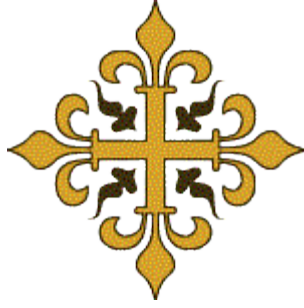


The Upper Triad Material

Topical Issue 5.51

Psychology 1

The Science of Personality



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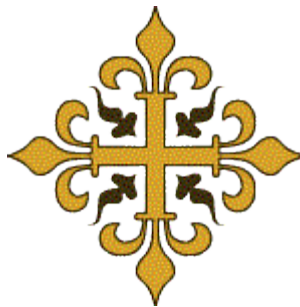
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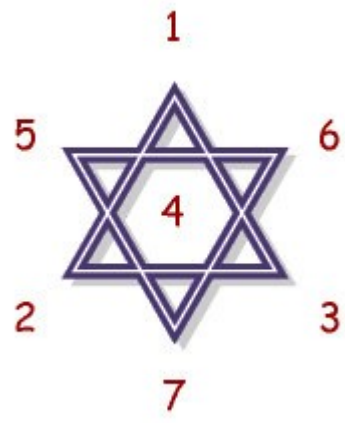
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Chapter 5.51

Psychology 1



The Science of Personality

- Psychology is the philosophy and science of mind and behavior, and includes the analysis and evaluation of the individuality and the manner of its expression. Orthodox (academic) psychology generally considers the mind to be the source of a person's psychological constitution and expression.
- Metaphysical and esoteric psychology considers the soul to be the source (individuality) and the mind (personality) to be the mechanism for expression for the soul. But the soul is the interface between spirit and matter, and a great deal depends upon the relationship (relative balance or interaction) between the soul and its personality.

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Psychology is the philosophy and science of mind and behavior, and includes the analysis and evaluation of the individuality and the manner of its expression. Orthodox (academic) psychology generally considers the mind to be the source of a person's psychological constitution and expression. Metaphysical and esoteric psychology considers the soul to be the source (individuality) and the mind (personality) to be the mechanism for expression for the soul. But the soul is the interface between spirit and matter, and a great deal depends upon the relationship (relative balance or interaction) between the soul and its personality.

Modern psychology is primarily the psychology of the mind and the personality, treating the personality as being more or less self-contained and with some external influence or factors. As such, psychology is somewhat limited in its scope of effectiveness to persons who are living strictly on a personality level (as most do). Treating the personality as the center of consciousness, however, neglects the karmic factor and a world of internal causes (the soul) which is increasingly significant as consciousness evolves. When the relationship between the soul and the personality is properly recognized, then the science of psychology shall be much more useful.

A major key to the higher (esoteric) psychology is the nature of the seven rays and the relationship of the seven rays to the soul and to the personality. The basic premise of esoteric psychology (as applied to human nature) is that each element of the human being is qualified by one or another of the seven fundamental rays (qualities or energies). The soul ray qualifies the higher nature (atma-buddhi-manas) and the personality ray (provided the personality is relatively integrated) qualifies the lower nature (the mind, the emotions, and the physical body). As the individual evolves, the soul ray (the primary) comes to dominate (uplift) the personality ray (the secondary). Thus the character of the soul ray is manifested through the character of the personality ray.

Another key to metaphysical psychology is the degree of activity of and the relationships between the various psychic centers. There are seven major

centers (chakras) within the human form; these centers may be active or inactive (or partially active), individually or collectively. The active centers may be under control or out of control (or somewhere in between), voluntarily or involuntarily. Each center contributes to the psychology of the individual. Improper psychic stimulation is the (intermediate) cause of many psychological (personality) disorders. With higher consciousness (based on experience and spiritual maturity) comes the understanding and control of the various centers (and oneself), so that (personality) resistance to the emerging energies of the soul is overcome and the nature of the soul is effectively manifested.

This mystical or metaphysical psychology is the science of consciousness, which considers all of these relationships and the effects of consciousness (or the lack thereof) on behavior. The conscious mind or waking-consciousness has a wide range of relative states of consciousness. The undeveloped, unevolved, or undisciplined mind often works on an instinctual, subconscious, or self-centered level. The highly evolved (developed and disciplined) mind often works on an intuitive or super-conscious level. If the waking-consciousness can function in rapport with the soul, the infusion of energy (quality) can provide a very different (higher) domain for psychology to consider. It is the quality of consciousness that determines the degree of interaction between mind and soul (or inversely), as the greater consciousness is manifested.

† Commentary No. 1125

Metaphysics and Psychology

There are two great perspectives regarding the human experience, one being the metaphysical perspective (conventional and psychological) and the other being the perspective of psychology (conventional and metaphysical). The relationship of the two perspectives is largely complementary in focus and emphasis, but in the broader sense metaphysics includes psychology while (conventional) psychology generally does not include metaphysics.

The metaphysical perspective properly focuses on the framework for human evolution in consciousness, with consideration of the underlying principles and the metaphysical reality (the human being in the context of various planes of

consciousness). The metaphysical perspective is properly based on direct realization (observation, participation, experience, understanding) without recourse to theories or statistics. Unfortunately, most people lack the experience and training that allows direct realization (clear perception and understanding of underlying reality) and therefore most people experience indirectly, on the basis of appearances (the objective world) and without benefit of understanding the (metaphysical) principles upon which life in these (lower) worlds is based. Conventional metaphysics is a matter of underlying principles (not theory) and direct perception, while psychological metaphysics is a matter of perceiving human nature within a metaphysical framework (in principle, through observation, without recourse to theories or interpretation). Yet few are able to perceive clearly, metaphysically or otherwise, due to inherent biases and personal consciousness.

Psychology is a conceptual framework and means of attempting to understand human behavior on the basis of observed experience. Unfortunately, observed experience is necessarily superficial. And the processes by which superficial experience is considered lead to generalizations based on limited experience and understanding. While many of these generalizations (theories) have a basis in actuality, they are rarely (if ever) generally applicable, even if they appear to be for most people in a given cultural context (the context in which the assumptions were made and conclusions drawn). Thus conventional psychology is fundamentally speculative, as behavioral observations are interpreted in the context of theories and possibilities.

Conventional psychology is an arena with considerable limitations, yet helpful in many ways (particularly if those limitations are appreciated and taken into consideration), while metaphysical psychology is a much more potent arena by virtue of its appreciation for the underlying principles and its lack of generalization (application of theory). Being based on underlying reality (cause and effect relationships, the seven planes of consciousness, the evolutionary framework, etc.) rather than upon superficial experience and interpretations, metaphysical psychology offers the strength (validity) of both metaphysics and psychology, without the various (more substantial) limitations of conventional psychology.

The fundamental limitation of metaphysical psychology (and metaphysics) remains that of human perception and the attendant biases, while the fundamental limitation of conventional psychology is the recourse to speculation and interpretation (compounded wherever assumptions are made (further compounded wherever one is not consciously aware that assumptions have even been made)). And yet, as one deepens in consciousness, and these human limitations are gradually overcome, it becomes possible to understand more and more of human nature, in the context of metaphysical reality.

† Commentary No. 1126

Psychology 2

Psychology is the science of personality. It is the philosophy and science of mind and behavior, and includes the analysis and evaluation of the individuality and the manner of its expression. Orthodox (academic) (conventional) psychology generally considers the mind to be the source of a person's psychological constitution and expression. Metaphysical and esoteric psychology consider the soul to be the source (individuality) and the mind (personality) to be the mechanism for expression of the soul. But the soul is the interface between spirit and matter, and a great deal depends upon the relationship (relative balance or interaction) between the soul and its personality.

There is considerable confusion in conventional psychology (as well as considerable and valuable insight) due to unconscious assumptions regarding human nature. For example, many people perceive the mind and the brain as synonymous, without appreciating the (metaphysical) reality of their distinction, namely that the brain is a physical instrument, subject to physical (biochemical) forces, while the mind is an altogether different instrument, on the mental plane, which utilizes the brain to some extent in expressing itself. Another source of confusion comes from the notions of soul and personality, where many people perceive the soul as simply the underlying or deeper emotional nature, rather than the more noble (transcendental) individuality that merely influences the personality to the extent that the personality is responsive.

Conventional psychology is the science of personality, primarily because conventional psychologists have not yet discovered the metaphysical reality (underlying evolutionary forces, distinctions between mind and brain, soul and personality, etc.). Metaphysical psychology broadens the perspective by including the nature of the soul and its relationship to the personality. The problem then is that most people are absorbed at the personality level so that the soul has little if any presence (influence). People are simply not (generally) responsive to the higher Self. Thus conventional psychology has some validity for most people (given the caveats that psychological theories may or may not be true and that even if (partially) true they may or may not be generally applicable). People tend to be individualistic. It is a characteristic engendered by the sojourn in the world of matter (personality) (ego). It is a characteristic that means that people do not (all) conform to psychological expectations, at least not necessarily, not generally, and at least not (necessarily or generally) in the same ways. It is also a characteristic that needs to be tempered and eventually transcended as higher reality is embraced.

Psychology then is the science of understanding the personality nature (life expressed through consciousness in the lower worlds), including all of the various conditioning forces and factors (heredity and environment) and the means for overcoming or working through these circumstances. The study of psychology includes family, group, and cultural contexts. It includes the whole process of learning from experience, of deepening and growing. It includes the development of the personality as an effective instrument for living and working in the external world, and, in metaphysical psychology, it includes self-transformation and transcending the personality.

Psychology is (potentially) valuable both in terms of encouraging self-adjustment (growth, adaptation) and in terms of adjustment to external circumstances (group and cultural contexts) (right human relations).

Esoteric Psychology

For practical purposes there are four major dimensions or levels of psychology. There is conventional (orthodox) (academic) psychology, which is based primarily on worldly experience, observations pertaining to human behavior, theories, conclusions, etc. There is transpersonal psychology which goes beyond the conventional and takes into account a broader framework. There is metaphysical psychology, which is based, in principle, upon direct observation of the human condition (thoughts and feelings) (aura) and intuitive insight. And there is esoteric psychology, which places all of psychology (human nature) (experience and expression) in the context of the underlying seven rays. Each of the four dimensions of psychology have considerable value, if placed in a proper perspective, with appreciation for the implied limitations of each.

Conventional psychology is the psychology of the personality and relies mainly on superficial observations (generally subject to considerable human bias). Metaphysical psychology is also the psychology of the personality, but it relies more on clairvoyant or intuitive observations and underlying metaphysical principles (and is also generally subject to considerable human bias). But esoteric psychology is the psychology of the whole person, including the monad and the soul and the relationships between the three aspects of the human being. Esoteric psychology focuses primarily on the soul and its evolution in consciousness through its instrument (the human personality (mind) (ego)). The only real limitation of esoteric psychology is the relative ability of the human being to apprehend the energies and principles (reality) upon which it is based.

The problem or limitation of conventional psychology is that it relies on superficial observations (bias) and generally does not take into account the underlying metaphysical reality. Metaphysical psychology goes beyond conventional psychology and takes the underlying reality into account but is still limited by interpretation (bias) and understanding (context). Esoteric psychology goes beyond both conventional and metaphysical psychology and embraces the whole person and the evolutionary (energetic) context. Esoteric psychology provides insight into the relationships between personality and soul

and monad, between the person (personality) in incarnation and the underlying purpose of life.

While esoteric psychology is ageless and timeless, and has been known to esoteric students for aeons, it has been popularized in more recent times through the books of Alice A. Bailey, particularly through A Treatise on the Seven Rays in its five volumes. Of course the “esoteric psychology” is no longer esoteric, but it does still represent the breadth and depth of understanding human nature in the context of the spiritual path (evolution in consciousness) and places the human being (experience and expression) in the broader context of purposive manifestation.

The basis of esoteric psychology is that everything within the manifested universe is composed of and related to one or another or several or all of seven great qualifying rays (energies). The human being relates to all seven rays, but in particular ways, and progressively. As the student evolves through various cycles, in consciousness, the student gradually develops each of the seven ray energies (components) until the student has mastered all seven (in the limited context of the human state). There are relationships between the rays. And there are ray relationships between the various aspects of the human being.

† Commentary No. 1211

Behavior

Behavior is the manner in which a person conducts himself (herself), how a person acts, functions, responds, etc., to the various circumstances of consciousness and experience in the world. Behavior and conduct imply that there are underlying reasons or underlying forces (motivation) which encourage or demand various behavioral expressions.

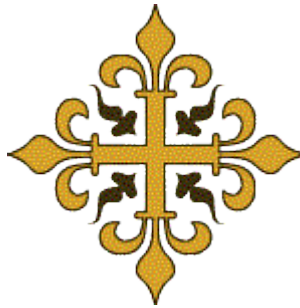
Much of behavior is a matter of conditioning, through heredity and upbringing (family and cultural environment) as well as through subsequent experience, but there is also the factor of consciousness (quality) and the extent to which a person is actually conscious (awake) to his or her actual circumstances. Much of behavior (for most people) is based on widespread (collective) conditioning

and is mechanical in nature. For a given confluence of external and internal forces, people who are conditioned tend to behave consistently (mechanically) and without thinking. For those (vast majority) who are almost entirely conditioned, even thinking is mechanical and the thoughts embraced are not really one's own.

