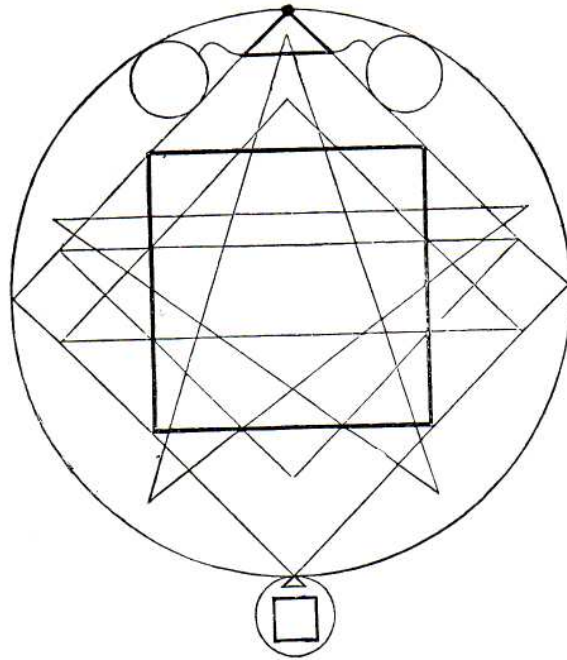


# Meditation Triangle Units



## Psychosynthesis and the Inner Life

by Philippe L. De Coster, D.D.



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## Foreword



Psychosynthesis is a transpersonal, or spiritual psychotherapy, a phenomenon of the twentieth century Western world. It is a theory and practice of individual development and growth, though with a potential for wider application into social and indeed world-wide settings: and it assumes that each human being is a soul as well as a personality.

For nearly hundred years, growing alongside the psychological work of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung stands the work of Dr. Roberto Assagioli, M.D. and Psychosynthesis. A transpersonal and distinctly western psychology, Psychosynthesis puts forth a holistic model of human development that takes into account the spiritual dimension of human nature. Assagioli saw human nature as a vast array of biological, social and spiritual impulses and felt that a true psychology had to embrace all of these aspects of the person. Psychosynthesis believes that we each have an innate tendency to evolve and unfold our highest potentials and that we can consciously cooperate with this process. Some of these potentials are the capacities of consciousness, energy and the human imagination. The strengthening and interaction with these inner resources opens people to their own innate spirituality, inner wisdom and potential for inner peace. Psychosynthesis is both a theory and practice where the focus is to achieve synthesis and harmony within and around ourselves.

Its hallmarks are a remarkable model of consciousness, concrete tools for developing and expanding awareness, tangible ways of working with the personality and a lifelong model for spiritual development.

As referred to above, the theory and practice of psychosynthesis began with the work of the Italian Psychiatrist, Dr. Roberto Assagioli, M.D. In a doctoral thesis in 1910, Dr. Assagioli presented his vision of a holistic approach in psychology emphasizing growth and including the spiritual dimension of human experience. He set out to form a psychology of the whole person, focusing his studies on the higher aspects of human nature, outside religious dogmas as found, for example, in Christianity.

As he proceeded to develop psychosynthesis, Dr. Assagioli was joined by increasing numbers of students and colleagues as Michal J. Eastcott and Nancy Magor in United Kingdom, and from many other countries. Some only read his articles, some studied with him personally, and many were inspired to practice psychosynthesis. Each could contribute to the growth of psychosynthesis in their own personal style, and they adapted psychosynthetic principles and techniques to the societies in which they worked. For every beginner, the Meditation group

for the New Age as founded. No orthodox method was devised for application by all psychosynthesists, and no centralized organization was formed, or is constituted today.

By remaining open and adaptable to a wide range of personal and cultural styles, the psychosynthesis movement established a context for a tremendous richness, variety and creative freedom. At the same time, its openness and diversity led to a certain degree of fragmentation. There was no coordination of the movement as a whole. No formal structure existed for independent workers to share new developments in psychosynthesis. No one person could form an accurate picture of psychosynthesis in its totality.

A further difficulty in forming a complete picture of psychosynthesis has been its openness to continuous growth. By nature, it is dynamic and changing. There has been a reluctance to define it or to formulate a precise theory, since definitions can be limiting. It is often described as a process or a way of inner life rather than a theory or a specific point of view.

It is believed that psychosynthesis has now reached a stage where the elements of a complete theory are emerging. The literature and practice of psychosynthesis embody repeated themes – definite patterns that give psychosynthesis a unique identity. Psychosynthesis does have its boundaries, its special emphases, an underlying unity, and a particular place in the world of Western Psychology, open to everybody, especially those finding traditional Western religion outdated.

Psychosynthesis is an open system, with a specific historical background, first in Europe, from Italy to England (*United Kingdom of Britain*), settling at Sundial House, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, UK. This study, *Psychosynthesis and the Inner Life*, explores the growth of psychosynthesis and several major Western and Eastern influences on its development. In relation to the “Inner, Spiritual and Individual life”, *Seven Basic Constructs of Psychosynthesis*, will clarify Assagioli’s ideas on the subject which also forms the foundation of psychosynthesis.

Through the 1960/70's, there was a growing recognition and acceptance of transpersonal psychology as the "fourth force." In the same decade, psychosynthesis was developing a coherent identity, a sense of wholeness, in Italy, United Kingdom, North and South America, Holland to name a few countries. The earlier pioneering work of Dr. Assagioli and his co-workers had foreshadowed several major features of the so-called fourth force. It is the combining and separate developments in psychology as a broad framework, the joining of the scientific and the spiritual, the study of alternative realities and altered states of consciousness, promoting growth beyond the Ego. So, it was a

natural step for psychosynthesis to be acknowledged as an established aspect of transpersonal psychology.

Psychosynthesis had been humanistic and transpersonal since its inception in 1910. Dr. Roberto Assagioli, M.D. was much ahead of his time. He was pioneering an approach that was not to be widely recognized and appreciated until the time of his death in 1974.

In the early days, while Dr. Roberto Assagioli was making a radical departure from psychoanalysis, thought he did not reject psychoanalytic ideas and techniques altogether. For him, psychoanalysis was good as far as it went, but it remained incomplete. His aim was to include the ideas of the psychoanalytic approach in a broader context. This notion – that new developments in psychology could include the former in a larger whole – would later become a key feature of transpersonal psychology theory. Dr. Assagioli firmly believed that his departure from pure behaviourism or psychoanalysis was not a rejection of science:

Our position affirms that all the superior manifestations of the human psyche, such as creative imagination, intuition, aspiration, genius, are facts which are as real and important as are the conditioned reflexes, and therefore are susceptible to research and treatment just as scientifically as conditioned reflexes.

We accept the idea that spiritual drives or spiritual urges are as real, basic and fundamental as sexual and aggressive drives; they should not be reduced to sublimation or pathological distortion of the sexual and aggressive components of the personality – although in many neurotic cases such elements are, of course, also present.

What we hope to see developed over a period of years – and certainly do not claim has yet been achieved – is a science of the Self, of its energies, its manifestations, of how these energies can be released, how they can be contacted, how they can be utilized for constructive and therapeutic work. (Assagioli, 1965)

Here again, Dr. Assagioli was the forerunner of a key feature of transpersonal psychology theory. Charles Tart, for example, made a strong case for the synthesis of the scientific and the spiritual in his *Transpersonal Psychologies*.

Who was Charles Tart sharing Assagioli's ideas in North America:

Charles Tart was born in 1937 and grew up in Trenton, New Jersey. He was active in amateur radio and worked as a radio engineer (with a First

Class Radiotelephone License from the Federal Communications Commission) while a teenager. Tart studied electrical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before electing to become a psychologist. He received his doctoral degree in psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1963, and then received postdoctoral training in hypnosis research with Professor Ernest R. Hilgard at Stanford University.

He is currently (2005) a Core Faculty Member at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (Palo Alto, California) and a Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of Noetic Sciences (Sausalito, California), as well as Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of California, Davis, where he served for 28 years, and emeritus member of the Monroe Institute board of advisors. Tart was the holder of the Bigelow Chair of Consciousness Studies at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas and has served as a Visiting Professor in East-West Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies, as an Instructor in Psychiatry at the School of Medicine of the University of Virginia, and a consultant on government funded parapsychological research at the Stanford Research Institute (now known as SRI International).

He was also integral in the theorizing and construction of the automatic ESP testing device the ESPATEACHER machine that was built at the University of Virginia. He supports Joseph McMoneagle's remote viewing claims that McMoneagle has remote viewed into the past, present, and future and has predicted future events.

As well as a laboratory researcher, Tart has been a student of the Japanese martial art of Aikido (in which he holds a black belt), of meditation, of Gurdjieff 's work, of Buddhism, and of other psychological and spiritual growth disciplines. Tart believes that the evidence of the paranormal is bringing science and spirit together. His primary goal is to build bridges between the scientific and spiritual communities, and to help bring about a refinement and integration of Western and Eastern approaches for knowing the world and for personal and social growth.

In his 1986 book "*Waking Up*", he introduced the phrase "consensus trance" to the lexicon. Tart likened normal waking consciousness to hypnotic trance. He discussed how each of us is from birth inducted to the trance of the society around us. Tart noted both similarities and differences between hypnotic trance induction and consensus trance induction. He emphasized the enormous and pervasive power of parents, teachers, religious leaders, political figures, and others to compel

induction. Referring to the work of Gurdjieff and others he outlines a path to awakening based upon self-observation.

Who was Abraham Maslow?

Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Maslow was the oldest of seven children. His parents were uneducated Jews from Russia. He was slow and tidy, and remembered his childhood as lonely and rather unhappy, because, as he said, "I was the little Jewish boy in the non-Jewish neighbourhood. It was a little like being the first Negro enrolled in the all-white school. I was isolated and unhappy. I grew up in libraries and among books." He would pursue law, but he went to graduate school at the University of Wisconsin to study psychology. While there, he married his first cousin Bertha in December 1928, and found as his chief mentor, professor Harry Harlow. At Wisconsin he pursued an original line of research, investigating primate dominance behaviour and sexuality. He went on to further research at Columbia University, continuing similar studies; there he found another mentor in Alfred Adler, one of Sigmund Freud's early colleagues.

From 1937 to 1951, Maslow was on the faculty of Brooklyn College. In New York he found two more mentors, anthropologist Ruth Benedict and Gestalt psychologist Max Wertheimer, whom he admired both professionally and personally. These two were so accomplished in both realms, and such "wonderful human beings" as well, that Maslow began taking notes about them and their behaviour. This would be the basis of his lifelong research and thinking about mental health and human potential. He wrote extensively on the subject, borrowing ideas from other psychologists but adding significantly to them, especially the concepts of a hierarchy of needs, meta-needs, self-actualizing persons, and peak experiences. Maslow became the leader of the humanistic school of psychology that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, which he referred to as the "third force" -- beyond Freudian theory and behaviourism.

Maslow was a professor at Brandeis University from 1951 to 1969, and then became a resident fellow of the Laughlin Institute in California. He died of a heart attack on June 8, 1970. In 1967, the American Humanist Association named him Humanist of the Year.

### **Highlights of Psychosynthesis**

1. "A multi-polar model of the human psyche, with its various subpersonalities; (as opposed to depth psychology's bi-polar or tri-polar traditional structure).

2. The central position of the Self as focus of coordination and integration of the personality.
3. The importance of the will, and of being a conscious centre capable of choice and purpose, in the midst of the apparently chaotic and contradictory events of life,
4. The existence of the transpersonal realm: the higher unconscious as source of inspiration, ecstasy, creativity, intuition, and illumination.
5. The pathology of the sublime: the occurrence of psychological disturbances of a spiritual, rather than psychological, origin and nature.
6. The use of a wide range of active techniques for everybody to use on his or her own to further their personal and spiritual development.
7. The use of imagery for the exploration of the unconscious, the transformation of neurotic patterns, and the expansion of awareness.
8. The concept of a natural tendency towards synthesis and; syntropy ; (*the opposite of entropy*), that is, towards the spontaneous organization of meaningful and coherent fields within the psyche."

# I

## Psychosynthesis, a Spiritual Psychology



First and foremost, Dr. Roberto Assagioli, M.D. was a spiritual seeker throughout his life. Many of the passing references in his books “give him away” as it were. In the Psychosynthesis Manual alone, there are many references to Eastern Mysticism: Hinduism, Yoga’s of various kinds, Buddhism, and Tibet. There are even more references to subjects from the Western Mystery Traditions: Christian Mysticism, Jewish Traditions, influences from classical Greek philosophy, Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, the Cathars, Hermeticism and Magic, Meditation, Rosicrucians, Freemasonry, Occult Societies, and Alchemy. That Dr. Roberto Assagioli, M.D. remained a seeker is shown through the books on the library shelves in his study in Florence - there is a Carlos Castaneda book, for instance, from the early seventies, not long before he died.

Along with integrating material from the lower unconscious, Psychosynthesis is concerned with realizing and synthesizing the contents of the higher unconscious into our personality. The higher unconscious is an autonomous realm from which originate our more highly evolved impulses, altruistic love and will, humanitarian action, artistic and scientific inspiration, philosophic and spiritual insight, and the drive toward purpose and meaning in life. Indeed,

innovations, creative breakthroughs, peak experiences, higher qualities, spiritual insights, a pervading sense of calm and expanded knowledge always come from a level of the mind that is greater than rational thought. This wisdom level of mind is a fact of human nature. The development, access and interaction with this part of our nature evoke latent potentials and is life changing, resulting in emotional, behavioural and quality of life benefits. It is through the process of psychosynthesis that a relationship with this wisdom can be made.

The worlds spiritual and philosophical traditions are filled with stories of this wisdom mind and have variously named it the Higher Self, the Self, the Still Voice Within, the Muse, the Soul, the Source, Illumination, Higher Consciousness, Inner Guidance, Inner Teacher, the Light of Intuition, Guardian Angel, Evolutionary Aspect of the Brain, etc.

Through the practice of meditation and engagement of the human imagination you will be assisted in experiencing and shifting your awareness and choice to this part of your nature.

Psychosynthesis makes the assumption that we are a “Soul” and have a Personality. The “Soul or Higher Self”, our true essence, lies beyond our personality. To realize this experience requires our many parts to resolve their conflicts and work in unison.

Each of us is a crowd with many internal parts called subpersonalities. Often, our parts are far from being at peace with one another. Dr. Roberto Assagioli, M.D., founder of Psychosynthesis wrote, “We are not unified; we often feel that we are, because we do not have many bodies and many limbs, and because one hand does not usually hit the other. But, metaphorically, that is exactly what does happen within us. Several subpersonalities are continually scuffling: impulses, desires, principles, aspirations are engaged in an unceasing struggle.”

