimately) collectively. It hardly matters in which order these are embraced or undertaken, as long as they are embraced and undertaken conscientiously and sufficiently. One must be earnest. Otherwise there will be only the appearance of progress and no real substance to the progress achieved. And while a student may resonate with one or another of the three rays (gates), the student must necessarily ultimately master all three.

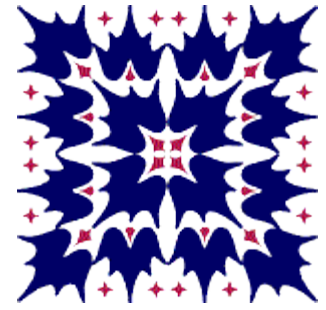
The first gate is humility and refers to the conquering of the ego. This process (effort) takes many lifetimes and is not even undertaken until the ego and intellect have been developed sufficiently to become a hindrance to further development. So while it is the first gate it is generally the last practice to be mastered. It is relatively more subtle than the other two gates, and much more

difficult in undertaking. Generally one must first have some considerable insight into the nature of ego and the courage (and ability) to be honest with oneself about one's own nature.

The second gate is honesty and refers to the commitment to truth that is necessary for self-realization. This too takes many lifetimes, and is complicated by the (self-interest of the) ego and the various deceptions and self-deceptions inherent in experience and expression in the lower worlds. It is not so easy for people to appreciate that being dishonest at any level is actually harmful, to oneself and to others. And that embracing honesty conscientiously is necessary in order to be able to comprehend the truth (in its deeper aspects). Not being honest places and sustains barriers to learning and comprehension of lessons. If a person is not wholly open and honest, then there are substantial limitations.

The third gate is harmlessness and refers to the fundamental behavioral dimension (precept) (ideal) of not harming anyone or any living creature. While it is the third gate it is generally the first practice to be undertaken and mastered, because it is the more readily straightforward to understand and embrace. Therefore most "religions" readily incorporate principles of harmlessness (e.g., the golden rule) and various associated ethics and morals. But the fundamental lesson (intended to be) conveyed is that hurting anyone else is hurting oneself. It is moderately helpful for one to embrace harmlessness. But it is especially helpful for one to embrace harmlessness with the depth and breadth of understanding that this dimension actually represents. Thus the process is developmental and the understanding is progressive. And many lives are required as one finally restores the balance (individually and collectively) (through fulfillment of karma).

Section 3.12



Reality

- The problem of reality is understanding the distinction between what is and what merely appears to be. The human lifewave is very much encumbered by its immersion in material (personality-centered) existence and the various glammers and illusions of individuality, though that immersion and sense of separation is also a means of experience and growth. Most people accept the world at face value and live superficial lives, but as growth in consciousness occurs the student begins to appreciate the relative glammers and illusions of this existence in the lower worlds and the struggle for freedom is begun. That struggle embraces deliberate growth in consciousness through more direct assimilation of experience, attention to the process and limitations of ordinary sense perception, a gradual realization of various levels of reality, and an eventual transcendence of all of these limitations. Thus the quest for realization.

Reality 1

The problem of reality is understanding the distinction between what is and what appears to be. The problem is compounded by a number of factors, including individual and common perception, the nature (illusion) of objective existence, and the lack of objectivity in subjective existence. Reality is defined simply enough, as the quality or state of being real, the totality of real things and events, something that is neither derivative nor dependent but exists necessarily. What is real refers to what is not artificial, fraudulent, illusory, or apparent; what is genuine, occurring in fact, necessarily existent, having no imaginary part; what is fundamental or essential. Reality implies agreement between what a thing seems to be and what it is, while truth implies conformity to what is real. In a higher sense, truth means actuality, a transcendent fundamental, spiritual reality.

A more proper definition of reality (in the context of esoteric philosophy) allows for the differentiation (relativeness) of reality, so that lesser realities can be derivative, dependent, and not necessarily existent, for much that is commonly accepted as real is indeed unreal relative to some intrinsic reality. The world illusion (of objective reality) complicates matters very much, for the manifested universe is inherently deceptive, and all who incarnate or manifest themselves therein immerse themselves in that massive illusion. The potency of that illusion is considerable, for it is essentially complete and self-consistent, albeit necessarily superficially so, but in a deeper sense, it is as insufficient as all things are short of embracing some totality.