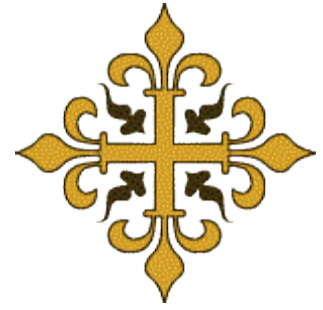
The astral plane is filled with emotional energies and forces (emotions and feelings) that impinge upon the aura and most people simply react to those energies and forces without being aware of them, and without being aware that they are reacting based upon conditioning and external forcing. Similarly, the concrete mental plane is filled with various energies and forces (thought-forms) that (conditioned) people appropriate without really thinking, i.e., through appropriation one thinks that one is thinking when actually one is simply being reactive and mechanical. This is the basis for the (widespread) manipulation of people's behavior (feelings) (thinking) by those who would influence others for their own ends (sincerely or otherwise) (e.g., some merchants, sales people, politicians, religious leaders, etc.). Of course those who manipulate others are also asleep and proceeding according to their conditioning. Thus for most people, behavior is a matter of mechanicalness and conformity, even while there is or appears to be behavioral diversity. But as people evolve, there is gradually developed more autonomy, more freedom from conditioning, less reactivity (mechanicalness) and more intelligent responsiveness.

Much of conditioning is circumstantial in the sense that the circumstances of one's heredity, and upbringing, the culture in which one is developed as a personality, etc., and so, much of behavior is consequential. One's family, culture, etc., exhibit expectations and one tends to accommodate those expectations non-consciously. Conditioned behavior is essentially passive, even though one may "think" otherwise. But as one emerges from the conditioned state, gradually, one begins to realize the extent of one's own conditioning, the extent to which behavior (and feelings) (and thinking) is conditioned and mechanical (and based in the ego), and then, and only then, one can actually begin to deal with it. This does not mean that one's behavior necessarily changes, only that the basis for behavior changes. Instead of behaving mechanically, one behaves more consciously, more deliberately, taking more conscious responsibility for one's actions on various levels.

And yet, as one passes beyond this stage (conscious and deliberate behavior), one becomes more and more non-active. One does not go back to passive (conditioned) behavior, but one learns to transcend the acquired tendency for active behavior. One then learns to flow with something higher than oneself, rather than flowing unconsciously with mass consciousness (mundane absorption).



Section 5.511



Acceptance

- Acceptance is one of the challenges of life in the lower worlds. Finding the balance between action and inaction, finding non-action, is not so easy while being immersed in the ways of the world.

Acceptance

One of the problems of life in the lower worlds of human incarnation is the place of acceptance. Throughout much of human evolution in consciousness the human being is acted upon primarily by external forces (evoked indirectly through one's own actions (karma) (thoughts, feelings, behavior)) which encourage the person to be actively involved in externalized experience. The resulting activity (interactions with the flow of life) then engenders further experience, and through this almost never-ending (recurring) cycle one progresses in consciousness as experience is assimilated into knowledge (understanding) (wisdom).

But as the student approaches the spiritual path, and throughout the student's passage along the path, and beyond, the student is driven increasingly by internal forces. The student learns to accept outer circumstances as a reflection of inner condition in consciousness (and an indication of karmic consequences holding the intended lessons). Thus the student focuses on the inner condition and accepts whatever occurs in the outer world. The student is encouraged to be more circumspect with regard to entanglements, eventually living in accordance with the flow without any stress or conflict therewith. One can certainly continue to act or function in the world, in fact more and more effectively, but harmlessly and honestly, and with increasing subtlety.

The problem of acceptance is the problem of action (including inaction) versus non-action. If one simply responds, without contrivance, to circumstances (non-reactively and non-egoistically and non-instinctively (i.e., not at the personality-centered level)) then one is in accord with the flow (Tao) and there are no complications inherent in that non-action. Complications may be inherent in the merited contemporary circumstances, but not by virtue of one's contemporary non-active responsiveness. But most people (and most spiritual students) are not wholly able to function so dispassionately, so comfortably. Most people have desires and naturally seek to fulfill those desires. Thus until the student fully and properly achieves desirelessness, the student must perforce interact more substantially with the flow. And any action or inaction is therefore inconsistent with the flow (in its higher, deeper sense). Only non-

action (non-active, non-passive acceptance) is wholly consistent with the flow (few can distinguish between action and non-action).

The dilemma of desire is perplexing to many. If one performs action (creatively) in order to bring about the desired conditions or circumstances, then one is not living in accord with the flow in the higher, deeper, more noble sense. Yet if one does not perform action then the desired conditions or circumstances may not be realized. Because energy follows thought (feeling) (behavior), every action or inaction is creative in the personal sense (while non-action is creative in the impersonal sense). And this action-ness creates entanglement. Yet, for the vast preponderance of humanity and even for the majority of spiritual students, this is exactly what is needed in order to progress (development in consciousness) (fulfillment of karma). One generally engages in meaningful service based on motive long before one can simply serve effectively without motive (other than the non-motive of being drawn to live in accord with the flow).

The solution, for those who can embrace it, is to realize that the flow carries all that is needed, without calling for action or inaction, that any action simply complicates one's life in the lower worlds. In letting go of desires and other attachments, freedom and fulfillment is realized.

† Commentary No. 1088

Self-Acceptance

A major dimension of acceptance is self-acceptance. Much of the preliminary practice (practical philosophy) (psychology) of the spiritual path involves improving the lower self (personality), through purification, refinement, cultivation, non-cultivation, etc. And much of the historical (and even current) religious conditioning tends unfortunately toward disparagement of the lower self and undermining of self-esteem. The purpose of this focus is to encourage unfolding consciousness while precluding egoism, or at least while minimizing egoism so that the ego can be eventually and properly transcended. Only through refinement in consciousness can the student become more receptive and responsive to the higher Self.

While this focus on refinement of personality and preclusion of ego has considerable value in the context of the spiritual path, it necessarily presumes that one has properly developed the personality (ego) (mind) to the point where it can (potentially) serve as an effective instrument of the higher Self. What is generally needed is a balance that includes both a healthy measure of self-respect and a not inconsiderable measure of humility. Self-acceptance is an important ingredient in achieving this balance. If one attempts conscious refinement prematurely, then the "ego" is not secure enough with its own self-acceptance (acceptance of its own artificial nature) to be collaborative. Thus the ego tends to inhibit any attempts at refinement or preclusion (tempering of the ego nature).

One needs to be honest about one's condition in consciousness, i.e., with regard to one's strengths and one's weaknesses, one's talents and one's limitations. One needs then to accept oneself (lower self) as the product of action (thoughts, feelings, behavior) (experience), and build intelligently upon that foundation, gradually replacing weaknesses with strengths, without denying the actuality (reality) of one's condition in consciousness. If one reacts to one's condition, e.g., through self-disparagement, then one inhibits growth. On the other hand, if one denies the reality of one's condition, e.g., through self-delusion (ego), then one also inhibits growth, but in more subtle ways. As one identifies more with the higher Self and less with the lower, the lower can be placed in perspective, as an instrument worthy of facilitating experience and expression, and eventually as an instrument able to embrace (manifest) the higher quality of the inner Self.

Self-disparagement, self-hatred, non-self-acceptance, are all ways by which the ego inhibits the growth and progression in consciousness that is otherwise intended (conceit, self-aggrandizement, etc. are similarly inhibiting). The ego naturally feels threatened by any focus on spiritual experience and finds ways to undermine the process, generally either through cultivation of feeling good or through cultivation of feeling bad. To the ego it doesn't really matter which tack is taken, as either contributes to the self-absorption (in the lower sense) that keeps the person asleep (i.e., preventing any meaningful awareness).

But with healthy self-acceptance (without accompanying egoism), the ego accepts its place (which is necessarily subordinate) and is tempered by higher impression. Without egoism, without the artificial strength of personality, one can then proceed more properly along the way. But without having developed the personality in the first place, the proper strength and facility of personality are not really available. Thus the student should exercise caution, seeking the balance of personality (self-acceptance) and focus on that which is infinitely greater and more noble (the soul or higher Self of atma-buddhi-manas).

† Commentary No. 1153

Acceptance and Evolution

In embracing some well-founded spiritual notion (e.g., acceptance) there are often accompanying some not so well-founded generalizations and associations (e.g., the false notion that in embracing acceptance one does not need to embrace growth or improvement or deepening in consciousness). This is a variation of the (fallacious) “short-cut to heaven” doctrine.

Of course there are no short cuts to self-realization or spiritual enlightenment. No teacher or intermediary can compromise the integrity of the spiritual path (which involves work and progress and merit with the guiding boundaries and encouragement of the (purposive) law of karma). The fundamental nature of life (experience) in this world is (gradual) growth of consciousness (evolution). But people (egos) naturally look for easy paths (and easy techniques) (simple (superficial) solutions). Acceptance is a very powerful concept and practice. It helps to resolve difficulties. One should indeed embrace acceptance, accepting whatever circumstances are evoked by one’s own condition in consciousness, accepting other people as they are, accepting the nature of things, working within the evolutionary flow. But acceptance is only one of a number of needed practices.

Some people suggest that embracing conscious evolution (growth) (levels of consciousness) is separative, that the whole notion of progress leads to the false sense that some people are better or more advanced than others. That may be so (false), but that does not mean that there are not differences in experience

and differences in quality of consciousness and differences in levels. What it means, really, is that those who are more advanced than others are, merely, more advanced than others (at least in some regard). It does not mean that anyone is (thereby) any better or worse than another, or that some people have greater or lesser value than others. People progress at different rates, according to their nature and circumstances, but everyone progresses. And everyone, at every level, contributes (equally) to the whole. Furthermore, most people are not developed equally in all respects, so that one may be more "advanced" in some respects and less so in other respects, which means that one should not be comparing "advancements" anyway (most indications are necessarily superficial).

A related notion is that of the inherent perfection of the soul or higher Self (as an argument for not needing to apply any effort toward personal growth or transformation). The soul is indeed already perfect, in the sense that it does not exhibit personal or worldly limitations, and in touching the soul one can readily appreciate its quality (perfection) as such, but it remains incomplete. The purpose of life in this world is experience and expression leading to growth in consciousness (through assimilation of experience) that brings the soul from being perfect and undeveloped (spark) to being perfect and fully developed (flame).

The real issue is work or effort. One cannot advance substantively without investing time and effort. One's place upon the path is a direct result of that investment (in experience and assimilation of experience). There are short paths and there are long paths, temporally, but every path ultimately requires the same measure of (integrated) effort (investment). It is not unlike climbing a mountain. Some take the long and winding road, proceeding leisurely. Others make a more direct ascent, scaling the heights relatively quickly, but with greater intensity (focused effort). But in both cases the change in potential energy (work expended or integrated effort) is measurably the same.

Section 5.512



Expectation

- Expectation is an inherently creative process, as expectation tends to evoke that which is expected, but it is also an inherently limiting factor, as what is expected may not be consistent with what is needed, and may be unrealistic and precluded by karma.

Expectation 1

Expectation is the act or state of expecting, to anticipate or look forward to, to consider probable or certain, to consider reasonable or necessary, or to consider bound in duty (obligated). A common daily expectation involves the service (work) offered by one person to another. This service expectation may range from a situation in which one has informally (freely) indicated that a task will be done (completed) to a more formal (contractual) arrangement in which one is being paid to perform needed work. In the case of the informal (free) service, the recipient's expectations may be low, i.e., the requestor may have little expectancy that the job will be done and the time frame of completion may be considerable. This low expectancy level is more likely to be true in one-time situations, but if the voluntary service has been ongoing for some time, then expectations can be more realistic. In the contractual (formal) (professional) situation, expectations may be higher both in terms of quality and time-to-completion. The recipient takes the quality and time expectation for granted, since he is probably paying for the service and the performer is probably making a living from the same, meaning that such expectation may not be unreasonable (from the perspective of the personality).

While expectations are common and (probably) necessary personality-centered attributes, i.e., the norm at this time, they should not be an undue part of the soul-infused, spiritual student. The problem is that in the transition period from personality dominance to being soul influenced, the personality is unwilling to (easily) relinquish control (eventually it will) to the higher perspective (the next evolutionary step). Regardless of the circumstances, it is the dharma (duty) of the spiritual student to be as free of externally projected expectations as possible (soul-derived internally-oriented expectations should be the norm), and the student should deal more in what is accomplished (the real), rather than the expected (the unreal).

From a higher perspective, the problem of expectation is that things which are appropriate for the personality may not be appropriate (are often (usually) totally inappropriate) for the soul. Expectation involves (purely) personality-centered traits, such as, being demanding, pushy, or aggressive, which are

attributes wholly alien to the soul, for (at the least) they are impositional and judgmental in makeup. The problem for the personality is to achieve (reasonable) congruence (alignment) with the soul regarding such concepts.

The issue of expectation (and most other dual-interpretation concepts between the uninspired personality and the soul-qualified personality) involves manner and degree. While the personality may believe that a task should be done in a timely, effective, and efficient manner (egocentric), taking exception at anything less (and projecting feelings of frustration and aggression (hostility)), the spiritual student has no such expectations and deals not in pressure or imposition (which only make matters worse), but would rather handle things in a peaceful, undemanding, non-confrontational manner. Thus, the situation from the higher perspective may come down to, does it really matter?

In such circumstances, rather than pursuing things excessively, it is better to remain detached, or otherwise negative consequences may be the only accomplishment. What is applicable for man in general is not true for the spiritual student. For the student, even minor deviations may be severe (in the short and long run), for undue expectation (imposition) may undermine an otherwise appropriate effort. One should live in but not be of the mundane world, remaining balanced in a non-impositional, well-adjusted manner.