Psychosynthesis contains a brilliant map of this internal system and a comprehensive structure to contact, intervene, heal and ultimately harmonize our subpersonalities for greater functioning. Utilizing the methods of Psychosynthesis, Internal Family Systems, Meditation and Imagery work you will be assisted in experiencing this process for yourself.

Psychosynthesis encourages creative change. It fosters new developmental steps. Each step is considered spiritual when placed in perspective as one element in the larger pattern of one's life purpose. Each step is spiritual when it benefits self and others, harming no one. Each step is spiritual when it promotes the well-being of the whole of life.



Spirituality in psychosynthesis also means balancing times of struggle and work with times of humour and recreation. It means taking actions which follow high principles: a willingness to be firm in the face of injustice and courageous in times of adversity. To be spiritual is to live by values and attitudes which are humanistic, progressive and democratic; to be actively concerned with the meaning and purpose of life; and to relate one's personal development to universal development.

This view of the spiritual is echoed by other authors as well, and generally accepted in our today's cultural world, though many do not know what "psychosynthesis" is, nor know anything about its founder. An important management consultant wrote "In Search of a Corporate Soul", which speaks of the need for "purposeful leaders" whose task is to " ... minimize destructive individual behaviour and to persuade people to sacrifice some of their own personal goals and needs for the good of the whole." (*D'Aprix, Roger, 1976*)

Carl Jung also points to this view of the spiritual in *Modern Man in "Search of a Soul"*. (Jung, 1933) This book mentions people who may not be affiliated with an organized religion but who nevertheless ". . . have experienced the soul as vividly as the body and for whom a religious attitude to life is as essential to them as a belief in the authenticity of science." In psychosynthesis, the religious term "soul" is related to the psychological terms "Higher Self" or "Transpersonal Self."

Roberto Assagioli, like Carl Gustav Jung, posited that the spiritual realm is not necessarily connected to any particular religious group, and psychosynthesis continues to draw inspiration from all the great religious traditions. The practical psychological methods of psychosynthesis are a useful adjunct to formal religious practices as well as an enhancement of the quality of life for individuals who are not affiliated with any particular religion. The spiritual in psychosynthesis encompasses anything which involves values higher than the average, including empathetic understanding, altruistic love, deep wisdom, creative inspiration, an appreciation of beauty, a sense of responsibility, a feeling of wanting to contribute, as well as so-called mystical experiences of universality, of oneness with the cosmos. (*Gerard, Robert, 1961*)

The (*Orthodox*) Catholic Church of the first centuries, and as persistently today, says that faith is enough; we should not need to have experience, that faith has to stand on its own, believing without "prove". The Gnostics in the early times after Christ disagreed, and paid the price for this heresy through countless Crusades sent to obliterate and destroy their message. The Crusades against the Cathars in the South of France, for instance, led to the slaughter of thousands of men, women and children, killed for their beliefs alone.

Dr. Assagioli embraces the Gnostic tradition wholeheartedly, putting it central to the vision of Psychosynthesis. He goes further, however, and quotes Goethe saying:

“Reality is that which is effective” thus aligning Psychosynthesis with Hermeticism and Magic. Indeed, “will and imagination” are clearly the most important elements of both psychosynthesis and magic (*always tempered by love, of course.*) Taking the hermetic position, Dr. Roberto Assagioli says “...in so far as phenomena whether termed spiritual, mystical or parapsychological change the inner reality and outer behaviour of an individual they are real.” This is again emphasising the importance of experience as well as faith.

In a rare moment of irony, or even mockery, Dr. Assagioli says (*talking of modern man*): “His belief in a future heaven if he conceives of one, is altogether theoretical and academic, as if proved by the fact that he takes the greatest pains to postpone as long as possible his departure to its joys.”

Let us explore what else is at the core of all these teachings that Dr. Roberto Assagioli incorporated into Psychosynthesis. Of course, there is much anecdotal information, and ideas and connections we can glean from his unpublished papers. But what clues can we learn from his published work, and particularly from the Psychosynthesis Manual?

What about, for instance, the Christian mysteries? Assagioli mentions Ignatius Loyola and the Jesuits who are considered to exemplify the 'will side' of the Christian tradition. The methods of self-discipline devised by Ignatius Loyola are most definitely aimed at strengthening the will. Dr. Assagioli also mentions Saint John of the Cross who is said to embody the love side of the Christian mysteries. The methods of St John are those often these days attributed to the feminine - love, surrender, forgiveness and so forth.

Assagioli was always looking for synthesis, the central theme of his work. Regarding the Christian Mysteries, he found this through Dante's Divine Comedy. This work is a synthesis of the “masculine / will” and “feminine / love” polarities, where Reason (represented by Virgil) can only take the aspirant so far, then Beauty (represented by Beatrice) takes him further, to the soul. The necessity of both is emphasised, so stressing the twin poles of analysis and synthesis. All “alchemy” whether called such or not, requires an analysis as part of the process, perhaps concurrent but often preceding the work of synthesis. Basically, the notion is you have to take something (*or someone*) apart before putting them back together again.

A theme central to Christianity, and most esoteric traditions, is that of service. Dr. Roberto Assagioli clearly intended this as a major part of the “Gnostic” tradition that Psychosynthesis would embrace. Talking about mystical experience, he says clearly: “Mystical experience is limited and whatever value it may have is only one stage in spiritual psychosynthesis ... the mystical experience is not an end in itself but from it the subject has to draw down the fire, enthusiasm and incentive to come back into the world and serve God and fellow humans “ (*Psychosynthesis*, page 207)



This leads us to the Rosicrucian tradition. Was Roberto Assagioli a Rosicrucian? Well, if he was, we would never directly know because part of the true Rosicrucian tradition asserts very strongly and adamantly that an initiate must never reveal this. Perhaps in keeping with this injunction, Dr. Roberto Assagioli is very discreet. In one place, however, he mentions “the rose at the centre of the cross that forms the symbol of some religious orders.” He is of course talking of the Rosicrucians. The word gives us a clue to their understanding of soul and spiritual growth, and of its connection to Psychosynthesis. “Rosicrucian” is made up of “Rose” and “Cross” and the notion is that when we accept our suffering (like Jesus on the Cross) then a rose blossoms in our heart. In other words, for the development of the Soul we need to include the darker aspects of psyche. It is vital we include the lower unconscious in our psychosynthesis work!

Dr. Roberto Assagioli, after mentioning the Rosicrucians, develops a beautiful exercise, one of the best known in Psychosynthesis - the blossoming of the rose. This is pure Rosicrucianism. Just as the cross needs to be planted firmly in the earth so the wood can 'bloom forth with a rose', so the rosebush in Assagioli's exercise needs to be firmly rooted in the earth to receive the nourishment required for it to blossom. The essential imagery of the rosy cross is a beautiful metaphor that lies at the heart of our Psychosynthesis way.

## Exercise of the Blossoming of the Rose

1. Let us imagine a rosebud, closed.
2. Let us visualize its stem and leaves with the bud above.

*It appears green, because the sepals are closed, but at the very top a rose coloured point can be seen. Let us visualise this vividly, holding the image in the centre of our consciousness.*

3. Now begins a slow movement: the sepals start to separate little by little, turning their points outward and revealing the rose-hued petals, which are still closed. The sepals continue to open until we can see the whole of the tender bud.
4. The petals follow suit and slowly separate, until a perfect fully-opened rose is seen.
5. At this stage let us try to smell the perfume of this rose, inhaling its characteristic and unmistakable scent; so delicate, sweet and delicious. Let us smell it with delight.

*(It may be recalled that religious language has frequently employed perfume as a symbol, e.g., “the odour of sanctity”; and incense is also used in many religious ceremonies).*

6. Let us now expand our visualisation to include the whole rosebud, and imagine the life force that arises from the roots to the flower and originates the process of opening.
7. Finally let us identify ourselves with the rose itself or, more precisely, let us “introject” it into ourselves.

*Symbolically we are this flower, this rose; The same life that animates the universe and has created the miracle of the rose is producing in us a like, even greater miracle – the awakening and development of our spiritual being and that which radiates from it.”*

Through this exercise we can effectively foster the inner “flowering.”

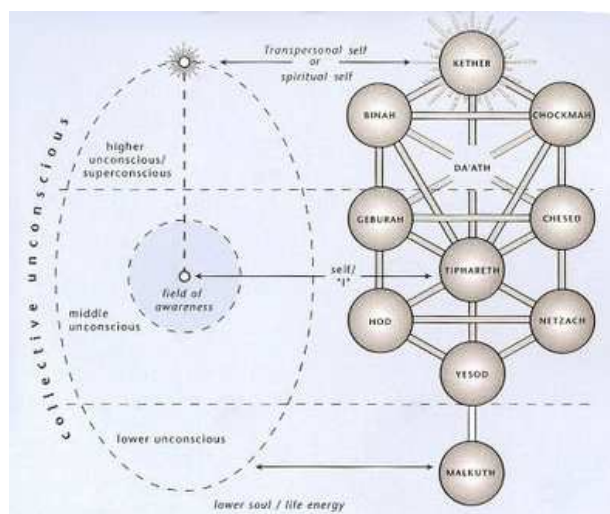
*(Extract from “Psychosynthesis – A Manual of Principles and Techniques, by Dr. Roberto Assagioli, M.D., pages 213-216)*

After discussing Christian Mysticism above, we must include the tradition that connects Dr. Roberto Assagioli to his own family, collective and ancestral roots - the Jewish Mystery Tradition, and particularly the Kabbalah, based on the glyph known as the Tree of Life. The influence of Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah on Dr. Roberto Assagioli is considerable. The link with the Kabbalah

is the main factor in Psychosynthesis being able to incorporate many other systems and techniques into its fold without being diluted or corrupted. The Psychosynthesis egg, like the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, on which it was modelled, is an excellent synthetic container for understanding and working with the psyche from an experiential perspective.

## II

### The Psychosynthesis Egg and The Tree of Life



It is clear that the main Kabbalistic diagram, The Tree of Life, is at the core of the spiritual psychologies in which Dr. Roberto Assagioli, the founder of



Psychosynthesis, had a life-long interest. It is therefore not surprising that Psychosynthesis easily interfaces with the Kabbalistic Tree of Life to create a model that can be effectively applied in many areas, particularly in the fields of healing, counselling and psychotherapy. Indeed, an understanding of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life is useful for practitioners of all types of therapeutic work. The larger, synthesising context of the Kabbalah enables different models to be included without any subsequent loss to the integrity of each system. (Above portrait: *Rabbi Joseph Ben Ephraim Caro, founder of the Kabbalah*)

The Kabbalah can enable practitioners of psychosynthesis particularly to deepen their knowledge of the human psyche and to understand their basic models in a simple yet deeper (and wider) context. The Kabbalah helps practitioners to develop their own style in accord with universal principles, develop relationship in line with these principles, and apply methods relevant to each situation.

Both the basic Psychosynthesis model and the Kabbalistic Tree of Life are systems of stunning clarity and simplicity. Using the two approaches together creates a meaningful synthesis that adds new depth to our work in service to others.



Joseph Ben Ephraim Caro Synagogue at Tsfat (Sefat, Safed)

The wider Jewish mystical tradition also affirms the importance of experience as well as faith, and Dr. Assagioli, who was Jewish, was steeped in its warm, heartfelt intentions. One of his friends was Martin Buber who has been called the father of Jewish Mysticism. Buber's masterful work expounding the importance of the reality and experience of what he called the I-Thou experience. The I-Thou experience is opposed to the I-it experience in which the other person in a relationship is made into an object. The I-Thou relationship transcends the projective and reflective limitations of I-it existence (*which can hardly be called relationship in comparison.*) What Buber was describing is the same as the Cathars illumination experience. His short biography:

**Martin Buber** (Hebrew: מרטין בובר; February 8, 1878 – June 13, 1965) was an Austrian-born Jewish philosopher best known for his philosophy of dialogue, a form of religious existentialism centered on the distinction between the “I-Thou” relationship and the “I-It” relationship.

Born in Vienna, Buber came from a family of observant Jews, but broke with Jewish custom to pursue secular studies in philosophy. In 1902,

Buber became the editor of the weekly “*Die Welt*”, the central organ of the Zionist movement, although he later withdrew from organizational work in Zionism. In 1923 Buber wrote his famous essay on existence, “*Ich und Du*” (later translated into English as *I and Thou*), and in 1925 he began translating the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) into the German language.

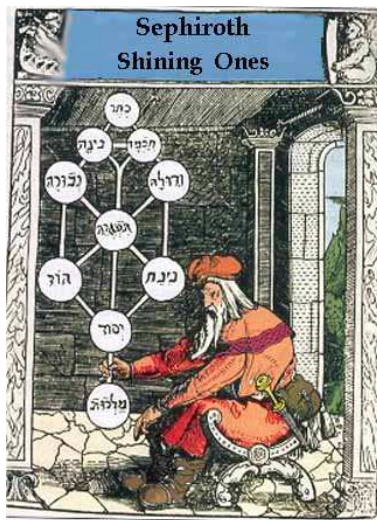
In 1930 Buber became an honorary professor at the University of Frankfurt am Main, and resigned in protest from his professorship immediately after Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933. He then founded the Central Office for Jewish Adult Education, which became an increasingly important body as the German government forbade Jews to attend public education. In 1938, Buber left Germany and settled in Jerusalem, in the British Mandate for Palestine, receiving a professorship at Hebrew University and lecturing in anthropology and introductory sociology.

Buber's wife Paula died in 1958, and he died at his home in the Talbiyeh neighbourhood of Jerusalem on June 13, 1965.

Much has already been written about the relationship between the Kabbalistic Tree of Life and the Psychosynthesis egg diagram and their similarities. “The Qabalist” (*Psicosintesi Journal, Italy, April 1997*) have explored this in depth. *The Kabbalah (and its more modern update, the Qabalah)* is the central key to understanding the Western approach to the soul (Higher Self) and spirituality, and therefore to really understanding Psychosynthesis. The Kabbalistic Tree of Life is at the core of the spiritual psychology in which Dr. Assagioli had a life-long interest. It is therefore not surprising that Psychosynthesis easily interfaces with the Tree of Life to create a coherent and effective synthesis.