All things in the lesser objective domain (physical, emotional, and mental worlds) exist necessarily as derivative and dependent things. Everything in the lesser domain is merely transient and temporary. The problem of proof requires that all facts be merely accepted as facts (or not as the case may be), with no fact being provable (beyond some level of belief or consensus). In the relative sense, even that which is imagined consciously to be is real on its level (i.e., what is imagined exists as an imagined existence). But the fact of imagined existence should not be confused with existence free of imagination (except in the sense that all that exists exists only as imagined existence).

The range of realities can be grouped into three aspects: personal reality, common reality, and the underlying or intrinsic reality. All are complicated by perception but none more so than personal reality. Personal reality refers to the sense of what is real (what is perceived to be real) by an individual. An individual sense of reality is determined by that individual's experience, character, consciousness, beliefs, emotional bias, mental bias, conditioning, degree of acceptance of some common reality, etc. The premise that "any given thing is to one such as it appears to be to that one, and is to another such as it appears to be to that other" asserts the (relative) reality of personal perception, but that (personal) reality depends as much or more on the filtering function of perception and the common reality of mass consciousness as it does (if at all) on any intrinsic reality.

Due to individual differences, the range of personal realities is vast, with varying degrees and types of bias, varying degrees and balance of objective and subjective factors, varying degrees of breadth and depth of perception and understanding. All are real on their own terms, albeit not necessarily or generally real in any greater sense. But who can say in truth that any one personal reality is any more or less real than another, for each serves a purpose within the grand illusion and evolutionary scheme.

† Commentary No. 440

Reality 2

And who can say verily that any personal reality is any more or less real than some common reality, for the common reality is necessarily as much a part of the grand illusion of material and psychological existence as any personal reality is likely to be. A common reality, being somewhat objective and somewhat subjective, is simply the intersection set of personal realities for some group or species. That some (or all) things may appear different to different observers and/or different from different vantage points (e.g., microscopic reality versus macroscopic reality) should be as obvious as that some (other) things may appear the same to all observers in a particular group (i.e., those who share

the same common reality (by choice or incidentally by virtue of absorption in that common reality)).

What is real for one (some) is not necessarily real for another (others), the entire domain of personal reality being as a whole, less real than some intrinsic reality and no more nor less real than some common reality. "For every putatively veridical perception there is a possible corresponding illusory one." One simply cannot discern in any absolute sense between a particular object and the illusion of that object's existence and character, since neither perception nor reasoning is absolute or infallible (reasoning invariably requires assumptions). It is essentially wrong (misleading) to assert what something is (or has); it is more proper to assert what something appears to be (or have). All observations (mentally and otherwise) merely evoke (personal) evidence that is inconclusive (albeit possibly compelling).

Knowledge is in this sense therefore not real. One cannot know anything with any absolute certainty. One can only perceive and/or realize some relative truth within the context of some personal and/or common reality. Many observables (attributes) of things are both relative and incidental rather than intrinsic. What intrinsic properties may exist cannot be discerned as such in any absolute sense. So even intrinsic reality, albeit more real than any personal or common reality, is necessarily relative (if only in its appearance).

Intrinsic reality is by definition all-inclusive (i.e., consistent with all things microscopic through macroscopic to macrocosmic) and therefore of much greater dimensionality than any being in consciousness is capable. Intrinsic reality embraces the illusion of all that appears to be real in consciousness, the important thing being that there exists an intrinsic reality of which all of the manifested universe and the domain of human consciousness is merely an imagined (presumed) reality. Of course that intrinsic reality is unknowable (and inherently unprovable), but it is approachable, by degrees, to the extent that personal and common reality (illusion) is overcome.

If one accepts the senses and their products for what they are (relatively) (rather than what they appear to be) (i.e., for senses and sense-impressions, necessarily inconclusive and heavily biased and therefore of only limited utility), and if one accepts reasoning for what it is (relatively) (also biased and inherently

inconclusive), and if one recognizes the illusory nature of personal and common reality (the great deception of substantial existence, separateness, etc.), then one can begin to free oneself from these limitations, utilizing them only in the practical context, turning to the higher consciousness (greater reality) of the soul, and gradually embracing (intuitively and yet still necessarily inconclusively) higher and greater levels (degrees) (extent) of intrinsic reality. Though the absolute is unattainable, the challenge of approach remains the noble quest.