† Commentary No. 810

Expectation 2

Circumstances involving expectation are a routine (necessary) part of life for mankind in general (implying convenience to the lesser self (a personality necessity)), but they have (potentially) different (difficult) consequences for the spiritual student (depending on level of preparation). While expectation may be appropriate for one student of another (without taking exception) or for the student of himself, this is not true for the student in the case of others, for the others are not answerable to the same laws. Spiritual students are generally honorable, conscientious, and responsible, meaning what they say (and saying what they mean), while humanity in general is less constrained by such

expectations (at least at this time). Thus, the rules for the average person seem to be less restrictive (less expectant) than for those on the path.

Undue expectation (pressure) normally does little to resolve circumstances from either the lower (personality) or higher (soul) points of reference (even if it may provide needed experience). In the personality mode, expectation of one person of another may be either unperceived or interpreted as harassment (unappreciated). In addition, the related energy may be negative, especially if it is permeated with (unwarranted) emotional feeling (no matter the outcome). In such instances, understanding is unlikely, for the necessary insight does not exist as to the implication of an unfulfilled promise. The end result may also seem to be a wasted effort (but nothing in manifestation is wasted).

From the perspective of the spiritual student, such energy (which should not be confrontational) may also seem wasted. At best, the student should have only limited external expectations (undue or otherwise), for mainly negative (karmic) consequences are (seem to be) derived (especially if the request was made without proper detachment). The situation appears to be negative for the requestor's expectations are not met, possibly because the request was poorly presented or the expected is undeserved (at that time) (in that context). Depending on context, unfulfilled expectations (may) (probably will) create situations to be repeated (until the lesson is learned), since the individual knows (should have known) better than to have unwarranted expectations in the first place (especially if they are impositional or judgmental).

The specifics of how to interact in the world is ever the responsibility of the spiritual student, for he is (in essence) an outsider (visitor). If a situation is poorly handled, one implication is that the originator is only beginning on the path (lacks proper control (refinement)). If the situation had been better addressed, then probably no one would have had to suffer (the seeming) adverse consequences of the errantly directed effort. Possibly, the situation indicates that the originator (student) is split (lacks focus). In a positive sense, such situations can (should) lead to beneficial lessons in patience. The student should always endeavor to avoid (not perpetuate) such circumstances. If the scenario continues, it may indicate that refinement is needed (in poise). Thus, at the least such situations should be looked at as learning opportunities by which to progress on the path, i.e., karmic reduction.

The student's undue expectations are not unlike expecting too much of a child, before the necessary faculties are developed. Just because the individual is an adult does not mean (real) maturity (e.g., an integrated personality). Much of mankind (at its present developmental state) naturally endeavors to avoid work (a personality perspective) and expend the least effort, while the spiritual student is (should be) trying to give as much of quality as possible, with little (or no) concern for the lesser (little) self.

† Commentary No. 1226

Pedestals

Is it fair and reasonable to place anyone upon a pedestal? Is it realistic or fair to have any expectations of another person? Is it fair and reasonable to hold another person to a standard beyond that to which a person may hold himself (herself)? Is it fair and reasonable to hold anyone else to any standard at all?

It is perhaps only human nature to admire certain people, for whatever reasons (are apparent) or for whatever sense of the person may appear. It is perhaps only human nature to appreciate others on the basis of apparent (superficial) accomplishments and appearances rather than inherence (the divinity that lives within every human being). And it is perhaps only human nature to be disappointed and/or dismayed when these people fail to live in accordance with those (necessarily unreasonable and unrealistic) expectations. People tend to admire people (and sometimes to envy people) based upon apparent conformity to one's values. This is as true for material and egoistic (worldly) value systems as it is for spiritual value systems. But unless "admiration" is really just appreciation, unless "admiration" is reasonable and without accompanying (non-realistic) expectations, then admiration may lead to envy and ultimately to disappointment (dismay) (resentment) (separative judgment (as all judgment is separative)).

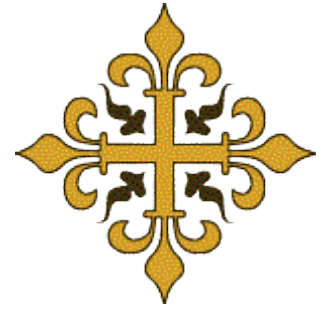
In this sense, spiritual students and spiritually-minded people of all faiths are not significantly different than anyone else (not that they are significantly different in any regard, but may appear so). Spiritual students and spiritually-minded people remain perforce human (until such time as they are able to

transcend this world altogether, not ever to return). Although they may excel in some areas, or appear to excel in some areas, they cannot reasonably be expected to excel in all areas, or to appear to excel in all areas, or to excel in some areas all of the time. Having expectations of anyone, placing anyone on a pedestal, is inherently unreasonable and unfair. And judging anyone, likewise. For judging is necessarily separative. Having expectations is necessarily separative. Placing anyone on a pedestal is a necessarily blinding process (the one who places accomplishes self-blinding) (and the one who is placed is doomed to disappointment).

Standards are all well and good, provided they are only applied to oneself, and provided they are fair and reasonable (and not taken too seriously). Standards are in this sense merely facilitators of intermediate goals. But standards applied to others are inherently counter-productive (inconsistent with reality). This is true whether the purported (presumed) standards are positive or negative, e.g., expecting someone to be honest is just as counter-productive as expecting someone to be dishonest.

Is it not better to see the good in everyone, however masked it may be by external (superficial) appearances? Is it not better to appreciate people for who they are (human beings, inherently divine)? Is it not better not to judge anyone at all, recognizing (collectively and generally) that each person has both strengths and weaknesses, and that each person passes through cycles of expression that may evoke either the higher nature or the lower, depending on circumstances? Is it not better to not compare oneself with anyone else, for appearances may be quite misleading, and the reality of a person may be something else altogether? Is it not better to allow people to be themselves? Is it not better to accept people as they are, and not as they may appear to be? Is it not better to be, rather than to judge?

Section 5.513



Normality

- The spiritual student is not entirely normal. The ways of the spiritual path involve moderate nonconformity to the ways of the world.

Normality

Each lifewave embraces a relatively diverse distribution of units of consciousness (e.g., human souls) and their reflection into manifested realms (e.g., human personalities in incarnation). For each lifewave (for a given stage or period of manifestation) normality is defined as some degree of conformity to the intended character and quality of consciousness in manifestation (for that stage or period). Normally, for a reasonably coherent and stable lifewave, the vast majority of members of that lifewave will fall within the bounds of normality. For some lifewaves or groups, those bounds are relatively narrow; for others those bounds may be relatively broad.

Actually there are two dimensions to normality, the extent of conformance to the general standards of the lifewave (to which all are expected to conform more or less) and the extent of conformance to the more particular standards of diversity (which constitute a variance of specialization while conforming nonetheless to the general standards). In other words there are general standards of achievement in consciousness applicable to all (e.g., for humanity, generalized achievement upon all the seven rays) and more particular standards of achievement applicable to those specializing within a particular ray (or function within a ray domain).

Most normal distributions of (units of) consciousness allow a relatively broad range of variance in character and quality. Thus one should not generally view others in the context of one's own values and character (which reflect some variance) but rather one should view others in the context of the overall normal distribution (which is necessarily broader and more inclusive). As a lifewave (or major group within a lifewave) advances, of course the general and particular standards (for normal consciousness) advance also, and individuals within the normal range or variance of consciousness may advance at a more or less rapid rate than the collective consciousness (integrated over the entire group or lifewave). It is generally misleading to consider a particular person in the context of some average consciousness; it is far better to consider people in the context of a normal (and relatively broad) range of normal consciousness. Viewing the depth and breadth of variety in human consciousness, for example,

is more constructive, more inclusive, and more sensible (from the standpoint of identification with humanity and from the standpoint of human rapport) than otherwise.

Normality is therefore the state of not deviating from the norm or average beyond some reasonable range for characteristic consciousness. In addition to the natural normality, there are perceptions within collective consciousness which constitute arbitrary or artificial normalities in the sense of social norms or expected conformities. These expectations are generally within the natural range of normality, but more narrowly defined and directly or indirectly impressed upon the participants, resulting in group cohesion of some degree of consistency and stability. Social norms can be helpful in the sense of positive or constructive encouragement or less so in the sense of being imposed or in limiting the freedom of expression of the individuals concerned.

Since normality implies a reasonable range in character and quality of consciousness, there are generally two fringe regions of significant variance to the average. One fringe region represents the spiritual path or the path of inductive leadership for the group or lifewave. That (positive) fringe region is called (spiritual) nonconformity. The other fringe represents a separative path and is called the path of abnormality.

† Commentary No. 559

Moderate Nonconformity

Intelligent, sensible (spiritual) nonconformity is the positive (moderate) fringe of normal consciousness. While the vast majority of humanity (or members of any particular major group or lifewave) exhibit the normal range of character and quality of consciousness, the spiritual path (of super-normality) constitutes that region of human consciousness that leads or impels humanity onward and upward in conformity with the evolutionary plan. But that conformity to the plan is expressed as a moderate nonconformity with respect to ordinary (normal) consciousness and the normal values and relatively mundane absorption of the bulk of humanity.

Moderate nonconformity is necessary for the spiritual student, for the spiritual student must become and remain relatively free from the mundane momentum (absorption) and habits of ordinary existence (experience and expression along more or less mundane lines (i.e., without conscious realization)) in order to be free from the limiting desires, distractions, and (personal and mundane) attachments that preclude the hastened (but not hasty) expansion and qualification (refinement) of consciousness implied by the evolutionary (spiritual) path. Thus it is relatively important for the spiritual student to be on the positive fringe of human consciousness, but not beyond such positive fringe (since being beyond implies some separation from humanity, while the positive fringe affords constructive (inductive) endeavors with regard to humanity).

The gradual momentum of the bulk of humanity toward expanded and more refined consciousness is quite natural. So too is the somewhat accelerated progress (momentum) of those upon the spiritual path quite natural. Both are intended, and both are afforded by karmic bounds. But remaining on the (positive) fringe implies some risk (in the context of the spiritual path), for those who come too close to the (mundane, personal) habits of (ordinary) human consciousness risk absorption (loss of spiritual momentum) and those who go too far from the ordinary risk ascension (passage into (transference onto) the preceding lifewave or another path entirely). The principal intention of the path of moderate nonconformity is inductive leadership, and therefore one must endeavor to balance the spiritual development with a sincere service motive that maintains one's link to humanity.

Moderate nonconformity is actually a rather subtle nonconformity, generally unrecognized by the bulk of humanity (i.e., the spiritual student should easily appear to conform to the basic range of normal (acceptable) human consciousness), yet with significantly greater albeit less obvious freedom in thinking and (more subtle) expression than is the case for the more normally human consciousness. Thus the spiritual student does not generally draw attention to himself or exhibit nonconforming behavior (nor should such a student conform dishonestly or deceptively), yet he (generally) thinks more clearly (being to some extent responsive to the spiritual intuition) (i.e., less rationally and without emotional complexity), acts along more subtle lines (appropriately rather than rationally or compulsively), and maintains an

integrity and quality of (refined) consciousness while nonetheless working within the bounds of natural human momentum.

Thus moderate nonconformity is not willful or deliberate, nor is it reactive or for its own sake; it is more an indication and reflection (natural expression) of adherence to truth and being (the soul) (the path) than it is anything else.

† Commentary No. 560

Abnormality

The negative fringe of normal (human) consciousness is the realm of separateness and the path of isolation (destruction). The positive fringe is not separative because it is consistent with the evolutionary plan. The negative fringe is separative because it is inconsistent with the evolutionary plan. Any substantial and significant condition in consciousness that creates emotional or mental barriers between the individual and the (range of) normal human consciousness is inherently separative and constitutes abnormality.

Abnormal consciousness can come about as a consequence of any one or more of a number of causes, all of which are behavioral extremes (on physical, emotional, and/or mental levels). Wherever attachments exist, fiercely sustained, there are paths to abnormality. On physical levels, the problem is usually identification with matter (extreme coarseness) (physical reactivity) (callousness) to such an extent that the person (personality consciousness) becomes unresponsive to the gradual encouragement (momentum) of human consciousness.

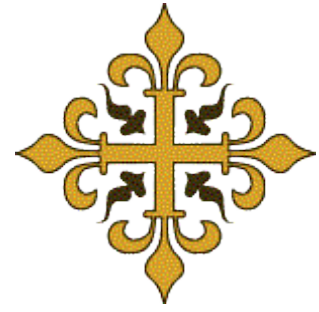
On emotional (astral) levels, the problem is usually some form of (unconscious) identification with astral matter (emotional experience) or absorption in emotional experience and expression. A mild form (nonetheless destructive if sustained, but mild in the sense of being less complicated and potentially more easily mitigated) of astral attachment is extreme materialism; i.e., sustained desires for and emotional attachments to material possessions. A more severe form of emotional extremism is sustained absorption in glamour (attachment to personalities, religious causes, self-deception, emotional dishonesty, etc.). The most devastating forms of emotional extremism are emotional (personal)

reactivity (e.g., sustained feelings of jealousy, hatred, resentment, anger, etc., or extreme emotional sensitivity (untempered emotions) so that the individual becomes wholly unresponsive to reason or sensibility), vanity, and sexual excesses. All of these (emotional extremes) if untempered lead to emotional isolation (isolation or detachment from the emotional field of humanity).

On mental levels the paths to destruction are less apparent but nonetheless dangerous. The problem on mental levels is generally that of mental attachments (fixations) (e.g., extreme critical nature, closed-mindedness, extreme opinionated nature, extreme conceit (ego), mental deception and dishonesty, etc.). The mental extremes if untempered lead to mental isolation (isolation from the mental field of human consciousness). Thus rogue (abnormal) consciousness can arise from physical, emotional, and/or mental extremes and constitute a most difficult challenge for the soul (which is only indirectly aware of the perils of the rogue (insensitive) (unaware) (unresponsive) personality).