The purpose of the Tree of Life is to help us sort out different aspects of our psyches, and more clearly be able to work with heart energy rather than just with intellectual knowledge. We have minds, feelings and bodies so we can be incarnated here on the planet earth to do our work, whatever that work might be. If we make fun of our thoughts, feelings and sensations apart a little bit and start looking at what each of them means in relationship to the whole of us, then it is easier to start finding out what the energy is behind these – what is really moving us. The Kabbalah, being a way of the heart, says that basically it is always love that is trying to emerge. That is not to deny the importance of power, or all the other qualities and aspects of our lives, but when we move to our hearts and really ask ourselves what it is we are here for, in one way or another we find it is something to do with the expression of love.

When one first looks at the Tree of Life it seems very complicated, but in fact, it really is very simple. Start by imagining an upright triangle. Now imagine two triangles, one upright, then underneath it an upside down one. This is a little bit harder but not terribly difficult. Just add one more, so you have now three triangles, one the right way up and two upside down directly underneath. The three triangles are the basis of the whole tree of life image. Of course, the Tree of Life is little more complicated than that. At each of the corners of the triangles there is a sphere. Then just to make it a little more difficult, there is one extra sphere between the top two triangles and one extra one inside the bottom triangle.



So what does this all mean? What is the point of these triangles and the spheres at the corners? What could they be about? Imagine you are in a room with a group of strangers and we all hold hands in a circle. No speaking is allowed, we are just holding hands in a circle. The longer time passes before anyone speaks, the more things are happening for all of us. We do not often hold hands with strangers, so as soon as we are holding hands with these people we have different responses and reactions. There is the physical sensation involved in actually touching another person. Secondly, there are different feelings and emotional reactions, such as: what's it like to

hold hands with this stranger here? What does this mean? What do I feel about this? Is it dangerous? Do I like it? So many different emotions can come up. Thirdly, we have thoughts about it, too. What do you think about holding someone else's hand? What do you think about somebody coming along and telling you to hold someone else's hand?

The three circles on the bottom triangle of the Tree of Life represent these three different aspects of our relationship to other people and the world around us. The bottom one represents our physical presence on the planet. If we could hold hands without having any emotional reactions, feelings, thoughts, or any reactions at all, *just* the experience of sensing holding hands, that would be the pure experience of this sphere (*which is called Malkuth, but you don't need to worry about these names, or the numbers of the spheres to be able to understand them.*) When you spend even a moment aware of your physical presence and yet neither thinking or feeling anything - that is this sphere in its essential form. You might have experienced this if you walk, dance, go running or swimming, and have pushed your body until you are no longer thinking or feeling anything.

The two spheres above this sphere represent our feeling and thinking processes. So with these three spheres we cover the three modes familiar to us from



Psychosynthesis: body, feelings and mind. Usually, however, we do not just sense something, or just feel something, or just think something. All three modes operate in combination. The field of awareness, also familiar from the Psychosynthesis egg diagram, offers us a good way to understand this. This field of awareness (*like an amoeba*) moves about, most of the time, between the three spheres that represent thinking, feeling and sensing. These three sensing, feeling and thinking spheres, taken together, represent what we have to experience life with and to express ourselves with, in the present moment. Here we are, here and now, with these three modes somehow or another activated within us and activating us. The sphere in the centre of these other three spheres then represents the past.

Within any present moment we are always carrying the past within us. What happened to us in the past is affecting what's happening here and now. When we imagine holding hands with a group of strangers, the feelings, emotional reactions, thoughts, and senses we experience are unique to each of us, at least somewhat different from everyone else's experience. At least partly, each of us has different experiences now because of the different experiences we have had in the past. The other factor that affects us in the here and now is the future, our inner potential. Everything that is potential can happen in the future. The upper part of the Tree of Life represents the future; it is the potential we carry round in us, that is able to manifest at any moment. Most of the time, though, we are not aware of it. We might be so caught up with experiences from the past, or so busy in the present moment, we forget about our potential. It is still there, however, always manifesting.

The key to understanding both Psychosynthesis and the Kabbalah is through the central sphere on the Tree of Life which exactly corresponds to Dr. Assagioli's notion of the "self" at the centre of the egg diagram. As well as representing "the I" it corresponds to both the heart at the centre of the human body, and the sun at the centre of our solar system. It is possible, through meditation and other techniques, to focus totally around this central sphere. The Psychosynthesis version of this experience is described with the words: "I am I , a centre of pure self consciousness." Nothing else: no thoughts, no feelings, no sensations. I have thoughts and I am more than my thoughts. I have feelings, and I am more than my feelings. I have a body and I am more than my body. I am I, a centre of pure self consciousness.

Dr. Assagioli added a vitally important extra into the formula. To "I am I, a centre of pure self consciousness...", he added, "...and of will." When we move into that central place, when we connect to our heart energy, to the central aspect of our being, there is also a push, an energy, a will, a transpersonal purpose, or spiritual thrust - one can call it all sorts of names - something that pushes us

back into life. It is as if, when we enter into the energy of the heart, something says: hey well, fine, we made this connection, very good, now do something with it. Activate it, make it more manifest on the planet. From a Kabbalistic viewpoint, people use the Tree of Life to meditate, and will focus on their spiritual centres, but always with that idea of being able to bring this energy back to earth. Like Psychosynthesis, the Kabbalistic system, as well as being a way of the heart, is also a way of service. The focus is on manifesting soul energy back into everyday life to 'serve God and our fellow humans. The danger for many spiritual seekers is that they like it on the sun so much they never want to leave there. They become so involved being the sun, being a light source, that they forget the shadows they cast. In terms of the solar system, in terms of our heart energy, if we stay just there, there are not any shadows. Absolutely, and that's a wonderful place to experience. But often it is the shadows, the dark places, that reveal to us more things about how we are going to manifest. If everybody existed in a place of no shadow, there'd be no need for relationship, for contact, for service. We need places with shadows to remind us of our mortality *and* our totality.

The diagram shows an overlay of the Psychosynthesis egg diagram with the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. How well they overlap is astonishing, although perhaps not so astonishing when we remember Assagioli's interests. Spend some time now studying this diagram and seeing how it increases your understanding of the egg diagram. Notice, as you do this, a third overlay in the diagram a human body. The Tree of Life is most definitely not just an abstract map of the psyche but also, through its system of correspondences, a map of both the structures and energies within a body. Consider the implications of this for the Psychosynthesis egg diagram, which also corresponds to the Tree of Life!



The use of the Kabbalah as a tool in psychotherapy allows the practitioner to develop a style in accord with more universal principles, develop relationship in line with these principles, and apply techniques where and as appropriate to each relationship. This three-fold understanding of the process, principles, relationship and techniques corresponds exactly with the three triangles on the Tree of Life. The aim of Psychosynthesis, from a Kabbalistic perspective, is to bring a client into relationship whilst holding connection to underlying spiritual principles (*the top triangle on the Tree of Life.*) How far this happens depends upon the type of therapy being practised, the

individual practitioner's aims and abilities, and the relationship. Psychosynthesis aims to include the whole Tree (*as represented in simplified form by the egg diagram.*)

So we have been talking about the tree and the egg, but what of the serpent? Perhaps the two best known 'serpents' are firstly, the serpent of knowledge (*from the Garden of Eden story*) and secondly the 'serpent power', also known as Kundalini, which resides at the base of the spine and which is always ready to uncoil and bring illumination to an individual who activates it. The Western mystery traditions include a third serpent, one that is described as coiled around the egg of life. Imagine the egg diagram with a serpent coiled around it, its tail at the bottom of the egg, its head reaching the heights. The serpent in this “egg girt with a serpent” (*as it is called in esoteric literature*) is an appropriate synthesis of the two better known serpents mentioned before, and an ideal metaphor for our psychosynthesis work. Interestingly, the image corresponds to the rosy cross - the egg can only crack and release its potential new life when the serpent is activated on all the planes.

## **Serpent Meditation To Awaken Kundalini**

*To practice this meditation follow the step by step instructions below. Please do not overdo any Kundalini Meditation. Start off slowly and then build up your time systematically over time.*

1. Sit comfortably with your legs crossed. If you cannot sit with your legs crossed, then you may sit on a chair.
2. Have your spine straight, relax your stomach and then close your eyes.
3. Bring your attention to your breath and allow it naturally slow down. This may take a few minutes to happen.
4. Now bring your awareness to the base of your spine and visualize yourself breathing from there. As you inhale and exhale, visualize the breath coming into and leaving this area. Continue for a few minutes to establish your awareness there.
5. Once you feel concentrated enough, visualize a small black cylinder (lingam with the top cut off) at the base of spine. And visualize a small baby red snake (not a cobra) coiled around this lingam looking up with the mouth open.

6. Once this picture is clear, visualize the serpent struggling to rise up the spine and straining in its effort to do so. As it struggles to rise, it makes an intense hissing sound.

7. When the serpent rises, visualize its mouth to be as wide as your body and as it rises, its body stretches up, but tail remains at the base of the spine coiled around the lingam.

8. This serpent's body will often rise and then fall back during the meditation, but the lingam coiled by the tail will stay fixed. Continue the meditation in this way.

9. Success with this meditation is indicated by the eruption or great feeling of bliss, with the rising of the serpent. It can also happen that the lingam and serpent will move to various chakras along the spine, and if that was to happen continue the visualization using this new location as the base.

### **Other Techniques of Serpent Meditation**

Kundalini yoga energy is the life force energy that lies, coiled like a serpent, inside your core. This energy force flows through your seven chakras, from your chakra located at the base of your spinal column to your crown chakra, unleashing your full emotional, spiritual and physical potential. The Kundalini force is described as goddess energy within that seeks unification with the energy of the universe, bringing enlightenment and contentment.

Kundalini meditation is practiced to release this energy, unblocking the chakras and enabling the proper flow of Kundalini energy through the body. Kundalini meditation is most effective when practiced in conjunction with yoga, especially when the "asanas" assumed are consciously chosen with the intent of opening the chakras.

One method of Kundalini meditation involves alternate nostril breathing. Assume the lotus position (cross-legged) on the floor or a meditation pillow or, if this is not comfortable, sit in a straight-backed chair with your feet securely on the ground. Close your eyes. Place your finger on one nostril and breathe in slowly, counting to four. Imagine your "breath-prana", which is a powerful life force-is entering your body and sending power to your chakra located at the base of your spine. Hold your breath for a count of four, then release that nostril and place your finger on the other nostril, and breathe out of the other nostril, releasing all negative energy through the exhalation. Breathe in through the open nostril and

repeat the exercise, moving upwards through all the chakras, deliberately bringing energy into the chakra and releasing negative energy or blockages. Try to think of nothing but the energy flow that is uncoiling up through your chakras.

Another method of Kundalini meditation involves shaking and dancing. It is an hour-long meditation session unlike many mediation practices. For this practice, you will need to set aside an hour of uninterrupted time, and will want to have a timer you can set so you don't interrupt your meditation to check the time. For this method of mediation, you will first stand in an empty, quiet room and allow your body to shake-vibrating to the natural pulse of your body-for an entire fifteen minutes. While your body is shaking, contemplate the energy flow that is being awakened in every cell of your body. When the initial fifteen minutes is up, you will then dance, free form, in any way you are moved for fifteen minutes. It can be angry dancing, joyful dancing-any kind of therapeutic dancing is acceptable. After this, you will sit on the floor in lotus position, and meditate on the opening of the chakras for fifteen minutes, beginning with the base of your spine and ending with your crown chakra. When you finish this segment, you will want to lie on your back as in the corpse position and meditate quietly upon your breathing and the free-flowing of Kundalini energy through the chakras.

Basically, we have to get to the ground or the earth and invoke the serpent energy within our bodies - then the awakened serpent makes the connection for us between the different realms of the unconscious, expanding our field of awareness, or our knowledge. A bridge is created between the areas of the unconscious and our conscious intent. Divine and human will are aligned. This is identical to the Eastern notion of working with energy centres in the human aura (*chakras*) to awaken the serpent energy (*kundalini*). Of course, knowledge can be dangerous if either we do not know how to utilise it or if we misapply it. (*So, the injunctions against prematurely awakening kundalini energy.*) Kabbalists assert that we can use knowledge most effectively when we connect to the higher spheres of wisdom and understanding. Our task is to connect with the wisdom and understanding that enables us to use (with will and love) this knowledge. The work of Roberto Assagioli is intended to guide us towards this wisdom and understanding. As Ferrucci so succinctly puts it in the title of his book, *Psychosynthesis leads us towards 'what we may be.'*

Now we have the tree, egg and serpent, we have the essential components of alchemy, a lifelong interest of Dr. Assagioli, that is also central to the Mystery Traditions. The work of Jung on alchemy is well-known and invaluable. Whilst not all Jungians follow this line, the tendency in the Jungian approach is to

psychologise our view of alchemy. The notion is that alchemists were really talking about the inner world, our intra-psychic manifestations. Turning lead into gold was a metaphor for the process of individuation. Whilst this is true, it misses the fact that many alchemists were talking in guarded terms not just intra-psychically but also about physical and sexual alchemy. They weren't just working with transforming psyche -inside, they wanted to do this through the sexual gnosis. Central to this "Great Work" (*Opera Magna*) is the inclusion of what in Psychosynthesis we term the lower unconscious, as is made very clear in Assagioli's written work. For instance in Psychosynthesis he states: "we have first to penetrate courageously into the pit of our lower unconscious in order to discover the dark forces that ensnare and menace us.." We have already talked about the importance of grounding, of being in the body, of 'coming to earth.' But what about the importance of working with sexuality from a Psychosynthesis perspective. What of the serpent of desire, another aspect of the serpent energy both from a kundalini viewpoint and its role in the Garden of Eden story?

Dr. Roberto Assagioli had what some people might describe now as a rather old-fashioned attitude towards sexuality. The core of what he wished to express, however, was that we need not suppress or repress any aspect of our energy. Instead we can learn to regulate and appropriately express ourselves, including through sexuality. This may be summarised by his statement: "No drive, emotion or desire needs to be repressed or should be condemned on its own account; it is the skilful *regulation* of its use and manifestation that is needed." (*Psychosynthesis Manual, page 74.*) The Psychosynthesis approach to transforming sexuality is simply putting it into perspective. Rather than sexuality 'having us' we can learn to have it. I have sexuality so I can use it (not that sexuality has you so it can 'use' you!) Of course, as always dis-identification should not be used as a means of avoidance - to 'have sexuality' you must be coming from a genuinely dis-identified place or you cannot choose to let go and surrender to it when that is appropriate.

To end this beautiful chapter on the Kabbalah , let us perform an alchemical ritual together to embody the energy of the Tree of Life.

1. Stand holding hands comfortably, then let go. Be aware of your own egg, individually surrounding your space, and overlapping with the energetic egg of the other people in this circle. Connect to the ground: imagine you have roots that connect you deeply into the earth Visualise the energy of the earth flowing up your legs, into your lower body - your genitals and lower abdomen - as you do this, get a sense of openness freedom pervading you.