† Commentary No. 541

Consensus

Consensus is defined as group unanimity or general agreement in sentiment and belief. In the lower sense, consensus implies conscious or unconscious rational (or emotional) agreement (on some subject) or acquiescence to such an agreement generally held by virtually all of those concerned (in contrast to a simple majority which leaves a minority relatively unsatisfied). In the higher sense, consensus implies unanimous intuitively-realized agreement (based upon group realization rather than the rationally or emotionally persuasive processes of consensus in the lower sense). The significance of consensus is three-fold: (1) consensus is the next evolutionary step beyond democratic processes, (2) consensus (in the higher sense) requires the participation of the soul (or more properly, the non-participation of the (independent) personality), and (3) consensus is inherently a group phenomenon rather than a composite of individual processes.

Although democratic processes are (potentially) significantly better (more fair (effective)) than non-democratic non-consentaneous processes, democratic processes are not as fair and as effective as consentaneous processes (i.e., the achievement of consensus through realization). Democratic processes can be abused, while consentaneous processes (in the higher sense) cannot (simply because in the higher sense the personality is unable to serve separative causes). Of course a real consensus in the higher sense cannot be achieved by a group of people having widely differing values or sentiment (because such a group is in general a group of individuals lacking alignment of souls and personalities). Thus the overall quality of consciousness of the people (group) determine its

ability to embrace effective democracy (one that is not dominated by majority or minority (special) interests, but one that embraces what is (apparently) best for all) or (with greater quality of consciousness) effective government by consensus in the higher sense.

An effective (proper) consensus can only be achieved where the personalities are sufficiently refined to permit the soul to qualify the process and where virtually all of the participants are involved at that (relatively high) level and quality of consciousness. This does not preclude differences of relative values or sentiments, but it does require (evoke) that all of the basic (important) values and sentiments be commonly held (which of course is always the case where individuals are aligned with their respective souls (since all (human) souls share the same basic (overall) (inherent) quality)). The differences have to do with variabilities in talent, responsibilities, etc., but where consentaneous processes are the general rule (in the higher sense) then the differences are ever complementary and therefore inherently constructive.

The practical significance of consensus for the spiritual student today (in any era in which consensual processes in the higher sense are not prevalent in the secular or mundane world (which would not be secular or mundane if consensual processes in the higher sense were prevalent)) rests in the role of metaphysical (theosophical) (esoteric) (spiritual) groups to the extent that they participate in or are responsive to hierarchical qualification (the qualification of the evolutionary plan) and are (therefore) self-governing by effective (intelligent and intuitive) consensus (where individual, rational, or emotional positions and/or processes are not present).

A consensus can be general or specific (limited in scope) (character), (relatively) positive and constructive or negative and destructive (separative). It is for the spiritual student to encourage constructive (realistic) consensus.

Consensus Reality

Life in the lower worlds is very much a matter of reality by consensus, that default reality being established and sustained over the aeons of subhuman and human experience. Those who are subjected to the lower reality (i.e., those who incarnate) have little choice than to participate to some degree in the lower, practical reality (and therefore in the lessons to be learned or experience to be gained there). The basis of the (lower) consensus reality is the deeply ingrained belief in the reality (preponderance) of material existence (that belief resides in the material (composite) substance of the lower worlds and almost completely enamors (deludes) every personality that has not (yet) been touched by the soul (called toward the path)).

The (lower) consensus reality is sustained by physical, emotional, and mental attachment to (or through) material things (including the personality vehicles). Any continuing belief in material reality as the only substantial or meaningful perspective merely serves to sustain. Although the lower (material) (physical) (objective) reality serves a purpose nonetheless evolutionary, it must be overcome and transcended before any higher reality can be entered or achieved. This process of transcendence (of material and personal (personality centered) reality) means that all of the ages-long attachments to material existence must (gradually) eventually be loosened and released. The process is complicated by the student's need to remain functionally effective in the lower consensus reality (of the bulk of humanity) while gradually embracing more and more effectively (simultaneously) the (higher) consensus reality (which is based upon conscious existence (reality) rather than material existence (reality)).

The perspective of a preponderance of consciousness as reality (vice material substance) is the practical consensus reality of the spiritual path, at least prior to liberation (graduation) from the human domain. In each case (material and conscious existence) the body of thought and feeling sustained by the two groups (one within the other) contributes directly to the nature and progress (development) of the implied consensus. The material consensus is almost entirely involuntary, while the conscious consensus is almost entirely voluntary. As the student evolves and as consciousness gains the upper hand over the

material nature, the student becomes (gradually) more and more responsive to the (quality and character) of the higher nature.