Just as one's place upon the spiritual path is carried over from one incarnation to the next, so is one's rogue consciousness carried over as well (at least until favorably or unfavorably resolved). The extremes on whatever levels are incorporated in the personality matrix as habits (tendencies) (vulnerabilities) and must be dealt with and overcome if destruction of the personality matrix is to be avoided. The extremes generally result in impaired faculties (e.g., damaged or diseased physical, emotional, or mental instruments (as the case may be)). In short, extreme behavior or extreme attachments generally result in extreme consequences intended to break those attachments or habits of excess (i.e., to generate some recognition or realization on at least unconscious levels). Success comes as a result of responsive learning.

Section 5.514



Objectivity

- One of the great challenges to the spiritual student is the overcoming of attachments, bias, conditioning, opinions, prejudice, etc., and becoming objective, both at the rational level as well as intuitively.

Bias 1

Virtually everyone is not only emotionally and mentally biased, but the vast bulk of humanity are largely unaware of their biases and even the fact that they are biased. Emotional and mental bias is a major impediment to open-mindedness and the embrace of truth (and concomitant growth and refinement in consciousness). Awareness of one's bias is a first and major step toward the reduction of bias and its ultimate elimination.

Bias is defined as an inclination of temperament or outlook and is a more general form of prejudice. Bias can be positive or favorable in the sense of being favorably disposed toward some object, process, or person, or conversely, bias can be negative or unfavorable in the sense of being unfavorably disposed. Bias can be constructive in the sense of yielding some net benefit, or, more generally, bias can be somewhat destructive in the sense of yielding some aspect or element of separateness. Bias can be strong or weak, conscious or unconscious, or more generally somewhere in between. Bias provides a filter for one's experience, emphasizing (strongly or weakly) one aspect or interpretation of sense impression or perception over another. Bias is also multidimensional in the sense that one's bias is an accumulation of habits (biases) in thinking and feeling that vary depending on focus (object, process, person, etc.), i.e., one can be favorably biased about some things and negatively biased about others, one can be strongly biased in some ways and weakly or slightly biased in others, and one can be conscious of some biases and unconscious of others.

Bias is an inevitable part of personality development as one's experience contributes more or less directly to one's bias and one's previous experience contributes to one's character, consciousness, temperament, etc., which in turn contribute to one's bias. In fact, having a generalized positive bias (in the sense of being good-natured, having a positive or constructive outlook on life, seeing the good side of things rather than emphasizing the more negative (destructive) side, etc.) is "good" and implies a relatively well-adjusted personality. But the spiritual student also needs to be aware of the fact of that bias, in order to see things more clearly (honestly and accurately), thereby being able to assimilate experience more effectively.

A particular manifestation of bias normally and generally begins at the level of polarization of consciousness. An emotionally-polarized person (emopol) will generally “suffer” emotional bias which will then color both the feelings and subsequent thinking. A mentally-polarized person (menpol) will generally “suffer” mental bias which will then color both the thinking and subsequent feelings. A secondary “flow” often occurs in the reverse direction, generally unconsciously, in the sense that an emopol’s thoughts can lead to unconscious emotional biases and a menpol’s feelings can lead to unconscious mental biases.

In order to effectively embrace truth, one must be substantially open-minded and intelligently responsive to truth. The extent of one’s biases is the extent to which one is not so open-minded and to which one is not so responsive. One should therefore make a conscious effort (1) to be honest (and particularly to be honest with oneself), (2) to earnestly and honestly scrutinize (retrospectively if not simultaneously) one’s own thoughts and feelings and actions with a view to discerning or recognizing one’s biases and how they are manifesting, and (3) to establish the habit of intelligent (non-passive) open-mindedness (and its corollary of relative freedom from beliefs, opinions, and/or other attachments).

† Commentary No. 826

Bias 2

The problem of bias is compounded by the existence of attachments to various thoughts and feelings (as the emotional and concrete mental nature is wont to do). Objectivity in thinking and feeling, i.e., expressing or involving the use of “facts” without distortion by personal feelings or prejudices (bias) and being fairly rational and reasonable, is relatively rare due to the preponderance of bias and associated attachments (as well as the existence and manifestation of maya, glamour, and illusion).

There exists a multi-dimensional spectrum of relative attachment or one’s relative conviction of the truth of something. This spectrum includes impression, faith, sentiment, view or perspective, loosely-held belief, belief, opinion, and strongly-held opinion, and conviction. Impression implies some

tentativeness (relative non-attachment). Faith implies confidence without rational or objective substantiation. Sentiment implies the bias of one's nature or character. View or perspective implies one's relative bias but without necessarily any substantial attachment (particularly where one is more or less conscious of that relative bias). Belief implies relative certitude or confidence (which may vary with the degree of attachment) and generally implies "deliberate acceptance and intellectual consent" to what is believed. Opinion implies more of a judgment or appraisal of the belief (which implies greater relative attachment). And conviction implies great attachment (entanglement).

There are those who passively and/or foolishly accept whatever others suggest as true, without intelligent consideration and self-determination. And there are those who unconsciously allow their emotional and mental biases to determine their beliefs and opinions, with or without substantial conscious (rational or otherwise) consideration and judgment (self-determination albeit substantially biased). The skeptic is just as much enslaved by his or her opinions as the proponent. But there are also those (more moderate and preferable) who defer judgment (and who accept beliefs either tentatively or provisionally [tentative acceptance implies lack of confidence, while provisional acceptance implies (higher or inner) confidence but (open-minded) qualification for revision] (allowing subsequent experience to guide the modification, refinement, or elimination of general or particular beliefs)).

There is no hypocrisy in this matter of bias greater than that of the scientist (or anyone) who has a belief or opinion and sets out to prove it, with the illusion of objectivity (the possibility of proving something being another fallacy in itself). The existence of a belief or opinion definitely biases the mental approach of the scientist, effectively compromising his or her objectivity by the extent of the relative attachment to the belief or opinion, even if the outcome (conclusion) happens to be true. Anyone who believes something and attempts to prove it will naturally (and largely unconsciously) interpret whatever "evidence" is acquired in a way such as to reinforce the conclusion that is sought.

The significance of "positive" or supporting evidence will be (foolishly) exaggerated (greatly or otherwise according to the relative bias and relative honesty of the seeker) to support one's contention and the significance of "negative" or contrary evidence will be (likewise foolishly) rationalized away or

otherwise discounted to some extent. On the other hand, the degree of intellectual honesty that a person has may very well be sufficient to prevent too much bias from being applied and a “reasonable” outcome or conclusion may be achieved in spite of the bias in the process.

† Commentary No. 827

Bias 3

So where in all of this should stand the spiritual student? Somewhere between having provisional beliefs and being entirely free from such bias. The spiritual student is ever urged to embrace the truth that is realized, but without being attached to that truth (i.e., without having opinions). While all opinions convey and contain attachments, beliefs may (if properly qualified) be more provisional and less impedimental. In consciousness there is (some) bias, but it is up to the student to minimize that bias and eventually preclude the filtering of one’s sense-perceptions, thoughts, and feelings by that bias.

In the worst case, the professed student has opinions and convictions that are strongly held and defended reactively. In such a case the (questionable) student is deaf, dumb, and blind, being closed to the truth and naturally separative. He or she hears and sees only what he or she wants to hear or see (i.e., only that which reinforces his or her own beliefs and opinions). Having opinions is a very strong indication of ego manifestation, as it is only the ego that can have beliefs or opinions in the first place (the soul is free). Occultly, anyone who has opinions is literally entangled in them (to their extent) (and the consciousness is thereby dulled) (and the responsiveness to truth or realization is thereby impeded or subdued).

In the best or ideal case, the spiritual student has no beliefs or opinions, but has only a generalized (intuitive) feeling of direction (upward and onward along the spiral evolutionary circuit in consciousness and being). Such a student will have some (considerable) realization of truth and a refined sense of appropriateness (for himself or herself), but will be free from judgment and rationalization and will be open to greater and progressive realization. More realistically, the spiritual student will have some beliefs but will be aware of the bias that those beliefs represent and will work toward non-attachment (and corresponding

freedom). The (true) student is not afraid of being “wrong” and does not mind admitting that his or her provisional beliefs have been moderated, for such implies both honesty and a willingness (and ability) to grow spiritually. Every belief impedes subsequent realization (while every opinion more severely impedes subsequent realization), for human perception at its best has fewer dimensions than reality and is therefore inherently impaired.

In consciousness there is an inherent (progressive) seeking of (progressive) truth. In order to be effective, the seeker of truth (as all spiritual students are) should not have any beliefs or opinions, nor make assumptions, nor make or have judgments concerning whatever aspect of truth is being sought. Any preconceived beliefs or opinions will filter or bias the process of truth-seeking and potentially bias the outcome (perceived understanding). All beliefs and opinions (preconceived or otherwise) impede the realization of truth, but that which is preconceived represents a more substantial if not cumulative bias that affects the process as well as the conclusion. Objectivity (intellectual honesty) is more valuable than its lack, but subjectivity (true realization) is even more valuable (particularly when the mind is well-developed and properly tempered). Discernment and discrimination are likewise more valuable than their lack, and particularly where tempered by the intuition and self-realization.

Ultimately, the self-realized student ceases seeking. Truth is revealed most properly without being sought, for the very act of seeking (and any form of expectation) is a (subtle) bias and filter of truth and impediment to the realization of truth. Without seeking there is only realization. And with true realization there is only being (beyond consciousness).

Objectivity 1

Objectivity is defined as the quality or state of being objective, of being able to perceive and interpret sensible reality (sense impressions) as it is (they are), or at least without being distorted by personal reflections or feelings. In the ordinary, day-to-day life in the external or “objective” world, few people actually perceive and interpret their sense impressions or experience objectively. And likewise few people actually think clearly on any subject, due to their lack of objectivity.

Most people are heavily biased by their own character, temperament, opinions, feelings, values, etc., and tend to see what they want to see, hear what they want to hear, and think what they want to think, that is, consistently with their own habits of thinking and feeling. This phenomenon is compounded as a problem by virtue of the person being largely unconscious of the process. In other words, sense impressions are normally unconsciously interpreted according to whatever particular personal biases a person might have. What is “perceived” is then used as if it were factual and the person naturally then draws conclusions or makes judgments based upon it, without realizing how non-factual the interpretation is in the first place.

Before the spiritual student can effectively perceive and interpret superphysical impressions (or work effectively on superphysical levels), he or she must first learn to perceive and interpret the ordinary (physical plane) sense impressions more or less objectively. This involves becoming honest in every sense of the word, intellectually and otherwise. This also means becoming more and more objective, being able to discern things clearly and in an unbiased manner. This requires a great deal of effort, training, self-discipline, etc. It means thinking for oneself rather than passively accepting what is apparently presented to the senses or suggested by others. It also means overcoming the self-centered (personality-centered) bias that results from the undisciplined and unrefined nature of the emotions and lower, concrete mind. Any degree of dishonesty, with oneself or others, undermines objectivity.

One of the keys to becoming objective is learning to discriminate effectively, being able to see or discern (real) distinctions, being able to see things as they are rather than as they may appear to be (even on the physical plane), or how one is accustomed to thinking they are. Of course on the next higher level, even discrimination must yield to realization, but discrimination is nonetheless invaluable in the process of the student becoming objective (and thereby being able to see the meaning of things rather than drawing incorrect or misleading conclusions). Another key is learning the rules of logic (or more properly, learning to avoid the pitfalls conveyed by the lack of logic) [and of course, on the next higher level, learning to overcome the habits of rationalization].

One of the tendencies to be overcome (in becoming more objective) is the tendency to make wild inferences or to “read into” what is said or written, instead of accepting statements (and behavior) more objectively (truthfully) (accurately). The imagination is generally the culprit, as one infers what one wants to infer rather than inferring what is intended. Realistically, one should consider the possibilities of other inferences, but not assume that any inference is actually correct (unless there is objective evidence or substantiation). The intuition is generally a good guide, beyond the reasoning or rationalizing faculty, but most people confuse their own imagination with their intuition and that only compounds the problem.

† Commentary No. 884

Objectivity 2

“Problems arise when semantic meaning is over-whelmed by pragmatic inferences.” This leads to innuendo or boomerang effects, where “readers and listeners make pragmatic interpretations that may be entirely contrary to the semantic meaning of statements.” Semantic meaning is what a statement is literally intended to say, while pragmatic meaning is what a person thinks (more or less unconsciously) of why a statement was made. “Innuendo effects are so powerful that they can distort intentional meanings even in the most innocuous of cases.” Inferential interpretation is a quagmire for the less-than-objective student, who is not even really conscious of the fact that inferential interpretations are taking place.

These problems may be categorized in two ways, the problem of inferential interpretation, and the problem of not being aware that an inference has been made. These problems are further compounded by any attachment to conclusions that the person may have (which is fairly common) (i.e., where the student allows personal bias to so condition the process that one is "certain" of the correctness of the (wild) inference) (and of course, one "sees" whatever supporting evidence one wants to see). Spiritual students must overcome both of these problems if they are to progress beyond the mundane consciousness that so englamorizes and so enchants the masses.

Another aspect of the problem is the "denial of reality" syndrome, where a person so wants to believe that something is true (or false) that every sense impression or experience is interpreted to be consistent with that sense of reality. This is true for the whole physical plane phenomena (where virtually everyone is deluded into believing in physical appearances) as well as for more personal aspects (e.g., a person who wants something (or wants something to be true) will naturally rationalize and justify his desire (or belief) and interpret experience to support the belief that what is wanted is okay (or that the belief is true)) [this rationalization process, however conscious or unconscious it may be, is fundamentally dishonest, even if the belief or object is okay or true, respectively].