2. Visualise energy rising up into your belly, your solar plexus and whole trunk - as you do this, feel your centeredness in life, how you are rooted in earthly existence Visualise energy rising up into your heart, see your heart glowing with energy - as you do this, feel yourself filled with courage and compassion Visualise energy flowing from your heart, down your arms and into your hands - without opening your eyes, physically reach out with courage and compassion, feel yourself reaching out to the person on either side of you. Feel how courage and compassion in your heart gives you the power to link with other people.
3. Visualise energy rising up into your throat and mouth, and into your voice - feel this connected energy giving you the power to speak out your truth. Without opening your eyes, make a sound to express your own inner truth, (don't force it, but keep making the sound until you feel complete.)
4. Visualise energy rising to your eyes - open your eyes and see the truth of who you are and where you are. Then close your eyes, visualise the energy ascending to the top of your head and feel the presence of the divine within.
5. Connect now with the courage and compassion to let go of those either side of you, still aware of their presence but no longer linked with your arms and hands. Imagine yourself as the Tree of Life: your roots deep in the earth, your trunk filled with energy, your branches stretching up into the sky, connecting with the light of the sun and stars.
6. Draw down the energy of the sun and stars into your body - keep drawing energy through your body and bring this energy right down to earth. Bring energy right down into your roots, supporting you in expressing who you are, your own truth Ask your inner guide now to give you a word, short phrase, image, symbol and/or gesture, movement that encapsulates what is the next step for you on your journey in life.

As said earlier, the work of Roberto Assagioli is intended to guide us towards the wisdom and understanding necessary to manifest our knowledge on the earth, clearly and in service to others. Through this we are constantly turning our old 'leaden' nature into a new 'golden' embodiment of our deeper truth, that we are always becoming Self.

*First presented at the Bologne. Psychosynthesis International Conference, 2000*

Psychosynthesis is a transpersonal, or spiritual psychotherapy, a phenomenon of the twentieth century Western world. It is a theory and practice of individual development and growth, though with a potential for wider application into social and indeed world-wide settings: and it assumes that each human being is a soul as well as a personality.

For nearly one-hundred years, growing alongside the psychological work of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung stands the work of Dr. Roberto Assagioli, M.D. and Psychosynthesis. A transpersonal and distinctly Western Psychology, Psychosynthesis puts forth a holistic model of human development that takes into account the spiritual dimension of human nature. Assagioli saw human nature as a vast array of biological, social and spiritual impulses and felt that a true psychology had to embrace all of these aspects of the person. Psychosynthesis believes that we each have an innate tendency to evolve and unfold our highest potentials and that we can consciously cooperate with this process. Some of these potentials are the capacities of consciousness, energy and the human imagination. The strengthening and interaction with these inner resources opens people to their own innate spirituality, inner wisdom and potential for inner peace. Psychosynthesis is both a theory and practice where the focus is to achieve synthesis and harmony within and around ourselves.

Its hallmarks are a remarkable model of consciousness, concrete tools for developing and expanding awareness, tangible ways of working with the personality and a lifelong model for spiritual development.





# III

## Religion and Mythology

Religion and Mythology differ, but have overlapping aspects. Both terms refer to systems of concepts that are of high importance to a certain community, making statements concerning the supernatural or sacred. Generally, mythology is considered one component or aspect of all religions, even the Christian religion, as for example the virgin birth, the resurrection and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth. (*We know today for sure that it is impossible.*) Religion is the broader term: besides mythological aspects, it includes aspects of ritual, morality, theology, and mystical experience. A given mythology is almost always associated with a certain religion, such as Greek mythology with Ancient Greek religion. Disconnected from its religious system, a myth may lose its immediate relevance to the community and evolve—away from sacred importance—into a legend or folktale.

### Definitions from the Anglo-Saxon World

“Religion” is commonly defined as belief concerning the supernatural, sacred, or divine, and the moral codes, practices, values, and institutions associated with such belief. Religious beliefs and practices generally include the following:

- a soul or spirit
- a deity, higher being or entity
- a system of worship

Some religions do not include all these features. For instance, belief in a deity is not essential to Buddhism.

The term *mythology* usually refers either to a system of myths or to the study of myths. However, the word "myth" itself has multiple (and some contradictory) definitions:

- 2007: According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Myth:
  1. (a) A usually traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon.  
  
(b) Parable, Allegory.

2. A popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something or someone; especially: one embodying the ideals and institutions of a society or segment of society.
3. An unfounded or false notion.
4. A person or thing having only an imaginary or unverifiable existence.
5. The whole body of myths.

In regards to the study of culture and religion, these are some of the definitions scholars have used:

- 1968: The classicist Robert Graves defines myths as "whatever religious or heroic legends are so foreign to a student's experience that he cannot believe them to be true."
- 1973: Another classicist, G. S. Kirk, rejects the notion that all myths are religious or sacred. In the category of "myth", he includes many legendary accounts that are "secular" for all practical purposes.
- 1997: Folklorists define a myth as "a sacred narrative explaining how the world and humankind came to be in their present form".
- 2004: In religious studies, the word "myth" is usually reserved for stories whose main characters are gods or demigods.
- 2004: The classicist Richard Buxton defines a myth as "a socially powerful traditional story".
- 2004: Robert A. Segal, professor of theories of religion at the University of Lancaster, defines "myth" broadly as any story whose "main figures (are) personalities -- divine, human, or even animal. Excluded would be impersonal forces such as Plato's Good."

## **Relationship between Religion and Myth**

- The relationship between religion and myth depends on what definition of "myth" one uses. By Robert Graves's definition, a religion's traditional stories are "myths" if and only if one does not belong to the religion in question.
- By Segal's definition, all religious stories are myths—but simply because nearly all stories are myths.
- By the folklorists' definition, all myths are religious (or "sacred") stories, but not all religious stories are myths: religious stories that involve the creation of the world, the life of Abraham, a biblical character that has most probably not existed (*e.g., the stories in Genesis*) are myths; however, religious stories that do not explain how things came to be in their present form (*e.g., hagiographies of famous saints*) are not myths. King David has existed, but biblical stories are mostly not true about him.

- It should be noted that most definitions of "myth" limit myths to stories. So, non-narrative elements of religion, such as ritual, are not myths.



King David's Sepulchre in a Synagogue in Jerusalem as latest resting place.

## Truth and Falsehood

The Christian apologist C. S. Lewis, made a clear distinction between myth and falsehood when he referred to the life of Christ as a myth "which is also a fact". Jesus of Nazareth, called the "Christ or Messiah and Redeemer", did exist but all the New Testamentary stories as found in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are not always true. They were written fifty to seventy years after his life and death. One can, in all honesty, draw conclusions here.

## Similarities between different inter-religious mythologies

Given any of the above definitions of "myth", the myths of many religions, both ancient and modern, share common elements. Widespread similarities between religious mythologies include the following:

- Many religions involve an initial Paradise preceding ordinary historical time as found in the book of Genesis.
- Many religions involve the story of a god who undergoes death and resurrection (*see life-death-rebirth deity*). The mythical geography of many religions involves an *axis mundi*, or Cosmic Centre.
- Many myths feature a global flood.

The similarities and others between cultures and time periods can be useful, but it is usually not easy to combine beliefs and histories from different groups.

Simplification of cultures and time periods by eliminating detailed data remain vulnerable or flimsy in this area of research.

## **Defects in Christ's Teaching as brought forward by the Churches**

“Having granted the excellence of these maxims, I come to certain points in which I do not believe that one can grant either the superlative wisdom or the superlative goodness of Christ as depicted in the Gospels; and here I may say that one is not concerned with the historical question. Historically it is quite doubtful whether Christ ever existed at all, and if He did we do not know anything about him, so that I am not concerned with the historical question, which is a very difficult one. I am concerned with Christ as He appears in the Gospels, taking the Gospel narrative as it stands, and there one does find some things that do not seem to be very wise. For one thing, he certainly thought that His second coming would occur in clouds of glory before the death of all the people who were living at that time. There are a great many texts that prove that. He says, for instance, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come." Then he says, "There are some standing here which shall not taste death till the Son of Man comes into His kingdom"; and there are a lot of places where it is quite clear that He believed that His second coming would happen during the lifetime of many then living. That was the belief of His earlier followers, and it was the basis of a good deal of His moral teaching. When He said, "Take no thought for the morrow," and things of that sort, it was very largely because He thought that the second coming was going to be very soon, and that all ordinary mundane affairs did not count. I have, as a matter of fact, known some Christians who did believe that the second coming was imminent. I knew a parson who frightened his congregation terribly by telling them that the second coming was very imminent indeed, but they were much consoled when they found that he was planting trees in his garden. The early Christians did really believe it, and they did abstain from such things as planting trees in their gardens, because they did accept from Christ the belief that the second coming was imminent. In that respect, clearly He was not so wise as some other people have been, and He was certainly not superlatively wise. (*Extract from "Why I am not a Christian, by Bertrand Russell, Philosopher"*).

## **Contrasts between different religious mythologies**

Though there are similarities among most religious mythologies, there are also contrasts. Many mythologies focus on explanations of the universe, natural phenomena, or other themes of human existence, often ascribing agency to one or more deities or other supernatural forces. However, some religions have very

few of this kind of story of cosmic explanation. For instance, the Buddhist parable of the arrow warns against such speculations as "Is the world eternal or not eternal? Is the soul different from the body? Does the enlightened exist after death or not?", viewing them as irrelevant to the goal of escaping suffering.

## **Modern-day opposition**

Some religious believers, above all among the Evangelicals take offense when what they consider to be historical aspects of their faith are labelled as "myth". Such believers distinguish between religious fables or myths, on one hand, and those narratives of Scripture which Scripture itself, or their tradition, describe as history or revelation, on the other.

Traditional Christianity insists that the "Christian Faith" is not mythology; or, they do insist that Judeo-Christian revelation has nothing in common with the category of myth.

Some assume that religious believers who oppose the term "myth" are literalists who overlook the variety of non-literal meanings (*e.g., hyperbole and allegory*) that Scripture contains. This assumption is generally unfounded, although some fundamentalists do think that all stories in Scripture should be accepted as literally true, being the "Word of God" from cover to cover.

## **What Is a Christian?**

Nowadays it is not quite that. We have to be a little more vague in our meaning of Christianity. I think, however, that there are two different items which are quite essential to anybody calling himself a Christian. The first is one of a dogmatic nature -- namely, that you must believe in God and immortality. If you do not believe in those two things, I do not think that you can properly call yourself a Christian. Then, further than that, as the name implies, you must have some kind of belief about Christ. The Mohammedans, for instance, also believe in God and in immortality, and yet they would not call themselves Christians. I think you must have at the very lowest the belief that Christ was, if not divine, at least the best and wisest of men. If you are not going to believe that much about Christ, I do not think you have any right to call yourself a Christian. Of course, there is another sense, which you find in Whitaker's Almanack and in geography books, where the population of the world is said to be divided into Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists, fetish worshipers, and so on; and in that sense we are all Christians. The geography books count us all in, but that is a purely geographical sense, which I suppose we can ignore.

Therefore I take it that when I tell you why I am not a Christian I have to tell you two different things: first, why I do not believe in God and in immortality; and, secondly, why I do not think that Christ was the best and wisest of men, although I grant him a very high degree of moral goodness.

But for the successful efforts of unbelievers in the past, I could not take so elastic a definition of Christianity as that. As I said before, in olden days it had a much more full-blooded sense. For instance, it included the belief in hell. Belief in eternal hell-fire was an essential item of Christian belief until pretty recent times. In this country, as you know, it ceased to be an essential item because of a decision of the Privy Council, and from that decision the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York dissented; but in this country our religion is settled by Act of Parliament, and therefore the Privy Council was able to override their Graces and hell was no longer necessary to a Christian. Consequently I shall not insist that a Christian must believe in hell. (*Extract from "Why I am not a Christian, by Bertrand Russell, Philosopher"*).

We are now fully prepared to deepen Christianity after more than two-thousand years religious history. Bertrand Russell, Britain's greatest Philosopher of past century:

### **The Character of Christ**

“ I now want to say a few words upon a topic which I often think is not quite sufficiently dealt with by Rationalists, and that is the question whether Christ was the best and the wisest of men. It is generally taken for granted that we should all agree that that was so. I do not myself. I think that there are a good many points upon which I agree with Christ a great deal more than the professing Christians do. I do not know that I could go with Him all the way, but I could go with Him much further than most professing Christians can. You will remember that He said, "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." That is not a new precept or a new principle. It was used by Lao-tse and Buddha some 500 or 600 years before Christ, but it is not a principle which as a matter of fact Christians accept. I have no doubt that the present prime minister (Stanley Baldwin), for instance, is a most sincere Christian, but I should not advise any of you to go and smite him on one cheek. I think you might find that he thought this text was intended in a figurative sense.

Then there is another point which I consider excellent. You will remember that Christ said, "Judge not lest ye be judged." That principle I do not think you would find was popular in the law courts of Christian countries. I have known in my time quite a number of judges who were very earnest Christians, and none of them felt that they were acting contrary to Christian principles in what they did. Then Christ says, "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." That is a very good principle. Your Chairman has reminded you that we are not here to talk politics, but I cannot help observing that the last general election was fought on the question of how desirable it was to turn away from him that would borrow of thee, so that one must assume that the Liberals and Conservatives of this country are composed of people who do not agree with the teaching of Christ, because they certainly did very emphatically turn away on that occasion.

Then there is one other maxim of Christ which I think has a great deal in it, but I do not find that it is very popular among some of our Christian friends. He says, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor." That is a very excellent maxim, but, as I say, it is not much practised. All these, I think, are good maxims, although they are a little difficult to live up to. I do not profess to live up to them myself; but then, after all, it is not quite the same thing as for a Christian. (*Extract from "Why I am not a Christian, by Bertrand Russell, Philosopher"*).

Especially within Christianity, objection to the word "myth" rests on a historical basis. By the time of Christ, the Greco-Roman world had started to use the term "myth" (Greek *muthos*) to mean "fable, fiction, lie"; as a result, the early Christian theologians used "myth" in this sense. So, the derogatory meaning of the word "myth" is the traditional Christian meaning, and the expression "Christian mythology" may offend Christians for this reason.

In addition, this early Christian use of the term "myth" passed into popular usage. So, when essential mysteries and teachings are described as *myth*, in modern English, the word often still implies that it is a *fable* and false *invention*. This description could be taken as a direct attack on religious belief, quite contrary to the meaning ostensibly intended by the academic use of the term.