Significant stumbling blocks however exist within the lower field of (material) consciousness (lower consensus reality) as those with more potent minds (yet not spiritually responsive) naturally (selfishly) manipulate the lower (default) consensus (i.e., as ideas or beliefs are imposed via the (passive) consensus). Those who impose themselves (or their ideas) deliberately upon others (through the lower field of consciousness) are courting the ways of the dark path, particularly where what is imposed is not even believed by the imposing party but merely projected for some presumed personal (corporate) benefit. Every imposition of belief, value, etc. is a violation of freedom, particularly where the consensus reality is manipulated (consciously or otherwise). Consequently, all who are vulnerable (i.e., who are enamored by material (passive) existence) must be encouraged (not imposingly) to think for themselves (which leads eventually to freedom from material and personal attachments) and to embrace the reality of conscious (active) existence.

The consensus reality inexorably evolves as those who contribute to it evolve in character, quality, and temperament. Those who are able to bridge effectively between the two realities are the encouraging force for freedom.

† Commentary No. 580

Underlying Reality and Locality

One of the problems of local objective manifestation is the distortion of (perceived) reality that accompanies local manifestation. That distortion is non-linear and has both (relatively) stable and dynamic components. This complicates the process of perception (and its interpretation) and this also complicates the process of manifestation relative to the plan or pattern of manifestation, because of the apparent (induced) inconsistencies between the pattern and its manifestation (local reality) on objective levels.

The spiritual student and (more so) the esoteric student bridge between the underlying reality of cosmic (universal) manifestation (subjective, higher reality)

and the outer, objective manifestation masked as it is with great illusion and misleading appearance. The underlying reality is the truth of cosmic manifestation. The distortion of that reality is the illusion (appearance) of separateness, physical substantiality, etc. Underlying reality and all of the associated laws and processes are present nonetheless in every objective (local) manifestation, but that (higher) reality is masked in the normal (objective) illusion (perception).

The local distortion of the underlying reality has two aspects, one a matter of perception (the induced, imaginary part) and the other more substantial (the real part, being an actual distortion or modification of processes in manifestation). The spiritual student needs to understand both aspects and consider their implications, in order to become (and then remain) relatively free from the misleading delusions of objective existence. The distortion in perception is a matter of illusion induced by material existence and experience by material means, compounded by a self-consciousness (largely or partially) unaware of the underlying, more permanent reality and therefore deceived by the appearance of life and things and events in a material world. The solution comes, in degrees, as the student learns of the soul and the higher reality, qualifies the process of perception (through refinement of the personality), and begins to recognize the otherwise hidden (subtle) forces at work on the various planes of consciousness.

The real distortion is another matter entirely and requires considerable and impersonal insight in order to recognize its extent and nature, the duration of the implied modifications, and the consequences of such distortion (modification) in the overall balance and plan. The laws of manifestation (e.g., karma) cannot be compromised, in the long term, or substantially, but they can and are modified to some extent locally, by the perception and beliefs (perceived reality) of the minds and emotions of human beings absorbed in the mundane (objective) world. In a sense, the extent to which some belief is commonly held (no matter that the belief may be inconsistent with the reality of universal manifestation and spiritual existence) constitutes a force for inductive modification of the underlying reality on mundane levels, so that inconsistencies (injustices) may appear to exist.

Yet in spite of induced inconsistencies, the overall balance cannot be upset. For every (apparent) inconsistency (which is a force in itself), another

(compensating) force is induced to (eventually) restore the local balance. The further from the intended balance humanity proceeds (in perception and in local reality) the greater will be the compensating forces. Though local manifestation (distortion) of cosmic laws may indeed be effected, the measure of distortion is very, very small when viewed overall (cosmically), and in time all justice (merit) is served.

† Commentary No. 885

The Great Realization

The great message or realization is two-fold: On the “down” side (internal realization) it is the message of the truth about oneself, that each person is wholly accountable for what he or she is and for everything that happens to him or her, that virtually everyone is asleep in the maya (glamour) (illusion) of materialism, duality, ego, etc., and that in order to achieve awakening there is a very great price indeed to be paid. On the “up” side (external realization) it is the message of the truth about life, the world, evolution, unity, momentum, etc., and the Way to enlightenment. Of course from the higher perspective there is no “down” side at all as both realizations afford progress and the inner realization is actually priceless.

While (relatively) many are eager to embrace the message concerning the world and the path, few are willing to take seriously the message concerning accountability and self-delusion, and therefore few are able to overcome these limitations and the inertia of their own personalities and embark upon the path (though many deceive themselves into thinking they are taking the path seriously). Most people who think they are on the path are just as much asleep as the average person, not being aware of the truth about themselves and not even being aware that they are largely asleep. Accepting the teachings is one thing and involves merely intellectual understanding. Living in accordance with the teachings is another thing altogether and involves a great deal of effort and dedication. The key is determination to be absolutely honest in all matters (even mentally and emotionally), for otherwise it is not even possible to awaken from the lethargy of personality-centeredness.