Stereotyping is another aspect of lack of objectivity that must be overcome. A stereotype "represents an oversimplified opinion, affective attitude, or uncritical judgment" in holding individuals to be representative of some (biased) mental picture. Any form of generalization is dangerous, because it leads to self-deceptive (unconscious) bias that simply may not be fair or accurate. The self-centered opposite of stereotyping is also a problem, in which a person views himself or herself as the "exception" to the general case, usually self-deceptively and heavily biased by the imagination. Any sense of oneself or others that is unrealistic compounds the problem of trying to see things objectively.

Since one generally perceives things through the emotional-mental aura, one of the approaches to resolving these problems is purifying and clarifying the aura such that personal bias is minimized if not eliminated entirely. The first step is realization of the existence (prevalence) of one's own bias. The second step is discerning the nature of that bias and its attendant habits in feeling and

thinking. And the third step is the actual purification and clarification of the aura so that it more clearly reflects realistic impressions rather than biased ones. The overriding and underlying key to all of this remains increasing honesty (and associated humility), the incorporation of a strong sense of (realistic) fairness in all things.

† Commentary No. 915

Racial and Cultural Bias 1

Each human being is conditioned in a number of ways, some preponderantly and directly, and some less so, in more subtle ways (less directly). The principal bias is that which dominates the personality and includes both hereditary and environmental factors. A secondary bias is that which affects the personality from within, being a measure of responsiveness of the personality to the soul. For the bulk of humanity the secondary bias is not apparent, as almost everyone is absorbed (asleep) within the personality field (i.e., within one's own ideas, feelings, activities).

The advanced of humanity are those who have consciously recognized and overcome the various (primary or lesser) biases that play upon or within the personality and who have thereby allowed the secondary or higher bias to emerge. The student needs to understand all of his or her own lower nature, all of the various biases and conditioning, and accomplish the implied self-transformation, all the while continuing to serve (work) within the context of the path. The keys are knowledge (understanding) (wisdom), patience (persistence) (perseverance), and detachment (freedom from entanglement).

Two of the principal biases are racial and cultural. While racial (hereditary) characteristics provide a conditioned basis for various abilitative aspects and attributes (abilities, characteristics, potential along physical, emotional, and mental lines), cultural (environmental) characteristics provide more of a conditioned basis for various perceptive and interpretive aspects and attributes (tendencies). While racial bias is inherent in the genetic (hereditary) basis for incarnation, cultural bias is acquired more so through the cultural (family) (religious) (personal) environment. Each of the various races within humanity

contributes directly to humanity by virtue of its characteristics (physical, emotional, and mental factors) which form a direct and underlying basis.

Each of the various cultures (which may or may not coincide with racial background) contributes directly albeit less obviously, by virtue of its psychological conditioning. In this sense, both family and religious biases are considered to be cultural rather than racial. These racial and cultural biases serve a definite and constructive purpose in the evolutionary development of humanity, but at some point along the way (the spiritual path) one must rise beyond the lesser conditioning in order to be responsive to the higher.

Consequently, the masses generally identify with and are naturally entangled in their racial and cultural aspects, while the relatively more advanced within humanity have achieved some relative freedom from these biases and perceive and value things in broader, deeper terms (e.g., humanity as a whole, the soul rather than the personality).

It is essential for the spiritual student to identify and understand all of the various biases affecting oneself as a personality, in part so the student can more fully appreciate, develop, and/or utilize the implied (conveyed) (potential) talents and opportunities, and in part so the student can overcome the implied limitations in consciousness (and ultimately all (worldly or personality) conditioning). Consequently it is also important to distinguish between the various sources of bias as their resolution is generally source-dependent. In the case of cultural biases it is also important to recognize and understand cultural differences as a means of overcoming (or pre-empting) misunderstanding (tension) that results from lack of awareness and lack of appreciation for those (natural) differences.

Racial and Cultural Bias 2

For example, in some cultures direct eye contact is considered offensive or disrespectful, while in other cultures indirect eye contact is considered cowardly or passive-evasive. Of course there is nothing inherently wrong in either case, except (1) where there is imposition (expectation for compliance with cultural biases) and (2) where there is lack of respect or appreciation for differences (i.e., it is wrong to assume that another person consciously or unconsciously subscribes to one's own cultural biases). Racial and cultural biases (while relatively helpful in some relatively narrow context) are inherently superficial and of less value than more universal principles.

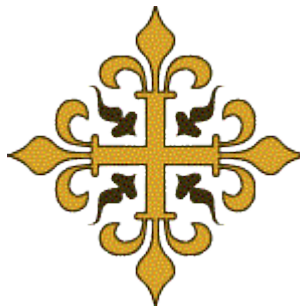
One should not judge another on the basis of one's own racial or cultural biases. One racial or cultural bias is not necessarily (or even generally) better than another. Some biases convey moral or ethical values and indicate evolutionary accomplishment (or lack thereof) along some line, but in general the various cultures are comparable in overall achievement (evolution), but not uniformly so (some cultures are "advanced" in some ways (but not in other ways) and other cultures are "advanced" in other ways but not in some ways). For example, the "norm" in one cultural setting may be much more emotionally expressive than in another. Thus, one should be very wary of generalization (and stereotyping).

While racial and cultural biases may pervade a particular group of people, one should not assume that everyone within such a group is comparably (or generally) biased. There are always exceptions, as some people develop or evolve more readily than others (or along different lines) and move beyond their racial and cultural conditioning in advance (or differently) of the bulk of the group. The spiritual student should (in principle) recognize, understand, and appreciate the various racial and cultural biases (while intelligently (consciously and deliberately but not passively) conforming (or respectfully not conforming) appropriately). It is essential for the spiritual student to awaken (and remain awake) and not sleep the waking-sleep of racial and cultural conditioning.

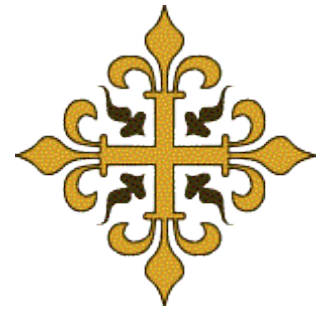
Thus while various racial and cultural biases may be helpful, even necessary at some stage, they ultimately limit further growth in consciousness. The

objective is to see beyond one's bias (superficiality and narrowness), thereby overcoming and transforming limitations into strengths (depth and breadth of perception and understanding), passing into the greater fellowship of humanity (and life) as a whole and toward greater reliance on the soul rather than the imbedded (inertial) personality. Freedom from bias (conditioning) generally leads to a measure of (hopefully intelligent) non-conformity.

Passive conformity to racial and/or cultural (social) expectations is inherently dangerous (not constructive) for the spiritual student as it simply deepens or sustains the waking-sleep. Of course it is also (and even more so) dangerous to openly challenge or to be antagonistic toward those expectations. One must learn and practice diplomacy, wherever possible, without losing one's commitment and adherence to the higher principles (and practices). For example, one can, in principle, be a non-smoking, non-drinking, vegetarian surrounded by smoking, drinking, meat-eating fellows, without being antagonistic. Thus one should neither impose on others or allow others to impose on one. Yet ever one must realize the underlying unity of all, so that one's relative freedom from racial and cultural bias is inherently constructive (and not separative). Such is the challenge.



Section 5.515



Other Aspects of Psychology 1

- There are numerous aspects of psychology. Human nature at the personality level tends to be relatively complicated, though it need not be so. The spiritual student studies psychology and engages in self-observation in order to understand himself (herself) at the personality (ego) level. The student also studies psychology and observes human nature in the world in order to understand relationship. All of which understanding contributes to the eventual self-transformation.

Imagination 1

Imagination is the power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or not otherwise wholly perceived in reality, a creation of the mind. The capability for imagination is inherent in the human constitution, but may be properly developed, or not, according to the mental and emotional development (character) (temperament) of the individual. The potency for constructive (creative) evocation (manifestation) as an intelligent consequence of imagination is quite considerable. Imagination is indeed an intended human capability, but one that should be carefully and properly applied.

The mind is the principle instrument of imagination, though effective imagination requires not only a well-developed mental ability, but it also requires a considerable heart quality. The mind is utilized as a focus to intensify the image (and project it appropriately). Consequently, if the mind is weak or not properly coherent, the imaginative abilities will be ineffective. Likewise, if the heart is weak, the imagination will likely be dull and ineffective, for the mind will have little to focus. Thus imagination is most effective where the personality is healthy and where the head and heart are reasonably balanced (complementary).

The power of imagination resides in the principle of energy following thought. The act of forming a mental image evokes energy: if that image (energy) is properly focused, intensified, and projected, then (potentially) a great deal of energy can be evoked to sustain the creative evocation (manifestation) of that image or construct. That projection may be a simple image or a self-consistent (synthetic) complex of related images. In either case, the objective is to encourage some consequence by virtue of and along the lines of the images envisioned and what they represent. The potency for good (within the context of the creative imagination) depends both on the imaginative and mental abilities and upon the overall character (quality) (motives) of the individual. Obviously, care should be taken to avoid imposition. The student should always keep in mind that he is responsible for all manifestations and projections evoked or formulated through his personality (mind) (emotions).

The power of the imagination is inherently interactive (though it can be dampened or masked), as every evocation (manifestation) (projection) (consequence) interacts with the environment, the personalities therein, and the karmic manifold thereof. The spiritual student should be particularly careful to qualify every (projectable) mental image for good, in a sufficiently general fashion. The reason for this is simple: the student cannot generally (wholly) predict all of the factors, effects, or consequences of the creative (projective) imagination. Thus, the student should be very careful with any specific attributes or characteristics of the images formulated. A general (healthy) qualification constrains the effects to good purpose and allows the flexibility of proper (albeit unforeseeable) interaction. A properly formulated creative projection will safely dissolve if the circumstances evoked are inconsistent with the intended purpose.

The creative imagination can be utilized to affect virtually any aspect of life and circumstances. The imaginative faculties can be used to condition or qualify (encourage) the personality to effect a refinement (development) (cultivation) of that personality or some ability therein. The imagination can be used to change (improve) circumstances, conditions in consciousness, future conditions, etc., on almost any scale, subject only to the power and training of the individual and the karmic constraints of the objective.

† Commentary No. 408

Imagination 2

The faculties of imagination are generally developed as a natural course of human experience (evolution). Those (ordinary) (preliminary) faculties are normally sufficient to affect the individual's own life (consciousness) (circumstances) (and to some extent those in the immediate environment), incidentally (since the vast majority of humanity are largely unaware of their own abilities and consequences in consciousness, being largely absorbed by mundane (physical) experience). The real potency for creative imagination comes with more mental training than is incidental to gradual evolution. With considerable mental abilities comes the considerable potency for good or ill in the intelligent or indiscriminate use of the imagination. Up until that point, the imagination is generally coupled to the astral or emotional capabilities, and is

generally projected indiscriminately. But the mentally-polarized individual is generally immune to incidental astral or emotional energies.

The faculties of creative imagination are normally only fully and properly developed as a consequence of (formal) occult training, where the student is taught the implications and ethics of energy projection, the self-discipline and personality refinement necessary for responsible and effective (constructive) occult (humanitarian) work, and the mental and psychic adjustments necessary for group work (as all serious occult or esoteric work requires the subordination of the individual to an intelligent, group (soul) context). With the proper occult training, the individual (spiritual student) can participate meaningfully in appropriate work involving the creative imagination (which is more or less central to much of the occult work involving humanity).

One of the important lessons of occult training involves learning to discern the difference between perception and imagination, and learning to perceive things as impersonally (without bias and distortion) as practicable. There is a considerable danger of confusing perception and imagination, for if some mental image is self-generated (by the subtle mind and/or emotions) and is mistakenly attributed as perception, then the resulting conclusions, beliefs, and attitudes will tend to negatively complicate the personality-life. The greatest danger in such a situation is the resulting self-deception, which if coupled with fear or insecurity (paranoia) can be devastating. Once the imagination is allowed to rule (mask) the perceptive faculties, the individual will become less and less responsive to the way things are, and more absorbed in the way things are (erroneously) imagined to be. Such a person (self-deceived) will see and hear whatever he wants to see and hear.

The spiritual student must learn early in the occult training process to be aware of both inner and outer circumstances, by being wholly honest with oneself and overcoming all fear and personal bias. The imagination must be properly realized and qualified, in order for the student to be effective. Assumptions must not be confused with facts. What is perceived must be recognized as perception. What is imagined (deliberately or otherwise) must be recognized as imagination. And what is evoked as a consequence of imagination must be responsibly acknowledged.

Since imagination is a focusing of energy, that energy must somehow be fulfilled. The occult student is taught to properly release what is intelligently imagined (toward some meaningful purpose) and to properly dissolve (devitalize) that which is not prudent. Thus, the imagination is utilized as a worthy instrument of progress, and the spurious images of the subconscious personality are not permitted unqualified emanation.

† Commentary No. 494

Vigilance

With occult training comes the natural ability for vigilant awareness and programmed protection, which is (as many things are) a mixed blessing (i.e., one with implied responsibilities) (meaning that that ability is itself an opportunity for learning, albeit for more subtle matters). One can in principle preclude virtually all energies that would otherwise lead to disease or injury. But in so doing, one must be very careful not to preclude awareness of those karmic forces (energies) and their proper resolution (implied learning and consequent adjustment). Thus the spiritual student should endeavor to improve the awareness and quality of consciousness, remaining relatively unsusceptible to impedimental forces, but remaining nonetheless responsive to the implied lessons and true to the dharma of the path.