Honest and modern day clergy and practitioners within some religious movements have no problem classifying the religion's sacred stories as "myths". They are called, the liberals; They see the sacred texts as indeed containing religious truths, divinely inspired but delivered in the language of mankind.

J.R.R. Tolkien's love of myths and devout Catholic Faith came together in his assertion that mythology is the divine echo of "the Truth". Tolkien wrote that

myths held "fundamental things". He expressed these beliefs in his poem "*Mythopoeia*" circa 1931, which describes myth-making as an act of "sub-creation" within God's primary creation. The poem in part says creation is "myth-woven and elf-patterned":

"...There is no firmament,  
only a void, unless a jewelled tent  
myth-woven and elf-patterned; and no earth,  
unless the mother's womb whence all have birth." - J.R.R. Tolkien

Tolkien's opinion was adopted by another Christian writer, C. S. Lewis, in their conversations: "Tolkien explained to Lewis that the story of Christ was the true myth at the very heart of history and at the very root of reality." C. S. Lewis freely called the Christ story a "true myth", and he believed that even pagan myths express spiritual truths. In his opinion, the difference between the Christ story and pagan myths is that the Christ story is historically as well as spiritually true. "The story of Christ," writes Lewis,

"Is simply a true myth: a myth working on us in the same way as the others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened: and one must be content to accept it in the same way, remembering that it is God's myth where the others are men's myths: i. e. the Pagan stories are God expressing Himself through the minds of poets, using such images as He found there, while Christianity is God expressing Himself through what we call real things."

Another Christian writer, the Catholic priest Father Andrew Greeley, freely applies the term "myth" to Christianity. In his book *Myths of Religion*, he defends this terminology:

"Many Christians have objected to my use of this word (myth) even when I define it specifically. They are terrified by a word which may even have a slight suggestion of fantasy. However, my usage is the one that is common among historians of religion, literary critics, and social scientists. It is a valuable and helpful usage; there is no other word which conveys what these scholarly traditions mean when they refer to myth. The Christian would be well advised to get over his fear of the word and appreciate how important a tool it can be for understanding the content of his faith."

At a "Consultation on the Relationship Between the Wesleyan Tradition and the Natural Sciences" in Kansas City, Missouri, on October 19, 1991, Dennis Bratcher presented a discussion of the adaptation of Near Eastern mythical thought by the Israelites. Bratcher argued that the Old Testament absorbed Near Eastern pagan mythology (although he drew a sharp distinction between the literally-interpreted myths of the Near Eastern pagans and the "mytho-poetic"



use of imagery from pagan myths by the Hebrews). During this presentation, he gave the following disclaimer:

"The term 'myth' as used here does not mean 'false' or 'fiction.' Even in my old and yellowed Webster's, 'fiction' is the *third* meaning of the word. In its primary and more technical meaning 'myth' refers to a story or group of stories that serve to explain how a particular society views their world."

## **The Moral Problem of Christianity**

Then you come to moral questions. There is one very serious defect to my mind in Christ's moral character, and that is that He believed in hell. I do not myself feel that any person who is really profoundly humane can believe in everlasting punishment. Christ certainly as depicted in the Gospels did believe in everlasting punishment, and one does find repeatedly a vindictive fury against those people who would not listen to His preaching -- an attitude which is not uncommon with preachers, but which does somewhat detract from superlative excellence. You do not, for instance find that attitude in Socrates. You find him quite bland and urbane toward the people who would not listen to him; and it is, to my mind, far more worthy of a sage to take that line than to take the line of indignation. You probably all remember the sorts of things that Socrates was saying when he was dying, and the sort of things that he generally did say to people who did not agree with him.

You will find that in the Gospels Christ said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell." That was said to people who did not like His preaching. It is not really to my mind quite the best tone, and there are a great many of these things about Hell. There is, of course, the familiar text about the sin against the Holy Ghost: "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him neither in this World nor in the world to come." That text has caused an unspeakable amount of misery in the world, for all sorts of people have imagined that they have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, and thought that it would not be forgiven them either in this world or in the world to come. I really do not think that a person with a proper degree of kindness in his nature would have put fears and terrors of that sort into the world

Then Christ says, "The Son of Man shall send forth his His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth"; and He goes on about the wailing and

gnashing of teeth. It comes in one verse after another, and it is quite manifest to the reader that there is a certain pleasure in contemplating wailing and gnashing of teeth, or else it would not occur so often. Then you all, of course, remember about the sheep and the goats; how at the second coming He is going to divide the sheep from the goats, and He is going to say to the goats, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." He continues, "And these shall go away into everlasting fire." Then He says again, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." He repeats that again and again also. I must say that I think all this doctrine, that hell-fire is a punishment for sin, is a doctrine of cruelty. It is a doctrine that put cruelty into the world and gave the world generations of cruel torture; and the Christ of the Gospels, if you could take Him as His chroniclers represent Him, would certainly have to be considered partly responsible for that.

There are other things of less importance. There is the instance of the Gadarene swine, where it certainly was not very kind to the pigs to put the devils into them and make them rush down the hill into the sea. You must remember that He was omnipotent, and He could have made the devils simply go away; but He chose to send them into the pigs. Then there is the curious story of the fig tree, which always rather puzzled me. You remember what happened about the fig tree. "He was hungry; and seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, He came if haply He might find anything thereon; and when He came to it He found nothing but leaves, for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it: 'No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever' . . . and Peter . . . saith unto Him: 'Master, behold the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.'" This is a very curious story, because it was not the right time of year for figs, and you really could not blame the tree. I cannot myself feel that either in the matter of wisdom or in the matter of virtue Christ stands quite as high as some other people known to history. I think I should put Buddha and Socrates above Him in those respects. (*Extract from "Why I am not a Christian, by Bertrand Russell, Philosopher"*).

# IV

## Different Religious Mythologies

### Jewish Mythology

Judaic myths grew from many sources. The primary source is the Bible (Old Testament, the Tanakh) ; it covers a period between polytheism and monotheism, thus allowing a rich environment for myths. After that, much of the mythological material was retained, and elaborated on, in the two Talmuds, the midrashic literature, and the mystical literature, mostly as expressed in the *Zohar*. More exists in the Apocrypha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and in various texts written in Aramaic and Greek but pertaining to Judaism.



Jews were a literate people from an early date. They committed much of their traditions, beliefs, legends and tales to writing, creating a vast body of myth and folklore. They maintained a constant exchange between the mystical and the practical parts of life. The Talmud itself, the cornerstone of Jewish scholarship, is divided into two parts: *Halakha*, the body of practical laws and traditions, and the *Aggada*, a body of tales and legends that explains the Bible homiletically. The two systems cannot be truly separated in spirit; teaching, law, folklore, the wondrous tale and the formal myth are all interwoven into one great tradition.

Jewish mythology contains similarities to myths of other cultures, and it may have absorbed elements from other ancient “Near Eastern” mythologies. Judaism has also reacted against these mythologies, seeking to purge its own mythology of "pagan" elements. In addition, elements of Jewish mythology have had a profound influence on Christian and Islamic mythology, as well as Western culture in general. Christian mythology directly inherited many of the narratives from the Jewish people, sharing in common the narratives from the

Old Testament, especially sharing the stories that speak of creation of the earth and people and the belief in one God as heavenly father. Islamic mythology also came after Jewish, and shares some of the same stories; for instance, a creation account spaced out over six periods, the legend of Abraham, and stories of Moses and the Israelites.



## Islamic Mythology

Islam was promulgated by the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia in the seventh century AD. The term “Islam” literally means 'surrender', as in 'surrender to the will of Allah'. Allah (*Arabic: God*) is viewed as the sole God, Creator, Sustainer, and Restorer of the world. His Holy Will, revealed to his messenger Muhammed, is made known through the Sacred Scriptures, the Qur'an (Koran), and the Hadiths, the verses of the Islamic traditions of the four main schools .

Allah is identifiable as the God of Abraham and the Creator God of Christians and Jews, but as he reveals himself to his messenger Muhammad - for Muslims the “Seal of the Prophets,” the Interpreter with the last word, as it were—He projects different emphases than the God of Moses or Jesus. Like Jews and Christians, Muslims see this God as, above all, unique:

“It has been revealed to me that your god is one god” (*Qur'an* 41:6).

But the *Qur'an* (2:267, 4:171) specifically rejects the kind of theology that involves a divine intermediary between God and humans (e.g., a divine Jesus or “Son of God”) or a God of more than one aspect (e.g., the Christian doctrine of the Trinity).

Allah is less personal than in his Judeo-Christian aspect, a more mysterious power that is nevertheless behind all aspects of the universe. He is knowable only through his creation, through the signs of nature, through the metaphorical

stories of the prophets, and especially through the *Qur'an*, his great gift to humankind. And though he is *al-'Azim* (the “inaccessible”), he is *al-Rahman* (the “compassionate” and the “merciful”).

For the Islamic mystics or Sufis, especially, he is *al-Haqq* (the “real” and the “true”) and *al-Hayy* (the “living”), in some sense the “god within”.

Pre-Islamic Arab and Persian traditions, which were essentially pagan, developed a wonderful body of myth and folklore. Jinns, efrits, demigods, saintly men and women, and great heroes played their part in sparkling collections of folkloric tales and fables. It is only natural that people, throughout history, would borrow these entertaining beings and attach them their own heros, and Islamic literature, therefore, is rich in such material.

**However, we are fully aware that pure Islam is entirely monotheistic and does not encourage the creation of anthropomorphic figures, play of fantasy, or anything suggesting multiplicity of gods and idol worshiping.**

None of the above article that appear in this paragraph presumes to be a religious discussion. Islam is a very “pure” religion. Many excellent books and articles on formal Islam are available to the interested reader.

Islamic Tradition and Culture includes a number of stories and legends that are mythological but do not have their origin in Sacred Texts such as the Quran and Hadiths. For example, note stories of genies, magic lamps, flying carpets, and wishes contained in tales from the Arabian Nights and other works. The story of Aladdin is one of these tales well known to English speakers.

Many Islamic grandmothers have told their grandchildren bedtime stories about a snake which will appear when they have died and are buried in their graves.

The concept of the Evil Eye may or may not be regarded as Islamic mythology, since it cannot be found in Islamic sacred writings, and yet has been and is being held to be true by millions of Muslims. It is a part of the so-called Folk Islam, a set of superstitions and practices transmitted orally from generation to generation. Many elements of Folk Islam stem from animism practices and have been integrated into the daily life of many Muslims. (*this may have to go to a separate page. Much more could be written about it*)

## **Hindu Mythology**

Hindus have created a rich, complex mythology which is still very much alive in India and all over the world where Hinduism is settled. Hundreds of millions of people continue to believe in the multitudes of gods which inhabit the Hindu

pantheon. The Indian sub-continent has been a crossroad for several cultures, and the Indian people have incorporated numerous ideas from different faiths.

Still, one Cosmic Truth holds in Hindu thought, and that is that all things are simply a part of a greater, whole One. In early Hindu belief, which still holds true, for nothing in Hinduism is ever discarded, this Universal whole was called Brahman. All beings and things, from the gods and demons, through humans, on to the lowliest pebble on the beach, were and are part of this One. In later times, the neuter Brahman became equated with the masculine Brahma, but the original idea is still very much a part of Hindu thought.

The history of Hindu mythology can be broken up into several different ages, all of which have contributed to the faith as a whole. The first is the pre-Vedic age, which goes back to the time of the early Indus valley civilizations of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, which were established around 2400 BCE. These cities were destroyed by 1700.

Some scholars have suggested that the Indo-European invaders known as the Indo-Aryans came and conquered both much of India and Persia by about 1500 BCE. We read in the Bhagavad Gita, discourse 2, verse 2:

The Supreme Lord said: From where has this dejection come into your mind in this perilous hour? This is unknown to an Aryan, not leading to heaven but causing disgrace, O Arjuna. (2.2) (*Translation from the Sanskrit, by Philippe L. De Coster, D.D.*)

They brought with them new gods and hymns dedicated to them. These hymns came to be called collectively the “Vedas”. The Vedic age is when Hinduism proper begins. The Indo-Aryans became the lords of India, and their gods became the most important in the pantheon, but earlier gods were still revered; they were just given different roles.

The Aryans also brought with them a distinct class structure, which included a priestly class, a warrior or ruling class, and the trade or merchant class. The native peoples who were subject to Aryan rule were incorporated into a fourth class. This is the basis for the caste system which still is very much a part of Indian life. By the end of the Vedic period, these castes were called, respectively: Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. The Vedic gods were led by Indra, the archetypical thunder god, and they got their strength from the drink Soma, a form of ambrosia. A very nice passage of the Bhagavad Gita, discourse 11, verses 05-08:

The Supreme Lord said: See, O Pārtha (*Arjuna*), My forms in their hundreds and their thousands; various as they are, divine, numerous in colours and shapes. (11.05)

See the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Aśvins twain, and the Maruts too. See, O Bharata (*Arjuna*), abundant wonders, never seen before. (11.06)

Here, today, see the whole universe centred in One, with all that it contains of moving and unmoving things (*seeing it*) in My body, O Gudakesa (*Arjuna*), and whatever else you want to see. (11.07)

**However, you are not able to see Me with these eyes of yours, I give you the divine eye to see My Supreme Yoga. (11.08) (Translation from the Sanskrit, by Philippe L. De Coster, D.D.)**

From around 900 BCE to 500 BCE, as Aryan culture spread further into the sub-continent, Hinduism underwent some major changes. This period has been referred to as the Brahmanic Age, for it was during this time that the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas fought for supremacy over Indian life. New thought had been adopted, with the idea of the soul or *atman* becoming a major part of Hinduism and the transmigration of that soul becoming a foundation of the religion. It was during this time that the Brahman caste asserted that the gods need human priests to keep their power, and some of the rishis, or sages, became more powerful than the gods. Sacrifice became the chief form of worship. The major Vedic deities began to fall from their high positions and were slowly usurped by the cults of the three gods who came to dominate Hinduism: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.

From 500 BCE to about 100 CE, the age of Buddhism and Jainism put Hinduism in decline. The Buddha's doctrine took India by storm, and the older religion almost was suppressed entirely. Hinduism still included its child into itself, however, and was able to survive the storm with new ideas. Sacrifice went out of favour, and influence by the ascetic worshipers of Jainism and Buddhism led to the composition of the Upanishads. It was also during this time that Vishnu and Shiva completed their eclipse of Indra and the other Vedic gods.

The next age was the Epic or Classical period, the time of the great Hindu epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. These great works were compiled into their present form during this time, but their origins go back at least to Vedic times. The Puranas were also composed at this time. Finally, around 1000 CE we come to modern Hinduism, when the religion once again became the dominant faith on the sub-continent.