True realization (self-realization) is a matter both of internal and external realization, simultaneously achieved as one consciously reconciles the inner and outer aspects. One must not only be honest and humble, but one must also live accordingly. That honesty and humility must be expressed in one's aura and consciousness as well as behaviorally. The requisite openness to the truth must actually be an active openness in order to overcome the habits in thinking and feeling that are natural to anyone who is thinking and feeling for oneself. In short, one may have beliefs but not opinions or other attachments. One can embrace the esoteric philosophy in its various aspects, one can even "know" fully the truth thereof, but one must not be attached even to that truth, which is, after all, only relative and conditional. As one grows, one must be willing to embrace relatively higher truth, and that means not being encumbered by the lower truth (however noble it may be).

Once one accepts the truth about oneself in the sense of accountability and self-delusion, then one is relatively better able to properly and fully realize the "up" side of inner realization, that of oneness (God-ness). If one embraces oneness intellectually, without accepting conscious accountability and the determination to progressively overcome one's own self-delusion, then that sense of oneness will remain merely intellectual and actually serve as a barrier to further progress (i.e., one who thinks he knows the truth is limited thereby). In other words, it is not what is known that matters, it is one's character and temperament and values that matter. The proper character and temperament for the spiritual student is intelligent humility and openness to realization.

The internal and external realizations thus go hand-in-hand. Truth is gradually and progressively revealed as one fits (and refits) oneself for that (continual) revelation. Knowledge must be transmuted into understanding, and understanding must be transmuted into wisdom.

Levels of Reality

One of the relatively important notions associated with the esoteric philosophy is that of reality and illusion. In order to overcome the delusion implied in physical-plane existence, one must learn to make a distinction between that which is real or of a higher (spiritual) nature and that which is unreal or of a lower (material) nature. One must necessarily consciously realize the distinction between the soul and its personality (and understand their relationship) before one can realistically hope to achieve any real sense of union with that higher self. And one must necessarily consciously realize the distinction between the apparent reality of the lower worlds (objective (?) reality) (physical, emotional, and mental planes of consciousness) and the higher reality of atma-buddhi-manas (subjective (?) reality).

And yet, ultimately, one must realize that the higher reality includes the lower reality. The higher reality simply places the lower in a more proper perspective. When one says that there is no space, what one really means is that space exists at a lower level of reality than not-space. The reason for using terminology or expressions such as “illusion” and “the human personality is not real” (respectively) is that the human mind tends necessarily to interpret everything literally and unconsciously (mindlessly) and to “think” in a binary, linear, exclusive (separative) manner. Merely intellectual (superficial) understanding of something does not suffice (does not endure and is not sufficient). By “thinking” of the lower world as illusory (which it is), the student is assisted in refocusing the attention of the mind (and consciousness) on higher things. By making strong statements such as “this is not real” one may be able to convey a sufficient shock to the habits (and assumptions (conditioning)) of the lower self (mind) (ego) (personality) such that the underlying conditioning is weakened and eventually overcome.

A more accurate but less effective notion is that physical reality is a legitimate reality. But things are not generally what they appear to be. Physical reality is not what it seems, not what the mind is conditioned into thinking it is. The mind that embraces physical reality as the only legitimate reality (i.e., materialistic thinking common to most human cultures) is thereby inhibited

from understanding any higher or deeper reality. It does not (should not) matter (to the spiritual student) that the vast majority of humanity are deluded with regard to physical reality (there are lessons to be learned in that delusion). But the student should not be intimidated by that majority thinking. In the context of evolution in consciousness, it is crucial for the spiritual student to overcome his or her conditioning, to be able to progressively embrace higher realities.

Reality is actually a plenum of differentiated realities, from one perspective a whole, from most perspectives discrete aspects of a continuum. Physical reality is simply the (apparently) furthest (furthestmost) from absolute reality (which may actually be only conceptually absolute). Much of the spiritual practice is given to overcoming the delusions of the senses with regard to the lower (physical, emotional, and intellectual) realities.

As these delusions are overcome (as the consciousness of the student is refined and the conditioning of the student is transcended), higher realities can be embraced, and, more importantly, the energy or qualification of those higher realities can be brought "down" into the everyday life of the spiritual student. Thus, self-realization implies contact with and evocation of the energy of the higher reality of the (higher) (God) self.