Another aspect of vigilance is (programmed) vigilant awareness of one's own thoughts, feelings, and actions (and the various implications of each) in order to become immediately conscious of any negative (unwarranted) expression (coarseness) or any expression inconsistent with one's (spiritual) values and understanding. This vigilance allows for (potentially) immediate compensation or preclusion and (potentially) reinforces the discipline of a properly qualified personality. Good intentions are helpful, but vigilant determination to fulfill one's intentions is more effective. With vigilance comes a flow of energy qualified by those intentions, and a corresponding (intelligent) qualification (programming) of the personality. With continued and proper vigilance comes improved recognition and understanding of cause and effect relationships.

Vigilance can be effective consciously or unconsciously. In a sense, the meditation state (involving occult tension) is a state of conscious, vigilant awareness on abstract mental or intuitive levels, effectively precluding any concrete mental activity (mental noise) or distraction. Deliberate, unconscious, vigilant awareness can remain in effect without distracting the waking-consciousness (unless warranted), provided that that vigilance is suitably qualified. This leaves the focus of consciousness (the waking-consciousness) free for other objective or subjective concerns. In either case, conscious or unconscious vigilance, the motive and qualification should be primarily one of learning or service. In either case, properly programmed (qualified) (consistent) vigilance is a means of improving awareness.

The manner of and motivation for vigilant awareness is relatively important. Where emotionally motivated (as in fear) or otherwise selfishly motivated, the energy associated with vigilant awareness can actually attract that which one might seek to preclude (or preclude that which one might seek to attract). Thus effective vigilance requires poise (a healthy mental demeanor, emotional stability, and a properly integrated personality). In the final analysis, proper vigilance must be incidental as well as deliberate, and not a major focus of consciousness.

Perhaps the most prudent application of vigilant awareness is that intended to preclude any absorption in personal or mundane energies. So much of the activities and circumstances of the external (mundane) world encourage absorption, yet with a properly qualified vigilant awareness, the spiritual student can be consciously reminded at each instance of crossing the threshold of absorption, which makes it much easier to overcome the absorptive tendency. Of course effective daily meditation is essential to effective qualification (vigilant awareness) and the preclusion of mundane (personal) absorption.

Tri-Dimensional Feeling

Wundt's tri-dimensional theory discerns three dimensions in which feelings (emotional experience (expression)) may vary, namely between (1) pleasantness and unpleasantness, (2) quiescence and excitement, and (3) relaxation and tension. Although the emotional field (of the astral body) is rather complex and embraces more than these three dimensions, these do illustrate a simple range of emotional activity and expression.

The two polarities of pleasantness and unpleasantness constitute the hedonic tone of experience. Pleasantness taken to an extreme constitutes the absorption of pleasure as an end in itself. While pleasantness is inherently (generally) attractive (pleasure being repulsive in the more subtle spiritual sense) and while unpleasantness is inherently (generally) repulsive (except in the sense that coarseness attracts coarseness), neither in extremis is spiritually conducive. More properly the extremes are (intense) (absorptive) pleasure and (intense) unpleasantness, with the (desired) balance being a (simple) pleasant disposition.

The two polarities of quiescence and excitement represent a dimension of emotional activity (passivity). More properly, the extremes of this dimension are excitement and depression, with (proper) quiescence being the desired balance. Both excitement and depression imply considerable loss of control (and considerable coarseness (loudness)). Emotional quiescence, if not merely coincidental (temporary), implies considerable balance and refinement (self-control) and positive quality of the astral (emotional) body. Similarly, the extremes of excitement (activity) and depression (passivity) are absorptive and therefore not spiritually conducive. The proper emotional disposition is quiescence, being neither active (entangled) nor passive, but reflective in the higher sense.

The two polarities of relaxation and tension represent a more subtle emotional dimension. Relaxed emotions in the non-quiescent extreme of uninhibited expression (release) and the extreme of emotional tension (repression) (oppressive inhibition or conditioning) are equally undesirable and neither are spiritually conducive. The desired balance is qualified (quiescent) relaxation

(freedom from tension and freedom from independent expression). Thus the (spiritually) intended state of the emotional body is a combination of pleasantness, quiescence, and (qualified) relaxation. A more synthetic (more real) emotional quality or dimension is refinement, since none of the three Wundt dimensions can be achieved in balance (*en rapport*) without the overall elevation of the refined (clear, quiescent) emotions to the highest sub-planes of the astral. It is for this reason that alcoholic beverages and other drugs are verboten, since they either excite or depress the astral body and undermine the process of qualification and refinement (effectively preventing the integration of the personality and the alignment of the integrated personality with the soul). Continuous sobriety is therefore a prerequisite for entrance upon or readmittance to the path.

The astral (emotional) body (with its tri-dimensional (or more properly synthetic) range of emotional experience) should be cultivated as a quiescent and qualified (non-active) vehicle of consciousness. While the physical body, the mind, and the spiritual will (*atma*) are occultly positive (active) (properly under (occult) tension), the emotional body and the intuitional sheath are occultly negative (meaning intended to be without tension, being passive in the higher sense (only) and neither active nor passive in the lower sense).

† Commentary No. 688

Listening and Speaking

Proper listening is a combination of hearing, paying attention to what is heard, and having an open mind so that learning is facilitated. What is heard is not necessarily valuable or constructively stimulating, but if one does not listen properly, then the opportunities for learning inherent in other people's experience is precluded to the extent of one's own mindset. With an open mind and ability to discuss (discriminate) what is useful or worthy of consideration (without unwarranted bias or preconception), the student's opportunities for learning are expanded.

One must discriminate to some extent, or else subject oneself to mindless drivel and suffer mundane absorption accordingly, but with suitable discrimination

and deliberately maintained listening skills (habits) much can be learned by consideration of other's experience (attitudes) (circumstances) (causal relationships). The development of proper observational and listening skills is an important part of the preparation and continuity of the spiritual student for learning and (service) expression. Furthermore, listening and observing properly is crucial to the development of the spiritual poise that is a necessary prerequisite to soul contact. One simply cannot approach the soul if one's mind or heart is noisy with one's own ideas, beliefs, thoughts, feelings, etc. Thus the development of outer listening skills paves the way toward development of inner listening skills and the concomitant spiritual poise that marks the established student relative to the aspirant.

Speaking is sometimes appropriate, particularly when the student must function in the outer (objective) (mundane) world, but the spiritual student should (must) nonetheless carefully cultivate (1) the proper listening disposition (predisposition) and (2) a corresponding reluctance to speak. People who speak reactively (responsively to others) or who "need" to speak or who "like" to talk have therefore and thereby a significant learning disability (people who like to talk do not therefore and thereby listen very well), which is a significant impediment to the cultivation of proper spiritual poise. People who like to talk (regardless of usefulness of the subject matter) (and even if the subject matter is useful) are therefore so filled with personality-centered energy (absorption) that they cannot be responsive to the soul. In fact, some can be manipulated by external forces and thereby appear to be "inspired" but they are not thereby in genuine spiritual rapport.

The natural detachment of the spiritual student (lacking significant attachments to mundane or personal matters) affords effective listening and effective speaking. The spiritual student (of any grade) primarily listens, observes and considers (and through consideration performs effective service), speaking appropriately (without the need or desire to speak) and occasionally, where called upon. The spiritual student has beliefs (knowledge) (relative understanding) but not opinions or attachments to particular beliefs. The spiritual student never needs to defend or explain his or her beliefs to others (although he may explain himself if warranted, but without need to do so). The spiritual student properly shares energy (by qualification of his environment, by his considerations, etc.), but never (properly) by imposition of ideas, beliefs, etc.

While mantras are useful for qualification, the student does not need to speak to God or the soul within. To the contrary, what is needed is the cultivated and qualified habit of listening to (for) the voice of the silence and adherence to its quality and encouragement.

† Commentary No. 931

Body Language 1

Body language is defined as a means of communication in which aspects of physical posture, gestures, facial expressions, demeanor, etc. are interpreted with some presumed significance. Although body language is a “real” phenomenon (process), there are associated problems. The real problem of body language is that in a particular instance, it may be intended or otherwise, it may be real or imagined (i.e., significant or not), and/or the “recipient” may be interpreting body language consciously or unconsciously, correctly or otherwise. Additional complications are cultural context, generality, and degree of personality integration (polarization of consciousness). The whole phenomenon of body language is a consequence of the passage of the human lifewave through the animal kingdom, where non-verbal communication was considerably developed.

The actual relative significance of body language depends on the relative consciousness of the sender. Almost everyone is emotionally-polarized and therefore (for most people) a person’s thoughts and feelings are to some extent (and largely unconsciously) reflected in his or her body language. That reflection is, in turn, qualified or conditioned by some variability and within some cultural context. This is “natural” body language. However, a person of deliberation may mask his or her thoughts and feelings, to some considerable extent, by consciously manipulating his or her body language. This is “artificial” body language.

Moreover, someone whose personality is fully integrated and who is mentally-polarized or intuitively-polarized will not generally reflect thoughts and feelings in the form of body language, naturally or artificially, because in such a case the body is naturally “poised” and qualified (and responds only in the active sense),

whereas in the “normal” (emotionally-polarized) case, the body responds passively and automatically to thoughts and feelings. The perceived relative significance may be something else altogether (i.e., other than intended and/or other than real).

The cultural context often dominates body language, in the sense that one’s cultural (tribal) (family) conditioning qualifies one’s body language such that there is some general consistency within a given culture (tribe) (family). Thus a problem for one who would interpret body language is the assessment of the cultural context and degree to which the body language is consistent with that cultural context. Cultural conditioning can vary a great deal from one country or culture to another. And cultural conditioning can vary a great deal even within a culture. The interpreter must also assess the degree of contrivance, if that is even possible, or else draw wrong inferences and conclusions. Likewise, the interpreter must appreciate the extent of personality integration, etc., or risk substantial misunderstanding.

The problem, then, for any interpreter of body language is correctness or validity of interpretation (inference and conclusion). Yet many people interpret body language unconsciously, based upon their own cultural conditioning, so the result is a consequence of a person unconsciously “sending” body language and another person unconsciously “receiving” body language. In either case, or both, the potential for misunderstanding is considerable. Even where the interpreter is conscious of body language and intelligently reading the perceived (presumed) signals, there is generally some degree of misunderstanding. In any case, reliance on observed body language is dangerous, and interpretation of body language is generally inconclusive or only partially conclusive (yet self-deceptive if presumed to be conclusive).

Body Language 2

The value of body language lies in its offering of information that might not otherwise be readily or easily (or politely) available. The problem of body language is its inconclusiveness. If a person interprets body language unconsciously, then the objective should be to transcend such unconsciousness and achieve conscious awareness. If a person interprets body language consciously, then the objective should be to do so without presuming validity.

The problem of any emotional or intellectual process is the presumption of correctness, which compounds the problem with self-deception. In wisdom, one considers whatever evidence is presented either to the senses or to the mind, without presuming any conclusion, except potentially or tentatively. This allows the possibility of truth and reality emerging into conscious realization, while without such tentativeness such possibility is impeded or constrained by one's presumptions. Wherever one is convinced of correctness, then the problem of presumption is further compounded (in this context, it does not really matter if one is correct or not, self-deception and unresponsiveness to the truth are "bigger" problems). Moreover, the whole process of reliance upon body language is a "lower" process that feeds the lower nature by drawing upon bodily instincts and emotional instincts (and even intellectual instincts), without regard (necessarily) for the truth.

While there is a conventional, cultural basis for body language, based on conditioning, the spiritual student tends to pass beyond that conditioning, becoming increasingly non-conforming (albeit not necessarily evidently so to others) until the student is fully integrated and mentally-or-intuitively-polarized and relatively free from external (cultural) conditioning (of course the student still has to overcome the internal conditioning (ego) (personality) (intellect) (illusion), but such a student will generally not conform to "normal" expectations (i.e., at that point the student generally has substantially different character, temperament, and values from the general population, yet appears more-or-less the same to anyone who does not share the character, temperament, and values)).

For the relatively mature spiritual student, there is evoked a poise of higher contact (of personality with soul or higher self), or at least the quality thereof, that is reflected in the student's consciousness and demeanor, albeit in subtle ways. The student has no need of masking his or her thoughts and feelings, for the body is so conditioned and qualified that it simply does not respond passively and reflectively. In short, while the normal person reflects his or her thoughts and feelings largely unconsciously and passively, the (relatively mature) spiritual student naturally (instead) reflects poise and quality of consciousness.

Consequently, (1) the relatively mature (mentally-or-intuitively-polarized) spiritual student does not rely on body language (nor intellect) as higher awareness (intuition) is more reliable and (2) anyone attempting to interpret the body language of such a (relatively mature) spiritual student will likely misinterpret the presumed signals and draw wrong (or at least misleading) conclusions (i.e., emopols (emotionally-polarized people) tend to see whatever they want to and/or allow their imagination to amplify and distort perceived (presumed) signals). On the other hand, it would be inappropriate for the student to contrive his or her body language to conform with someone's expectations, so the spiritual student remains, for the most part, indifferent to body language in both directions.

† Commentary No. 952

Aversion

Aversion is defined as a feeling of repugnance or distaste towards something with a desire to avoid or turn from it, a settled dislike or antipathy, and is, in the metaphysical sense, comparatively equivalent to (negative) attachment or (negative) entanglement. Aversions include dislikes, hatreds, and phobias. All aversions must ultimately be overcome. Contrariness is aversive, but non-conformity is not necessarily aversive.