# Buddhism in a Nutshell and Mythology

## 1. Is Buddhism a Religion?

It is neither a religion in the sense in which that word is commonly understood, for it is not "a system of faith and worship owing any allegiance to a supernatural being." Buddhism is a philosophy.

Buddhism does not demand blind faith from its adherents. Here mere belief is dethroned and is substituted by confidence based on knowledge, which, in Pali, is known as *saddha*. The confidence placed by a follower on the Buddha is like that of a sick person in a noted physician, or a student in his teacher. A Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha because it was he who discovered the path of deliverance.

Buddhism arose in India about 2,500 years ago in response to the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama. This young prince was born to a life of wealth and a luxurious, protected upbringing. In his twenties, he glimpsed passing sights of people who were old, diseased, and dead. Then he saw a wandering monk and learned about the possibility of withdrawal from the world. In order to find a way to overcome these horrible sufferings, he decided to leave his palace to study *raja* yoga with two Hindu masters, and then joined a band of ascetics to master his body. In the final phase of his search, he used the "middle way" to combine "rigorous thought and mystic concentration" as he sat under the bodhi tree to attain the Great Awakening.

A Buddhist does not seek refuge in the Buddha with the hope that he will be saved by his (*i.e. the Buddha's own*) personal purification. The Buddha gives no such guarantee. It is not within the power of a Buddha to wash away the impurities of others. One could neither purify nor defile another. The Buddha, as teacher, instructs us, but we ourselves are directly responsible for our purification. Although a Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha, he does not make any self-surrender. Nor does a Buddhist sacrifice his freedom of thought by becoming a follower of the Buddha. He can exercise his own free will and develop his knowledge even to the extent of becoming a Buddha himself.

The starting point of Buddhism is reasoning or understanding, or, in the Pali words, *samma-ditthi*.

To the seekers of truth the Buddha says:

"Do not accept anything on (mere) hearsay — (*i.e., thinking that thus have we heard it for a long time*). Do not accept anything by mere tradition — (*i.e.,*



*thinking that it has thus been handed down through many generations*). Do not accept anything on account of mere rumours — (*i.e., by believing what others say without any investigation*). Do not accept anything just because it accords with your scriptures. Do not accept anything by mere suppositions. Do not accept anything by mere inference. Do not accept anything by merely considering the reasons. Do not accept anything merely because it agrees with your pre-conceived notions. Do not accept anything merely because it seems acceptable — (*i.e., thinking that as the speaker seems to be a good person his words should be accepted*). Do not accept anything thinking that the ascetic is respected by us (*therefore it is right to accept his word*).

"But when you know for yourselves — these things are immoral, these things are blameworthy, these things are censured by the wise, these things, when performed and undertaken conduce to ruin and sorrow — then indeed do you reject them.

"When you know for yourselves — these things are moral, these things are blameless, these things are praised by the wise, these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to well-being and happiness — then do you live acting accordingly."

These inspiring words of the Buddha still retain their original force and freshness.

Though there is no blind faith, one might argue whether there is no worshipping of images etc., in Buddhism.

Buddhists do not worship an image expecting worldly or spiritual favours, but pay their reverence to what it represents.

An understanding Buddhist, in offering flowers and incense to an image, designedly makes himself feel that he is in the presence of the living Buddha and thereby gains inspiration from his noble personality and breathes deep his boundless compassion. He tries to follow the Buddha's noble example.

The Bo-tree is also a symbol of Enlightenment. These external objects of reverence are not absolutely necessary, but they are useful as they tend to concentrate one's attention. An intellectual person could dispense with them as he could easily focus his attention and visualize the Buddha. For our own good, and out of gratitude, we pay such external respect but what the Buddha expects from his disciple is not so much obeisance as the actual observance of his Teachings. The Buddha says — "He honours me best who practices my teaching best." "He who sees the Dhamma sees me."

With regard to images, however, Count Kevserling remarks — **"I see nothing more grand in this world than the image of the Buddha. It is an absolutely perfect embodiment of spirituality in the visible domain."**

Furthermore, it must be mentioned that there are no petitional or intercessory prayers in Buddhism. However much we may pray to the Buddha we cannot be saved. The Buddha does not grant favours to those who pray to him. Instead of petitional prayers there is meditation that leads to self-control, purification and enlightenment. Meditation is neither a silent reverie nor keeping the mind blank. It is an active striving. It serves as a tonic both to the heart and the mind. The Buddha not only speaks of the futility of offering prayers but also disparages a slave mentality. A Buddhist should not pray to be saved, but should rely on himself and win his freedom.

"Prayers take the character of private communications, selfish bargaining with God. It seeks for objects of earthly ambitions and inflames the sense of self. Meditation on the other hand is self-change." — Sri Radhakrishnan.

In Buddhism there is not, as in most other religions, an Almighty God to be obeyed and feared. The Buddha does not believe in a cosmic potentate, omniscient and omnipresent. In Buddhism there are no divine revelations or divine messengers. A Buddhist is, therefore, not subservient to any higher supernatural power which controls his destinies and which arbitrarily rewards and punishes. Since Buddhists do not believe in revelations of a divine being Buddhism does not claim the monopoly of truth and does not condemn any other religion. But Buddhism recognizes the infinite latent possibilities of man and teaches that man can gain deliverance from suffering by his own efforts independent of divine help or mediating priests.

Buddhism cannot, therefore, strictly be called a religion because it is neither a system of faith and worship, nor "the outward act or form by which men indicate their recognition of the existence of a God or gods having power over their own destiny to whom obedience, service, and honour are due."

If, by religion, is meant "a teaching which takes a view of life that is more than superficial, a teaching which looks into life and not merely at it, a teaching which furnishes men with a guide to conduct that is in accord with this its in-look, a teaching which enables those who give it heed to face life with fortitude and death with serenity" or a system to get rid of the ills of life, then it is certainly a religion of religions.

## 2. The Buddha

On the Full Moon day of May, in the year 623 B.C., there was born in the district of Nepal an Indian Sakya Prince named Siddhartha Gotama, who was destined to be the greatest religious teacher in the world. Brought up in the lap of luxury, receiving an education befitting a prince, he married and had a son.

His contemplative nature and boundless compassion did not permit him to enjoy the fleeting material pleasures of a royal household. He knew no woe, but he felt a deep pity for sorrowing humanity. Amidst comfort and prosperity, he realized the universality of sorrow. The palace, with all its worldly amusements, was no longer a congenial place for the compassionate prince. The time was ripe for him to depart. Realizing the vanity of sensual enjoyments, in his twenty-ninth year, he renounced all worldly pleasures and donning the simple yellow garb of an ascetic, alone, penniless, wandered forth in search of Truth and Peace.

It was an unprecedented historic renunciation; for he renounced not in his old age but in the prime of manhood, not in poverty but in plenty. As it was the belief in the ancient days that no deliverance could be gained unless one leads a life of strict asceticism, he strenuously practiced all forms of severe austerities. "Adding vigil after vigil, and penance after penance," he made a superhuman effort for six long years.

His body was reduced to almost a skeleton. The more he tormented his body, the farther his goal receded from him. The painful, unsuccessful austerities which he strenuously practiced proved absolutely futile. He was now fully convinced, through personal experience, of the utter futility of self-mortification which weakened his body and resulted in lassitude of spirit.

Benefiting by this invaluable experience of his, he finally decided to follow an independent course, avoiding the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. The former retards one's spiritual progress, and the latter weakens one's intellect. The new way which he himself discovered was the Middle Path, *Majjhima Patipada*, which subsequently became one of the salient characteristics of his teaching.

One happy morning, while he was deeply absorbed in meditation, unaided and unguided by any supernatural power and solely relying on his efforts and wisdom, he eradicated all defilements, purified himself, and, realizing things as they truly are, attained Enlightenment (Buddhahood) at the age of 35. He was not born a Buddha, but he became a Buddha by his own striving. As the perfect embodiment of all the virtues he preached, endowed with deep wisdom commensurate with his boundless compassion. He devoted the remainder of his

precious life to serve humanity both by example and precept, dominated by no personal motive whatever.

After a very successful ministry of 45 long years the Buddha, as every other human being, succumbed to the inexorable law of change, and finally passed away in his 80th year, exhorting his disciples to regard his doctrine as their teacher.

The Buddha was a human being. As a man he was born, as a man he lived, and as a man his life came to an end. Though a human being, he became an extraordinary man (*acchariya manussa*), but he never arrogated to himself divinity. The Buddha laid stress on this important point and left no room whatever for anyone to fall into the error of thinking that he was an immortal divine being. Fortunately there is no deification in the case of the Buddha. It should, however, be remarked that there was no Teacher, "ever so godless as the Buddha, yet none so god-like."

The Buddha is neither an incarnation of the Hindu God Vishnu, as is believed by some, nor is he a saviour who freely saves others by his personal salvation. The Buddha exhorts his disciples to depend on themselves for their deliverance, for both purity and defilement depend on oneself. Clarifying his relationship with his followers and emphasizing the importance of self-reliance and individual striving, the Buddha plainly states: "You should exert yourselves, the Tathagatas are only teachers." The Buddha's point out the path, and it is left for us to follow that path to obtain our purification.

"To depend on others for salvation is negative, but to depend on oneself is positive." Dependence on others means a surrender of one's effort. In exhorting his disciples to be self-dependent the Buddha says in the *Parinibbana Sutta*: "Be ye islands unto yourselves, be ye a refuge unto yourselves, seek not for refuge in others." These significant words are self-elevating. They reveal how vital is self-exertion to accomplish one's object and, how superficial and futile it is to seek redemption through benignant saviours and to crave for illusory happiness in an after life through the propitiation of imaginary Gods or by irresponsible prayers and meaningless sacrifices.

Furthermore, the Buddha does not claim the monopoly of Buddhahood which, as a matter of fact, is not the prerogative of any specially graced person. He reached the highest possible state of perfection any person could aspire to, and without the close-fist of a teacher he revealed the only straight path that leads thereto. According to the Teaching of the Buddha anybody may aspire to that supreme state of perfection if he makes the necessary exertion. The Buddha does not condemn men by calling them wretched sinners, but, on the contrary, he gladdens them by saying that they are pure in heart at conception. In his opinion

the world is not wicked but is deluded by ignorance. Instead of disheartening his followers and reserving that exalted state only to himself, he encourages and induces them to emulate him, for Buddhahood is latent in all. In one sense all are potential Buddha's.

One who aspires to become a Buddha is called a Bodhisatta, which, literally, means a wisdom-being. This Bodhisatta ideal is the most beautiful and the most refined course of life that has ever been presented to this ego-centric world, for what is nobler than a life of service and purity?

As a Man he attained Buddhahood and proclaimed to the world the latent inconceivable possibilities and the creative power of man. Instead of placing an unseen Almighty God over man who arbitrarily controls the destinies of mankind, and making him subservient to a supreme power, he raised the worth of mankind. It was he who taught that man can gain his deliverance and purification by his own exertion without depending on an external God or mediating priests. It was he who taught the ego-centric world the noble ideal of selfless service. It was he who revolted against the degrading caste system and taught equality of mankind and gave equal opportunities for all to distinguish themselves in every walk of life.

He declared that the gates of success and prosperity were open to all in every condition of life, high or low, saint or criminal, who would care to turn a new leaf and aspire to perfection.

Irrespective of caste, colour or rank he established for both deserving men and women a democratically constituted celibate Order. He did not force his followers to be slaves either to his teachings or to himself but granted complete freedom of thought.

He comforted the bereaved by his consoling words. He ministered to the sick that were deserted. He helped the poor that were neglected. He ennobled the lives of the deluded, purified the corrupted lives of criminals. He encouraged the feeble, united the divided, enlightened the ignorant, clarified the mystic, guided the benighted, elevated the base, dignified the noble. Both rich and poor, saints and criminals loved him alike. Despotic and righteous kings, famous and obscure princes and nobles, generous and stingy millionaires, haughty and humble scholars, destitute paupers, down-trodden scavengers, wicked murderers, despised courtesans — all benefited by his words of wisdom and compassion.

His noble example was a source of inspiration to all. His serene and peaceful countenance was a soothing sight to the pious eyes. His message of peace and

tolerance was welcomed by all with indescribable joy and was of eternal benefit to everyone who had the fortune to hear and practice it.

Wherever his teachings penetrated it left an indelible impression upon the character of the respective peoples. The cultural advancement of all the Buddhist nations was mainly due to his sublime teachings. In fact all Buddhist countries like Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Nepal, Tibet, China, Mongolia, Korea, Japan, etc., grew up in the cradle of Buddhism. Though more than 2500 years have elapsed since the passing away of this greatest Teacher, yet his unique personality exerts a great influence on all who come to know him.

His iron will, profound wisdom, universal love, boundless compassion, selfless service, historic renunciation, perfect purity, magnetic personality, exemplary methods employed to propagate the teachings, and his final success -- all these factors have compelled about one-fifth of the population of the world today to hail the Buddha as their supreme Teacher.

Paying a glowing tribute to the Buddha Sri Radhakrishnan states: "In Gautama the Buddha we have a master-mind from the East second to none so far as the influence on the thought and life of the human race is concerned, and, sacred to all as the founder of a religious tradition whose hold is hardly less wide and deep than any other. He belongs to the history of the world's thought, to the general inheritance of all cultivated men, for, judged by intellectual integrity, moral earnestness, and spiritual insight, he is undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in history."

In *The Three Greatest Men in History* H.G. Wells writes: "In the Buddha you see clearly a man, simple, devout, lonely, battling for light — a vivid human personality, not a myth. He too gave a message to mankind universal in character. Many of our best modern ideas are in closest harmony with it. All the miseries and discontents are due, he taught, to selfishness. Before a man can become serene he must cease to live for his senses or himself. Then he merges into a great being. Buddha in different language called men to self-forgetfulness 500 years before Christ. In some ways he is nearer to us and our needs. He was more lucid upon our individual importance and service than Christ and less ambiguous upon the question of personal immortality."

St. Hilaire remarks "The perfect model of all the virtues he preaches, his life has not a stain upon it." Fausboll says — "The more I know of him, the more I love him."

A humble follower of his would say — "The more I know him, the more I love him; the more I love him, the more I know him."