One of the necessary stages of human development is entanglement in liking and disliking. The purpose of passing through this stage is the development of certain senses and abilities, culminating in a proper sense of discrimination (discernment) between what is real and what is unreal (this sense of

discernment is absolutely necessary for passage (advancement) (elevation) (evolution in consciousness) into that which is real) (ultimately, in choosing (more correctly accepting the call for) the spiritual path of intelligent choicelessness). In the process, it is natural (and necessary) to develop a sense of personal preferences, conscious and unconscious, that determine likes and dislikes. But, eventually, one must pass beyond this stage of liking and disliking and become aware of a higher order, and to develop that higher awareness one must become disentangled from the whole process of liking and disliking, of having beliefs, opinions, etc.

In beginning that process of disentanglement, one naturally tends to focus on the more obvious attachments, people and experiences and things to or with which one is attached, absorbed, enamored, etc., i.e., where there is attraction (and concomitant distraction). Great care should be taken that the process of disentanglement proceeds in a balanced manner, i.e., avoiding the potential coldness of the head-centered nature. One can be detached from things formerly attached to without being averse to them. This is the first sense of aversion.

A second sense of aversion has to do with negative attachments, i.e., to dislikes and feelings of aversion from people and experiences and things disliked. These attachments (and aversions) must also be disentangled, and the process is potentially much more subtle than is the case of positive attachments and entanglements (based on likes) because the student is generally less aware of (the more subtle) aversions and because it is inherently more difficult to overcome a negative bias or prejudice than a positive one (a negative bias is relatively more coarse than a comparable positive one) (i.e., separateness is inherently coarse, attractive bonding is inherently (relatively) less coarse).

But both likes and dislikes must be overcome, without aversion, which means that one must be (become) detached and indifferent (in the sense of being unaffected) (in the higher, mature sense) yet still be able to function intelligently and constructively (with compassion and insight). This is not an easy undertaking. There is much in the lower world of human endeavor that tends to attract or repel the human sensibilities, depending on the character, temperament, and values (conditioning) of each person. There is also much that is not so easy to understand, which is hard to not be averse to, such as apparent injustice. One of the dangers in becoming detached and disentangled is

passivity. The student who is properly detached and unentangled is neither active (involved) or passive (indifferent), but is simply aware of the balance of nature (karma) and working intuitively (without personal judgment) for the evolution of consciousness in the broadest sense. Thus the non-involved, non-averse student functions intelligently and in collaboration with natural evolutionary forces.

† Commentary No. 985

Justification

One of the problems of the human condition is the tendency of the mind (ego) toward justification (and self-justification). This is a consequence both of the delusion of separateness (within and from the oneness of God) and the self-serving aspect of the human condition.

The tendency is for a person or persons to (individually or collectively) rationalize (justify through rationalization) any action, behavior, feeling, thinking, etc., that occurs or which is desired in some sense by the separated self (personality) (mind) (ego) or group. The problem of this tendency is that it sustains the power of the separated self to pursue its delusion of independent existence, thus undermining the intentions of the higher self toward evolving more directly in consciousness. In the deluded state, one still evolves, albeit much more slowly by virtue of the person (individual) being absorbed on personal (mundane) levels and thereby not being responsive to higher guidance (conscience) (higher self). In the non-deluded state one is much more responsive to higher qualification and learning (growth) (service) is greatly facilitated thereby.

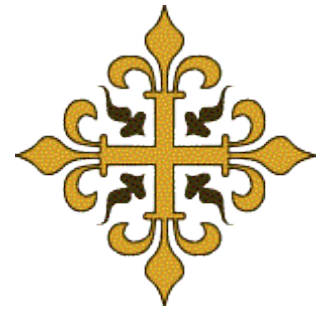
The most primitive of people simply do whatever is instinctive at the animal (survival) level. More developed people tend to do whatever they want to (that they are able to), subject only to whatever boundaries exist, e.g., cultural boundaries enforced by peers, with a manifested philosophy (rationalization) of if-it-feels-good-and-doesn't-hurt-anyone-it's-okay. That rationalization (and the unconscious or conscious assumption that "life" is only one lifetime and karma is non-functional) is indeed okay, at that level of maturity (and in fact is substantially better than if-it-feels-good-it-doesn't-matter-if-someone-else-

suffers). The problem of this rationalization is that the individual embracing this (self-indulgent) philosophy is continuing (actually complicating) the delusion. And self-indulgence in this sense is the single most spiritually-inhibiting factor.

Most people who have passed beyond this particular stage of self-indulgence and self-justification (who are relatively few) simply take self-indulgence and self-justification to progressively more subtle levels. As one evolves, one becomes less and less self-centered, but one remains personality-centered for almost the entire human evolutionary passage. It is only in the relatively final stages of human evolution (i.e., the spiritual path) that one actually passes beyond personality-centeredness. But therein (that passage) lays the key to fulfillment. One must eventually rise above even the subtle and lower-self-sustaining justifications of the personality in order to reach (achieve) union (in consciousness) with the higher self.

Rationalization is an important and necessary step, and is certainly better (albeit more complicated) than self-indulgence without any rationalization. But even the logic of rationalization is actually non-conclusive (not valid) in the higher sense. The inherent fallibility of logic (reasoning) (rationalization) allows one to twist and distort things however one wishes. As one progresses, one rationalizes humanitarian budgets (allocations of one's resources (time, money)) and/or spiritual efforts (likewise) [thus inhibiting "real" progress and sustaining the power of the lower self]. Eventually one realizes the inherent limitations of rational process. And eventually one learns to do what needs to be done without any justification or rationalization (i.e., one's motive is simply to do what needs to be done, rather than to have specific (or even general) but personal objectives).

Section 5.516



Other Aspects of Psychology 2

- Among the essential keys to growth in consciousness are understanding oneself and understanding the broader context so that one can build healthy relationships. But none of this can be accomplished without real awareness and insight. Additional aspects of psychology include actualization, intervention, delusion and denial, control, and quality aggregation.

Actualization

Actualization is the process of becoming what one truly is. The context of actualization is found in the distinction between the ideal human being (which is what the human being really is in the higher sense) and the human being in practice (which is what the human being is in the lower sense). The ideal human being is the individualized evolutionary archetype or personality matrix that is the intended outcome of human evolution. That outcome exists in potential form, generalized in the sense that it reflects the overall goals for human evolution, individualized in the sense that it reflects particular (personal) experience and the particular evolutionary path of the individual, in the context of humanity. Thus actualization has general goals but relies upon diversity of individual experience and expression. The outcome is assured only in general terms.

The humanistic psychologist Abraham H. Maslow popularized the notion of actualization by defining a hierarchy of needs and suggesting that once the relatively more basic human needs are fulfilled, then the human being would naturally approach or work toward the actualized state. According to Maslow “actualized persons are (1) realistically oriented, (2) accept themselves, others, and the world as they are, (3) spontaneous, and (4) problem-centered rather than self-centered. (5) They have an air of emotional detachment and a need for privacy, (6) are autonomous and independent, (7) appreciative of people and the world in a fresh, rather than stereotyped way. (8) Most have had profound mystical or spiritual experience, though not necessarily religious in nature. (9) They identify with mankind (10) and their relationships with a few people are profound, deeply emotional, and not superficial. They (11) have a democratic personality structure, for them all people are equal, (12) do not confuse means with ends, (13) resist conformity to culture, and (16) transcend, rather than merely cope with, the environment.” By independent one should mean “relatively unconditioned by mass consciousness.” By identification with mankind one should mean “rather than oneself and not to the exclusion of more general life.” By deeply emotional one should mean “meaningfully emotional” rather than emotionally-polarized.

The humanistic approach is to some extent helpful to the evolution of human consciousness in the intermediate (non-passive) sense. In the intermediate stages of human evolution, the “student” must be motivated, take constructive action, learn directly from experience, etc. In short, one must consciously and deliberately become more actualized. Yet transcending the egoism implied in the humanistic approach is eventually necessary. But the more subtle aspects (quality of consciousness, purity, overcoming egoism, etc.) may come later.

From the humanistic perspective, “man” is in control and consciously evolving according to rational objectives. From the spiritual (teleological) (more reverent) point of view, “man” is evolving in accordance with the divine plan, consciously or unconsciously. In either case, one is progressing in consciousness and the “spiritual” perspective eventually dominates as the humanistic approach to actualization ultimately reveals the limitations of human-centeredness.

One of the keys to actualization (besides motivation and fulfillment) is taking responsibility for one’s own actions and the consequences thereof. This is a matter of maturity and affords greater (meaningful) depth to experience. But the ultimate key to actualization is responsiveness to the higher self (the soul which “holds” the matrix of archetypal existence (causal body)).

† Commentary No. 1263

Intervention 1

Intervention is defined as the process through which a person or group of people attempt to interfere in another person’s affairs, sincerely or otherwise, with purported or genuine intent to “help” that person in dealing with some sort of perceived or adjudged crisis or illness. Intervention, in the sense of psychological intervention, is rarely a matter of love or caring, though it is often purported to be. Friends listen, learn, understand, and offer to help. Friends do not impose.

The intent of a (psychological) intervention may be to hinder or alter some action or behavior or simply to “remedy” some perceived condition (attitude, behavior, (physical, emotional, mental) illness or disease). Intervention implies

and usually involves imposition, in the sense that the “client” or “victim” of intervention is generally unwilling to do or to be as the intervener (or group) intends. Perhaps the client (victim) is incapable of sensible action. Perhaps the client is capable but simply chooses not to do what others would have him (her) do or be. And perhaps (actually, necessarily) the intervener(s) simply made a judgment, speciously or otherwise, and are acting upon that judgment. Generally, intervention involves the use or threat of use of some coercive force, to entice the client (victim) to be more receptive. But in any event, whether sincere and genuine or gratuitously self-serving, any intervention is necessarily a matter of imposition. And, generally unless it involves a minor child or genuinely incapacitated adult, it is a crime in consciousness.

To constructively and with sincerity assist someone who is open and responsive to being helped is a noble effort. To “intervene” in some obvious or apparent injustice is likewise noble, provided that the intervention is welcomed (in which case it would be an “assistance” and not an intervention). Genuinely caring for someone means listening and understanding and offering encouragement, without judging and without imposing. In the “best” case of intervention, there is gentleness and kindness. In the worst case of intervention, it is a matter of psychic violence (psychological rape). Any expression of criticism or judgment is an expression of (necessarily harmful) violence.

There is of course a dynamic range to intervention, from casual (less imposing) to formal (more imposing). From singular to collective. From genuine and sincere to self-serving. From legitimate in the sense of there being a true basis to illegitimate in the sense that the purported basis is unfounded or based on (specious) judgment or is self-serving in some manner. The ethics of “intervention” are relatively clear. No one has the right to impose on another, except where there is direct responsibility, as in a legitimate and sincerely founded parent-child relationship. And almost every “basis” for intervention is a matter of judgment, and judgment is never infallible, and rarely is judgment a matter of understanding the whole truth of anything.

So while there may be (a few) instances of legitimate and helpful intervention, the vast preponderance of “interventions” are merely attempts to impose one’s views on another, without real appreciation or respect for the victim’s thoughts or feelings or values, without any real consideration for the victim at all.

Indeed, most interventions are abject failures, even (and perhaps especially) where the “intended” changes are brought about. They are failures because they damage the psyche of the client (victim). They are failures because the whole process is adversarial (contentious) (impositional) (separative) (head-centered).

† Commentary No. 1264

Intervention 2

No matter how sincere the interveners purport or believe themselves to be. No matter how heart-centered they perceive themselves to be (one is not heart-centered “because” one “thinks” that one is, or “because” all of one’s actions appear to be noble (the head is notoriously capable and clever, able to provide whatever rationalizations are needed for self-deception)). Intervention is (necessarily) ego-based. It is based on judgment. It is not based on realization. It is based on imposition. It is not (truly) based on caring. It comes from the head, not from the heart.

To truly care for someone is to respect them, to listen and learn about their feelings, thoughts, and values, to accept them as they are, to support them as they choose to be, not as one would (foolishly) have them be. It matters not if the intervention is “based” in the (worldly) legal system, or if it is based on some democratic process (a majority of (or even all) people believing something to be true (or warranted) does not in itself mean that it is true (or warranted)). Intervention is, still, in almost every instance, a wrongful imposition. It is fine (perhaps even helpful) to express one’s concerns, to share one’s insights, but without the intent to change or influence another person’s attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, principles, temperament, or values.

One might argue that the “victim” is deserving, otherwise it would not happen. And, given an understanding of karma, this may indeed be true. But to “think” that the victim is deserving is judgmental and therefore psychically and psychologically violent (harmful). And to act on that judgment, through attempted intervention, is therefore unconscionable. One might also argue that if one is sincere, if one believes that the “action” is warranted, that the end justifies the means, etc., it is okay. But it is not. Sincerity is not an acceptable

excuse for unconscionable behavior (not that there is ever any acceptable excuse). Moreover, "sincerity" is often a matter of self-deception, in which the (necessarily self-serving) ego drives the behavior (intervention). Even "knowledge" is never sufficient, for one can never really know the whole truth of a situation. This is why any form of judgment is necessarily limited. One can make assumptions or presumptions, but one can never really know anything (sufficiently) about another person.

Thus there are a number of substantive fallacies associated with the "conventional psychological" notion and process of intervention, (1) that a person can ever know enough to make a proper judgment or truly know what another person needs (in fact, one can never really know the whole truth of anything), (2) that any person can ever be truly influenced (in fact, externally-imposed behavior "modification" is simply another form of conditioning, it is not a matter of learning or a matter of growth in consciousness, and therefore it is at best transient, at worst long-lived (in the sense that it inhibits the truly needed self-realization)), and (3) that sincere imposition is not harmful (in fact, the very act of judging someone is harmful, to both the judge and the judged (likewise criticism is never constructive)).