## **Final thoughts on Christianity in comparison with Buddhism**

### **How the Churches Have Purposely Retarded Progress.**

You may think that I am going too far when I say that that is still so. I do not think that I am. Take one fact. You will bear with me if I mention it. It is not a pleasant fact, but the churches compel one to mention facts that are not pleasant. Supposing that in this world that we live in today an inexperienced girl is married to a syphilitic man; in that case the Catholic Church says, "This is an indissoluble sacrament. You must endure celibacy or stay together. And if you stay together, you must not use birth control to prevent the birth of syphilitic children." Nobody whose natural sympathies have not been warped by dogma, or whose moral nature was not absolutely dead to all sense of suffering, could maintain that it is right and proper that that state of things should continue.

That is only an example. There are a great many ways in which, at the present moment, the church, by its insistence upon what it chooses to call morality, inflicts upon all sorts of people undeserved and unnecessary suffering. And of course, as we know, it is in its major part an opponent still of progress and improvement in all the ways that diminish suffering in the world, because it has chosen to label as morality a certain narrow set of rules of conduct which have nothing to do with human happiness; and when you say that this or that ought to be done because it would make for human happiness, they think that has nothing to do with the matter at all. "What has human happiness to do with morals? The object of morals is not to make people happy." (*From the manuscript, "Why I am not a Christian", by Bertrand Russell, Philosopher.*)

### **Fear, the Foundation of the Abrahamic Faiths.**

Religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly upon fear. It is partly the terror of the unknown and partly, as I have said, the wish to feel that you have a kind of elder brother who will stand by you in all your troubles and disputes. Fear is the basis of the whole thing -- fear of the mysterious, fear of defeat, fear of death. Fear is the parent of cruelty, and therefore it is no wonder if cruelty and religion have gone hand in hand. It is because fear is at the basis of those two things. In this world we can now begin a little to understand things, and a little to master them by help of science, which has forced its way step by step against the Christian religion, against the churches, and against the opposition of all the old precepts. Science can help us to get over this craven fear in which mankind has lived for so many generations. Science can teach us, and I think our own hearts can teach us, no longer to look around for imaginary supports, no longer

to invent allies in the sky, but rather to look to our own efforts here below to make this world a better place to live in, instead of the sort of place that the churches in all these centuries have made it.

### **What We Must Do**

We want to stand upon our own feet and look fair and square at the world -- its good facts, its bad facts, its beauties, and its ugliness; see the world as it is and be not afraid of it. Conquer the world by intelligence and not merely by being slavishly subdued by the terror that comes from it. The whole conception of God is a conception derived from the ancient Oriental despotisms. It is a conception quite unworthy of free men. When you hear people in church debasing themselves and saying that they are miserable sinners, and all the rest of it, it seems contemptible and not worthy of self-respecting human beings. We ought to stand up and look the world frankly in the face. We ought to make the best we can of the world, and if it is not so good as we wish, after all it will still be better than what these others have made of it in all these ages. A good world needs knowledge, kindness, and courage; it does not need a regretful hankering after the past or a fettering of the free intelligence by the words uttered long ago by ignorant men. It needs a fearless outlook and a free intelligence. It needs hope for the future, not looking back all the time toward a past that is dead, which we trust will be far surpassed by the future that our intelligence can create. (*From the manuscript, "Why I am not a Christian", by Bertrand Russell, Philosopher.*)



# V

## Buddhic Meditation Outlines



### Meditations and Reflection

#### Concentration on Respiration: *Anapana Sati*

*Anapana Sati* is mindfulness on respiration. Ana means inhalation and *Apana* exhalation. Concentration on the breathing process leads to one-pointedness of the mind and ultimately to Insight which enables one to attain Sainthood or Arhatship.

The Buddha also practiced concentration on respiration before He attained Enlightenment. This harmless concentration may be practiced by any person irrespective of religious beliefs. Adopting a convenient posture, keep the body erect. Place the right hand over the left hand. Eyes may be closed or half-closed.

Easterners generally sit cross-legged with the body erect. They sit placing the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. This is the full position. Sometimes they adopt the half position, that is by simply placing the right foot on the left thigh or the left foot on the right thigh. When the triangular position is assumed the whole body is well-balanced. Those who find the cross-legged posture too difficult may sit comfortably in a chair or any other support sufficiently high to rest the legs on the ground.

It is of no importance which posture one may adopt provided the position is easy and relaxed. Head should not be drooping. Neck should be straightened so that the nose may be in a perpendicular line with the navel. Buddha's usually adopt the full lotus position. They sit with half closed eyes looking not more than a distance of three and half feet. Before the practice, bad air from the lungs should be breathed out slowly through the mouth and then the mouth should be closed.

Now inhale through the nostrils normally, without strain, without force. Mentally count one. Exhale and count two. Inhale and count three. Count up to ten constantly concentrating on the breathing process without thinking of anything else. While doing so one's mind may wander. But one need not be discouraged. Gradually one may increase the number of series — “say five series of ten”.

Later, one may inhale and pause for a moment, concentrating merely on inhalation without counting. Exhale and pause for a moment. Thus inhale and exhale concentrating on respiration. Some prefer counting as it aids concentration while others prefer not to count. What is essential is concentration and not counting, which is secondary.

When one practices this concentration one feels very peaceful, light in mind and body. After practicing for a certain period a day might come when one may realize that this so-called body is supported by mere breath and that body perishes when breathing ceases. One fully realizes impermanence. Where there is change there cannot be a permanent entity or an immortal soul. Insight can then be developed to attain Arhatship.

It is clear that the object of this concentration on respiration is not merely to gain one-pointedness but also to cultivate Insight to obtain deliverance from suffering. In some discourses this simple and harmless method of respiration is described as follows:

### **"Mindfully he inhales; mindfully he exhales.**

1. When making a long inhalation he knows: 'I make a long inhalation'; when making a long exhalation he knows; 'I make a long exhalation'.
2. When making a short inhalation he knows: ' I make a short inhalation'; when making a short exhalation he knows: 'I make a short exhalation'.
3. Clearly perceiving the entire breathing process (i.e., the beginning, middle and end), 'I will inhale; thus he trains himself; clearly perceiving the entire breathing process, 'I will exhale'; thus he trains himself.

4. Calming the respiration, 'I will inhale'; thus he trains himself; calming the respirations, 'I will exhale'; thus he trains himself. "

## **Meditation on Loving-kindness: *Metta***

Be still and peaceful.

Recite three times — *Nammo Buddhaya* — (Honour to the Buddha)

Recite three times — *Araham* — (The Pure One)

Recite:

|                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Buddham saranam gacchami</i> | (I go to the Buddha for refuge) |
| <i>Dhamman saranam gacchami</i> | (I go to the Dhamma for refuge) |
| <i>Sangham saranam gacchami</i> | (I go to the Sangha for refuge) |

Think thus:

My mind is temporarily pure, free from all impurities; free from lust, hatred and ignorance; free from all evil thoughts

My mind is pure and clean. Like a polished mirror is my stainless mind.

As a clean and empty vessel is filled with pure water I now fill my clean heart and pure mind with peaceful and sublime thoughts of boundless loving-kindness over-flowing compassion, sympathetic joy and perfect equanimity.

I have now washed my mind and heart of anger, ill will, cruelty, violence, jealousy, envy, passion and aversion.

Think ten times:

May I be well and happy!

May I be free from suffering, disease, grief, worry and anger!

May I be strong, self-confident, healthy and peaceful!

Think thus:

Now I charge every particle of my system, from head to foot, with thoughts of boundless loving-kindness and compassion. I am the embodiment of loving-kindness and compassion. My whole body is saturated with loving-kindness and compassion. I am a stronghold, a fortress of loving-kindness and compassion. I am nothing but loving-kindness and compassion. I have sublimated myself, elevated myself, ennobled myself.

Think ten times:

May I be well and happy!

May I be free from suffering, disease, grief, worry and anger!

May I be strong, self-confident, healthy and peaceful!

Think:

Mentally I create an aura of loving-kindness around me. By means of this aura, I cut off all negative thoughts, hostile vibrations. I am not affected by the evil vibrations of others. I return good for evil, loving-kindness for anger, compassion for cruelty, sympathetic joy for jealousy. I am peaceful and well-balanced in mind. Now I am a fortress of loving-kindness, a stronghold of morality.

What I have gained I now give unto others.

Think of all your near and dear ones at home, individually or collectively, and fill them with thoughts of loving-kindness and wish them peace and happiness, repeating May all beings be well and happy! ... Then think of all seen and unseen beings, living near and far, men, women, animals and all living beings, in the East, West, North, South, above and below, and radiate boundless loving-kindness, without any enmity or obstruction, towards all, irrespective of class, creed, colour or sex.

Think that all are your brothers and sisters, fellow-beings in the ocean of life. You identify with all. You are one with all.

Repeat ten times, "May all beings be well and happy," and wish them all peace and happiness.

In the course of your daily life try to translate your thoughts into action as occasion demands.

### **Perfections: *Parami***

1. May I be generous and helpful! (*Dana* — Generosity)
2. May I be well-disciplined and refined in manners! May I be pure and clean in all my dealings! May my thoughts, words and deeds be pure! (*Sila* — Morality)
3. May I not be selfish and self-possessive but selfless and disinterested! May I be able to sacrifice my pleasure for the sake of others! (*Nekkhamma* — Renunciation)

4. May I be wise and be able to see things as they truly are! May I see the light of Truth and lead others from darkness to light! May I be enlightened and be able to enlighten others! May I be able to give the benefit of my knowledge to others! (*Panna* — Wisdom)

5. May I be energetic, vigorous and persevering! May I strive diligently until I achieve my goal! May I be fearless in facing dangers and courageously surmount all obstacles! May I be able to serve others to the best of my ability! (*Viriya* — Energy)

6. May I be ever patient! May I be able to bear and forbear the wrongs of others! May I ever be tolerant and see the good and beautiful in all! (*Khanti* — Patience)

7. May I ever be truthful and honest! May I not hide the truth to be polite! May I never swerve from the path of Truth! (*Sacca* — Truthfulness)

8. May I be firm and resolute and have an iron will! May I be soft as a flower and firm as a rock! May I ever be high-principled! (*Adhitthana* — Determination)

9. May I ever be kind, friendly and compassionate! May I be able to regard all as my brothers and sisters and be one with all! (*Metta* — Loving-kindness)

10. May I ever be calm, serene, unruffled and peaceful! May I gain a balanced mind! May I have perfect equanimity! (*Upekkha* — Equanimity)

**May I serve to be perfect!**  
**May I be perfect to serve!**

# VI

## Psychology and Psychosynthesis in the New Age

*The Science of Spirituality* integrates the individual systems of science, psychology, philosophy, spirituality and religion into a unified system that describes the multi-dimensional nature of man and the universe. Spiritual psychology and psychosynthesis provide a more comprehensive description of reality than religion can offer and explains the mechanisms behind an array of paranormal phenomena that “science” normally chooses to ignore. It explains the science behind religious, spiritual and New-Age beliefs, and sheds light on common misconceptions of traditional religious faiths as Christianity.

The explanations of why people behave the way they do and how they change have concerned philosophers, theologians, cultists, and occultists throughout the centuries. These explanations form the basis of modern psychology and psychosynthesis. Yet psychology and psychosynthesis deal with the very same areas of concern already dealt with in the World Scriptures, above all in Buddhism, the nearest to today’s scientific researches in the field of philosophy and psychology.

Since the Bible, better known among fundamentalists as “God’s Word, tells us how to live, and about the why’s of behaviour and the how’s of change must be viewed as religious in nature. Whereas the Bible claims divine (*religion is man-made*) revelation, psychotherapy claims scientific substantiation. Nevertheless, when it comes to behaviour and attitudes, and morals and values, we are dealing with philosophy and not religion - either the Christian Faith or any one of a number of other religions, including secular humanism.

The psychologist Carl Jung himself wrote:

"Religions are systems of healing for psychic illness. ... That is why patients force the psychotherapist into the role of a priest, and expect and demand of him that he shall free them from their distress. That is why we psychotherapists must occupy ourselves with problems which, strictly speaking, belong to the theologian."

Note that Jung used the word "religions" rather than Christianity. Jung had repudiated Christianity and explored other forms of religious experience, including the occult. It is our point-of-view that in this New Age, the psychologist, and spiritual counsellors replace the priests and ministers of the Christian Cult. Today, they are unable to help people with these well-known

sayings, “God blesses you”, or “I pray for you.” The world today needs much more, than those cheap words. People, patients, and people in difficulty need to be spiritually and psychologically guided and advised.

Carl Gustav Jung viewed all religions, including Christianity, as collective mythologies. He did not believe they were real in essence, but that they could affect the human personality, and might serve as solutions to human problems. But, that was in the past, but no longer true today. People today lose their confidence in religion, the more since the uncovering of “child abuse” in the Roman Catholic Church and its institutions.

In contrast to Carl Gustav Jung, Sigmund Freud reduced all religious beliefs to the status of illusion and called religion "the obsessional neurosis of humanity." He viewed religion as delusionary and, therefore, evil and the source of mental problems.

Both Jung's and Freud's positions are absolutely true in respect to the world's religions. Repudiating the God of the Bible, both Freud and Jung led their followers in the quest for alternative understandings of mankind and alternative solutions to problems of living. Forerunners of Dr. Roberto Assagioli, psychosynthesisist, they introduced the “God within”, the “Higher Self” in each one of us.

The psychological study of religion is a meaningful area of today’s psychology. It is relevant to our understanding of people because it addresses an important facet of life in our Western World, with more than eighty percent of Europeans being totally indifferent to the Christian religion, and the vast majority of citing, while a fast majority considering as part of culture, only uses the church to furnish their familial events as baptism or christening at birth, confirmation at the age of twelve, marriages and burials, very remunerative for those churches or establishments. It certainly offers a rich source of material for the study of attitudes, coping, altruism and many other phenomena of general interest to psychologists. It also challenges the psychologist's ingenuity to conduct research on constructs that cannot easily be studied experimentally. At a more abstract level, the link between psychology and religion helps psychology maintain its historical connection with philosophy. As psychologists seek to employ the techniques of the natural sciences, the psychology of religion reminds us that our roots are in philosophy, and that the assumptions we make regarding our subject matter have important implications for scientific researches today.

With science and religion we have two opposed views of how life, the universe and everything began:

- Scientists generally believe that a perfectly balanced universe gradually appeared out of nothingness through evolution, and that life, consciousness and intelligence randomly evolved from inert matter.
- Christians generally believe that an all-powerful and all-knowing God created the world and its myriad of life-forms (in just six days), and that is unbelievable. However, recent scientific discoveries have unknowingly provided evidence that supports the multi-dimensional nature of reality that Hindus, Buddhists and Kabbalists have known about for thousands of years:
- The latest scientific models state that the universe is multi-dimensional, with six or more hidden spatial dimensions, and is primarily composed of non-physical matter (*dark matter and dark energy*).
- Respected doctors and medical practitioners are now openly investigating near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences and past-life regression, and are beginning to discover the multi-dimensional nature of human beings.