On the other hand, there are legitimate techniques and processes for helping people. Without judging. Without imposing. Without intervention. Through listening and learning. By working with people, through gentle (kind) encouragement rather than judgment. By respecting people and allowing them to be who and how they are, rather than expecting them to conform to some (one's own or collective) value system.

Delusion and Denial

Delusion is defined as the state of being deluded about something or in some way, believing something falsely and acting as if it were not false, especially in the sense of false beliefs regarding oneself or others that persists despite factual or objective evidence. Delusion “implies self-deception concerning facts or situations” that is relatively uncommon and/or not shared by others in general, while illusion “implies an ascription of truth or reality to something that seems to normal perception to be true or real but in fact is not.” Thus while many people suffer the illusion that the physical world is real, relatively few are actually deluded about their place in the world. Delusion, then, is a more serious matter than illusion.

There are many illusions inherent in living in the objective world, wherein people tend to see things as they appear to be rather than as they are actually. Conditioning tends to strengthen these basic illusions. But as a person grows and deepens with experience and assimilation of experience, over the course of a lifetime and over the course of a succession of lifetimes, there is a gradual and progressive awakening to the illusory nature of this world. The slightly more “enlightened” person simply sees things a bit more clearly, a bit more closer to reality, a bit less unencumbered by appearances and unconscious assumptions and presumptions about the world and a person’s place in the world (and the nature of experience (and the nature of being)). But “delusion” is a bit more special than illusion, because it is inherently more personal, more individual, more a matter of personal perception than (more collective) illusion. Most delusion is a matter of uncommon (personally-oriented) beliefs that are simply false, but there are some cases where most people are deluded, sort of an extension and personalization of illusion, while some (fewer) people can see (relatively more) clearly and correctly. And of course there is also the case where a majority of people think that “someone” is deluded when in actuality it is not so.

One of the most prevalent delusions is that of believing oneself to be happy or unhappy. This is a delusion compounded and engendered by wrong identification, of (the illusion of) identifying oneself with the body and feelings

rather than with the (actual) indwelling (higher) consciousness). Less prevalent, but more serious, is the delusion that one is “happy” when indeed one is, at the level of appearances, actually not so. This is a modest form of denial, of simply denying the relative (practical) truth about oneself that is more readily apparent to others.

Denial compounds and goes beyond merely being deluded. Denial is an actual (conscious) “refusal to admit the truth or reality” of something. Thus being deluded is not a matter of awareness (indeed, is a matter of not being aware), while being in denial is a matter of consciously believing something for which there is substantial evidence to the contrary. But people tend to perceive and to believe what they want to, what sustains the illusion (perhaps even delusion) of (therefore unthreatened) comfortableness (illusion of security), what is consistent with their world view (the way they view the external world) and/or their personal view (the way they perceive themselves).

But many self-perceptions are simply convenient (and wrong). If a person’s self-perception is substantially at variance with how another person perceives him (her), there is delusion (by one or the other or both), depending on what is actually true). Thus the spiritual student should strive to be open and honest about oneself and about one’s external perceptions.

† Commentary No. 1287

New Age Delusions

There is a great deal of underlying, uncommon truth associated with new age metaphysics, but there is also widespread delusion (in many or most new age practitioners) based on limited understanding of those truths and based on unrealistic self-perception.

One of the “truths” of new age metaphysics is that each person is a living God or Goddess, when in fact the actual truth is that God lives within each person, that there is an underlying divine nature, and that a person can in principle tap into that underlying divine nature and evoke changes or expressions of that divine nature in the daily life. But if the outer, superficial self (personality)

assumes that "it" (oneself in the sense of the waking-personality or personality consciousness) is the indwelling God, then one is very definitely deluded. Because the ego (personality) is simply an artificial entity that is utilized by the underlying divine nature (soul) (higher consciousness) (monad). Most people who study metaphysics simply very wrongly confuse the ego and the higher self. The problem is compounded by the "new age" emphasis on self-esteem (even while healthy (modest) self-esteem is constructive for most people).

Another great metaphysical "truth" is that one can change one's circumstances, create one's future, in accordance with whatever is desired. Indeed, creatively having expectation does evoke energy and forces toward fulfillment of that expectation, but there is also a matter of karma (and practicality) that is often conveniently ignored by the new age practitioner. And indeed, one can bring about changes, but only to the extent that those changes are consistent with one's karma, i.e., what one actually needs and deserves. One of the greatest new age delusions is the belief that "God wants me to be happy" which tends to justify whatever behavior evokes (artificial) feelings of happiness. The problem is that "God" does not "want" anything. God provides the creative evolutionary framework, but does not get involved in the details of manifestation or evolution (and does not get involved in "individual" lives or circumstances). Happiness and sadness are necessarily superficial. God is not.

Positive thinking can be a real boon to one's day-to-day life experience, and yet unbalanced, unrealistic, positive thinking is delusional. A broad framework of positive thinking (feeling) is healthy, but where positive thinking is applied to details of personal matters, there is some measure of delusion (inconsistency between what is expected and what is actual). And to continue to believe something that is unrealistic is also the beginnings of delusion compounded by denial, especially if one is entangled in day-to-day life and personal (artificial) circumstances (desires, expectations, reactions to circumstances).

Any emphasis on being "beautiful" or being prosperous or having great self-esteem or "taking charge of one's life" (another great metaphysical delusion) necessarily takes the person away from an emphasis on truth and reality. There may be needed lessons in new age metaphysical delusional experiences, but the spiritual student rather needs to cultivate humility and a dedication to truth that allows the truth to be seen or perceived relatively more clearly despite

whatever tendencies there may be to the contrary. Indeed, if one focuses on being open to truth, embracing truth, and living the truth as best one can, than one will naturally tend to be “beautiful” and prosperous and not lacking in self-esteem, but without the otherwise attendant delusions.

† Commentary No. 1288

Control

There is a nominal trendiness associated with “taking charge” or “being in control” of one’s life. While there is some merit or value in this notion, for some people, there are also a number of associated caveats and delusions.

First of all, many people believe or perceive themselves (as egos and personalities) to be in control (of the lower life, of their own destiny) or to need to be in control, when in fact the ego or personality is never actually in control (in any real (non-superficial) sense). Neither are God or the soul. God (and the soul) provide encouragement and qualification to the extent that the lower self (ego) (personality) is receptive and responsive, but they do not control the lower life or circumstances in any direct sense. The waking-consciousness (ego) (personality-consciousness) (lower self) is nominally “in charge” but not really. But there are controlling factors. These controlling factors are the evolutionary principles (evoking evolutionary forces (in manifestation)) that underlay and overshadow all of life in the lower worlds, e.g., karma and dharma. So only in the karmic sense of “actions beget consequences” is any lower self (personality) “in charge” of the lower life. Yet even consequences do not generally follow (or precede) specific actions. Indeed, consequences generally follow (or precede) cumulative actions.

But there is for many people a need to engage (lower) (worldly) life in a more active, head-centered sense. This is where a person is entangled in life in the lower worlds and needs to evoke personal, worldly, experience and expression in order to learn and grow, to actively engage the world and one’s circumstances. But while this is an active engagement, one is still not actually in control of anything (while there may be the delusion of being in control), one is simply more actively engaged. This active stage follows the largely passive and

instinctive stage and precursus the subsequent non-active (non-passive) stage of simply being aware of life in this world and “doing” whatever needs to be done, intuitively (non-passively, non-actively, non-willfully) rather than (passively, non-willfully) instinctively or (actively, willfully) intellectually.

The need to be in control of one’s own life is necessarily ego-based. While the underlying (higher, non-conscious) purpose is evolutionary experience, the ego is simply attempting to substantiate its role as the (primary) interface between the waking-consciousness and the outer world. The problem is that this process (delusion) occurs only if a person identifies with the lower self (ego, personality, body) rather than with higher consciousness (and it hardly matters that the person “thinks” or “believes” that he or she is indeed identifying with something higher. But almost everyone identifies with the lower self, without realizing that it is so. Even most spiritual students. Learning to discern the differences between the ego pretending to be the soul and the soul itself is a very challenging process. And one that does not (need to) concern most people.

There is also a notion of the controlling personality, one who is perceived to be controlling or unduly influencing others (especially in petty ways). It is generally inherently wrong to impose on others, physically, emotionally, or intellectually, and so the controlling personal is one who is simply not appreciating or respecting the needs of others. But some are perceived as controlling when in fact they are not; where in fact others are simply passive (and yet always responsible for their own actions or reactions) but resentful. Thus one should simply live according to one’s own conscience and not worry about what others would have one do or be.

Quality Aggregation

One of the tendencies of human nature (and the mind) is to aggregate qualities in one's perception, i.e., to presume that if a person has one quality then that person also has other qualities that one associates with that quality. For example, gentleness and kindness are similar in quality and energy, but they are not really the same thing. Many people would observe gentleness and infer (usually unconsciously) that kindness is also present, but in fact, while many people are indeed both gentle and kind, one does not necessarily coincide with the other.

The reason is that human development tends to be unbalanced. People develop qualities according to their experiences (karma) and nature (needs). Over the course of a number of lifetimes there tends to be increasing balance (wholeness), but most people have not yet achieved any real balance. If a certain quality has been developed, there is a good chance that similar qualities have also been developed, but it is not necessarily so. Thus most people who are gentle are also kind, but some are not both gentle and kind. Similarly, while most people who are critical are also judgmental, some are not both critical and judgmental. So it is wrong to generalize from an observation of qualities, to make (conscious or unconscious) assumptive associations or perceived aggregations.

Moreover, one quality does not rule out another. Some qualities seem inconsistent one with another, based upon experience, but there are always anomalies, people whose development is relatively more unbalanced or whose nature is inherently self-inconsistent. Thus a person who has many "good" qualities should not be expected to have "all" good qualities. And much depends upon circumstances and context. For example, a person who is honest in some sense is not necessarily honest in every sense. But a person who is truly honest, who is consciously committed to being as honest as he or she can be, is generally truly honest in all respects, at least to the extent that he or she is conscious.

The human being in incarnation is a relatively complex mixture of qualities and characteristics. Each develops relatively uniquely, according to experience and

opportunities (and needs). Eventually there is convergence (increasing coherence and consistency in quality of consciousness (and therefore in aggregate)), but most people are still very much in the “complicated” stage of life, where there are usually a number of different and contrasting forces at work. In “getting to know” someone there is a natural tendency to fill in the gaps assumptively (or imaginatively), only to be surprised later on when inconsistencies are revealed. This is certainly true where one relies on observation and either emotion or intellect. But it is not generally true where one relies on the (true) intuition. With proper intuition, one has a general and subjective sense (insight), not based on observation or judgment, but simply based on (inner, higher) feelings. With intuition it is much more likely that one can simply sense in someone their overall quality of consciousness, without judgment and without presuming or inferring anything about the specific characteristics or nature.

Part of the human experience (evolution in consciousness) is simply developing and encouraging right (proper) human relations. Understanding human nature and understanding the various propensities and inconsistencies in human nature are part of the process. Both in relation to one’s own growth and in relationship to others.

† Commentary No. 1420

Qualities and Conditions

With regard to consciousness, there is a subtle distinction between qualities and conditions. A condition in consciousness is something that is embraced in some sense but not something that is actually possessed. A condition may be common, even prevailing, but it is not actually incorporated in consciousness. It is not something that one assimilates nor something that one can carry on into the next life. Happiness and sadness are conditions in consciousness. These conditions may come and go. They are inherently transient, though one or another of the various conditions may prevail (be sustained in consciousness for some period of time).

Some conditions are evoked and embraced by circumstances, others simply by choice (actually even circumstantial conditions are a matter of choice (usually

unconsciously)). Some people are happy when the sun is shining while some people are "happy" all the time, regardless of circumstances. But happiness is relatively superficial; it is simply a condition in consciousness. There is happiness. It can be embraced. It can be evoked. But it cannot be possessed. One may be good-natured and appear to be happy all of the time, but happiness is still merely a condition in consciousness.

Qualities are somewhat similar to conditions in consciousness, except that they are actually developable. Qualities are "things" that one develops and incorporates into one's nature and consciousness. Qualities are characteristics that can be assimilated and carried forth into the next life. Qualities evoke conditions in consciousness, but the qualities themselves are not transients. For example, honesty is a value. If one is indeed honest by nature, if one has developed the quality of honesty, then one naturally embraces the condition in consciousness of "being" or demonstrating honesty. But the root quality of being honest is part of the consciousness, part of what is carried forth from one life to the next.

Most people are experiential. They seek and embrace conditions in consciousness. But spiritual students are not focused on seeking or embracing conditions in consciousness. Spiritual students are (properly) focused on learning and growing and serving, which also means developing qualities that can be assimilated. In other words, spiritual students are focused on evolution in consciousness rather than simply "having" the emotions and feelings engendered by experience. Spiritual students tend to be "happy" but happiness is neither a goal nor is it important. Happiness may facilitate, but spiritual students are much more concerned with developing and expressing real qualities in consciousness. Thus embracing gentleness and kindness is much more important to the spiritual student than (merely) being happy. Being perceptive, being aware of conditions in consciousness (both with regard to oneself and with regard to others), understanding cause and effect relationships, serving humanity according to whatever talents and opportunities there may be, these things are (relatively) important, while (mere) conditions in consciousness are not.

Thus some "things" are merely conditions in consciousness, while other things are actual qualities that engender and sustain conditions in consciousness. But

some qualities are counter-evolutionary and must be overcome or transformed into their more constructive counterparts. And because these are qualities and not merely conditions in consciousness there is inertia, which means not inconsiderable challenge, e.g., to transform a self-centered quality into something selfless. Of course selflessness is not merely a condition in consciousness.