By combining modern scientific facts with ancient spiritual knowledge we begin to uncover the whole truth and bring unity out of the existing duality. There can be only one true reality, but we will never discover the whole truth if we hold on to our preconceived ideas and only look from one perspective.

Einstein said: "Religion without science is blind, science without religion is lame", because they are two sides of the same coin.

Psychosynthesis, psychology as part of science, and spirituality all agree that we live in a multi-dimensional universe, and paranormal phenomena suggest that life exists in these other dimensions. Human beings may be at the top of the evolutionary ladder in our three-dimensional physical world but a hierarchy of increasingly advanced beings live in dimensions that exist just beyond our normal range of perception. These higher-dimensional beings are omniscient and omnipotent in our physical world, which is how our concept of god originated. Man is another god, we read in the Bible.

A handful of these highly advanced beings periodically incarnate to teach the most advanced members of humanity about the true nature of reality. The great masters such as Krishna, Buddha and Christ (and many others who kept lower profiles) are the originators of esoteric knowledge – the one true science and the one true religion. The information was shrouded in mystery and symbolism to prevent the uninitiated from fully understanding it in the event that it became public knowledge.



Most of the world's major religions were built around carefully selected pieces of this esoteric information that were taught to the general public at various times throughout history. As time passed and the religions grew, bureaucracy, dogma and superstition developed, which further distorted the original teachings. Science developed in response to the woefully poor explanations of reality offered by Western Religion as found in traditional Christianity. The early scientists were persecuted and deemed heretics for questioning the Church and delving into the mind of God, when all they sought to do was to understand the world in which they lived. Scientific scepticism of all things mystical is still very much apparent today.

A significant amount of esoteric information was released into the public domain at the end of the 19th century but it (theosophy) failed to make much of an impact because religion was dominant, science was in its infancy and the people of the time were too reserved. The popularity of metaphysics, spirituality and new science in this twenty-first century indicates that the world is now ready for a modern presentation of esoteric knowledge.

*The Science of Spirituality* systematically describes the mechanisms behind a diverse range of subject matter including: consciousness, sleep and dreams, reincarnation, religion, creation, evolution, space and time, seven planes, higher dimensions, heaven and hell, ghosts, angels and demons, out of body experiences, near death experiences, clairvoyance, psychic abilities, personal development, meditation, enlightenment and the meaning of life.

## VII

### Psychosynthesis and Creative Occultism

Dr. Roberto Assagioli's *Psychosynthesis* provides the richest study of spiritual development in a psychological context that has ever been found. As its subtitle indicates, *Psychosynthesis* is *A Manual of Principles and Techniques*. Yet it contains important theoretical sections. Assagioli's topic is clearly spiritual growth. He distinguishes two major phases in the process of psychosynthesis: personal psychosynthesis and spiritual psychosynthesis. The first treats the very issues considered to be spiritual development in his many works. Furthermore, personal psychosynthesis is the presupposition of spiritual psychosynthesis, and so the two are part of one process. Thus, despite Dr. Assagioli's particular use of the term *spiritual*, his entire work can be considered a study of spiritual development.

An understanding of Dr. Assagioli's specific definition of "spiritual" presupposes his "pluridimensional conception of the human person." First, the field of consciousness and the conscious self or "I" represent the contents of ordinary awareness of the conscious subject. Then, as Freud was significantly instrumental in showing, there is also the "lower unconscious," which contains drives and primitive urges and all dreams and imaginations of an inferior kind and lower, uncontrolled parapsychological processes.

Beyond this there is the "higher unconscious or the superconscious." The superconscious is the source of all higher intuitions, inspirations, and feelings-artistic, philosophical and scientific, ethical, and altruistic; it is the source of genius, the source of states of contemplation, illumination, and ecstasy, and the realm of the higher psychic functions and, presumably, of the higher parapsychological processes.

For Dr. Roberto Assagioli, the term *spiritual* is a correlative of the superconscious and refers to any experiences that would be rooted there. But "spiritual" also refers to experiences of the "Higher Self." So, "spiritual" is defined by experience both of the superconscious and of the Higher Self, but clearly the greater emphasis is given to experience of the superconscious.

The term, "Higher Self" is one of those defined metaphors, so common in "spiritual writings." Psychology, metaphysics (occultism), and mystical considerations do fit together. He further states that the duality between the conscious self and the Higher Self is not real: "There are not really two selves, two independent and separate entities, rather "The Self is One." Dr. Assagioli relates the Self to the "Supreme Spirit" and to the "Universal Self" of Vedanta philosophy: "Tat Twam Asi" (Thou art That); but he seems to be unconcerned whether one conceives the individual Self and the universal Self "as identical or similar, distinct or united. True, the microcosm is in the macrocosm, man is part of the great whole. for Dr. Assagioli the term "Higher Self" is supposed to indicate some transcendent principle internal to the human. Man is another god. It is "man" that created religion.

The goal of psychosynthesis is "organic unity," the integration in "a harmoniously functioning organism" of the "different drives and the various psychological functions within the individual". Talk of integration presupposes that all the "drives" in question are internal to the human. This integration occurs in two phases. The first, called personal psychosynthesis, entails "the development and perfection of the personality"; the second, called spiritual psychosynthesis, entails the personality's "harmonious coordination and increasing unification with the Self."

In other words:

"The basic purpose of psychosynthesis is to release or, let us say, help to release, the energies of the Self. Prior to this the purpose is to help integrate, to synthesize, the individual around the personal self, and then later to effect the synthesis between the personal ego and the Self."

Note that here Dr. Assagioli defines spiritual psychosynthesis by reference to the Higher Self. But he fills out the meaning of spiritual psychosynthesis by reference to experiences of the superconscious. Incorporating into his understanding Abraham Maslow's conception, Dr. Assagioli refers to this second phase of psychosynthesis also as "self-actualization" and means "psychological growth and maturation,... the awakening and manifestation of latent potentialities of the human being; for instance, ethical, esthetic, and religious experiences and activities." Dr. Assagioli specifically intends Maslow's meaning of the term "self-actualization" indicating a development of personality that frees one from preoccupation with deficiency problems of growth and the unreal, neurotic problems of life and directs one to the real, existential problems of life. Insisting with Maslow that the phase of self-actualization is not a static state of already perfect integration, Dr. Assagioli speaks of "the successive stages of self-actualization."

Introducing a further clarification, Assagioli contrasts self-actualization with Self-realization (upper case "S," referring to the Higher Self), "the realization of the Self."<sup>57</sup> Self-realization is also a goal of psychosynthesis. It is the subject's momentary experience of the higher Self. It is what is generally referred to as a "religious" experience or a mystical experience. Assagioli describes it in detail:

"Self-realization, in this specific well-defined sense, means the momentary or more or less temporary identification or blending of the 'I-consciousness' with the spiritual Self, in which the former, which is the reflection of the latter, becomes reunited, blended with the spiritual Self. In these cases there is a forgetfulness of all contents of consciousness, of all which forms the personality both on normal levels and those of the synthesized personality which include superconscious or spiritual levels of life and experience; there is only the pure intense experience of the self."

Now, in what may stand here as a summary of Dr. Assagioli's understanding of the "spiritual" and of "spiritual development," he writes,

"We are using the word "spiritual" in its broader connotation which includes, therefore, not only the specific religious experience (self-realization), but all the states of awareness, all the functions and activities which have as common denominator the possessing of values higher than the average, values such as the ethical, the esthetic, the heroic, the humanitarian, and the altruistic. We include under the general heading of "spiritual development" then, all experiences

connected with awareness of the contents of the superconscious, which may or may not include the experience of the self."

For Dr. Assagioli the second phase of psychosynthesis, spiritual psychosynthesis, is specifically spiritual development. It is defined by reference both to the superconscious and to the Self. It entails both self-actualization and self-realization. But self-actualization means integration of the superconscious into the permanent personality, while self-realisation means the blending of the Self with the personality. Self-actualisation is an ongoing process; self-realisation is a momentary experience. Are Self-actualisation and self-realization related? Dr. Assagioli evidently thinks they are. In fact, he as much identifies the two when he defines spiritual psychosynthesis as the personality's "harmonious and increasing unification with the Self"; for in this statement the distinction between superconscious and Self and the distinction between self-actualisation and self-realisation collapse. Yet if here spiritual psychosynthesis means "increasing unification with the Self," elsewhere spiritual development "may or may not include the experience of the Self."

In summary, Assagioli has two understandings of "spiritual" and of "spiritual development." One relates to the superconscious and the other, to the Higher Self.

Self-actualisation is the quest to become the best you can be. It involves deciding what you want from life and then doing what is necessary to get what you want. Self-actualisation is a term coined by psychologists Roberto Assagioli and Abraham Maslow to describe the ongoing process of fully developing your personal potential. The first thing to note about self-actualisation is that it is a process not a goal. In other words, self-actualisation is not something that you aim for: it is something that you do. The second thing to note is that self-actualisation is not restricted to high-profile, high-achieving individuals; you do not have to be famous to self-actualise.

Self-actualisers feel safe, calm, accepted, loved, loving and alive. They share a number of characteristics:

1. **Peak experiences.** Self-actualisers frequently experience moments of high excitement, ecstasy, harmony and deep meaning.
2. **Higher purpose.** Self-actualisers have a mission in life. They attempt to solve problems and pursue goals that are outside of themselves.
3. **Spontaneous.** Self-actualisers are willing to take risks and experiment with their lives. They are unrestrained and uninhibited.
4. **Fresh and renewed appreciation.** Every day provides an opportunity to enjoy the good things that life has to offer. Self-actualisers never tire of

seeing (for example) a golden sunset. Their enjoyment and appreciation are as intense the twentieth time as they were the first.

5. **Social interest.** Self-actualisers take an interest in others. They care about the well being of others and the community in which they live. Additionally, their relationships with loved ones are deep and committed.
6. **Comfortable with being alone.** As well as enjoying close relationships with others, self-actualisers enjoy their own company. They regularly enjoy being alone.
7. **Sense of humour.** Self-actualisers are able to laugh at themselves. Because their sense of humour is non-hostile, they are able to make jokes about others that are not hurtful or spiteful.
8. **Critical thinking.** Self-actualisers are not easily fooled. They are both open-minded and sceptical, willing to consider all ideas, but equally willing to dismiss them if they don't stand up to critical analysis.
9. **Accepting of imperfection.** Self-actualisers are comfortable with their own flaws as well as the flaws in others. Similarly, they calmly accept that life is full of uncertainty and frustration.
10. **Self-directed.** Self-actualisers are autonomous; they choose the direction of their own lives. They are independent and resourceful.

## How to self-actualise

Unfortunately there is no pill you can take that will turn you into a self-actualiser overnight, but there are some steps that you can take starting now that will head you in the right direction:

1. **Assess your life.** Are you living a life that you find deeply rewarding and meaningful? This is not a "once-only" step. It's a question you'll need to ask yourself regularly.
2. **Assess your motives.** Are you holding yourself back because of fear? Base your life choices on a desire to grow, rather than as a reaction to fear.
3. **Be willing to change.** If your life isn't rewarding you'll need to be willing to change, willing to get off your backside and take a new direction.
4. **Take responsibility.** Do not expect others to make changes for you. It is your life and its up to you to make the necessary changes that will lead to greater fulfilment.
5. **Cherish your uniqueness.** Be prepared to break away from the herd and be different. Do not be afraid to follow your impulses.
6. **Realise your dreams.** Instead of wallowing in wishful thinking, write down your goals and take the appropriate action to achieve them.
7. **Accept your fallibility.** Be willing to say, "I was wrong." Be honest with yourself and with others.

8. **Learn from the good times.** Try to repeat experiences that you find deeply meaningful or awe-inspiring or that lead to feelings of excitement, ecstasy, humility or personal fulfillment.
9. **Join in.** Get involved in life. Become an active member of your community.
10. **Look for the good in others.** Every one of us has good points and bad. All too often we overlook the good and focus on the bad. Get into the habit of looking for the good in others.
11. **Assess your progress.** Take the time to reflect on all that you've accomplished as well as to honestly assess how you can do more to improve your life and the lives of those around you.

**Self-realisation** is plainly found in the seven hundred verses of the Bhagavad Gita (*use our translation from the Sanskrit*). The entire thrust of the Gita is not to give a psychological or material explanation for things. The entire thrust of this Sacred Book is to lift the individual and solve his existential and spiritual problems. And once a spiritual problem is solved, once one discovers that he or she is inwardly strong: "In my being I am strong". Then whatever be the nature of the challenge one emerges stronger and diviner. The world thereafter will not become a problem, but an opportunity to the interested. The more one crushes a piece of sandalwood, the more fragrance emanates from it. In the same way when one discovers that one is inwardly strong, the world becomes an opportunity for him or her. The more one is crushing the more one's fragrance emanates all around, the more one's divinity manifests all around. And then one will not curse the world.

One will stand in utter reverence to the world, because the world has given he or her an opportunity to discover and unfold one's depth. Then one becomes a thankful person to the "Unique", and to the world that is created for the humans. Hence throughout the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna's self-awareness, his own self, his Being, concentrated on.

The concept of Self-realisation can stir up inner visions and a highly balanced outlook of life, a sober approach to every event and factor in life, a policy of impersonality in regard to any kind of encounter in the world. Yes, this is fine, and this can be there, and this is sometimes there. But there can also be something else.

Self-Realisation is not an easy thing to achieve, because the notion of the Higher Self can be a barrier and a handicap. What do you mean by the Higher Self when you speak of Self-Realisation? Where is this Higher Self situated? "It is within me, it is my Soul." This is a usual glib answer available for any person. "I seek to know my Higher Self." And why do I

seek to know my own Higher Self? Because I want to live in peace. What do you mean by peace? No answer can be given. Here, again, we are in a state of confusion. Why do you want Self-Realisation? To know my own Higher Self. Why do you want to know your Higher Self? To be in a state of balance in my mind and outlook. What for is this effort? To be peaceful. What is peace? That cannot be answered. We do not know what this peace means, about which people talk so much and which is the theme of the various rostrums in the parliaments of cultural discussion the world over, which are taking place from Peru to China! But, what is this Higher Self? While you may say, 'it is within me,' and this may appear to satisfy the person who has put this question, you will be sure that it does not satisfy even your own selves. There is no use merely saying "the Higher Self is within me and that is my God." We have a curious notion of Higher Self and the "Unique" (God, Divine Mind, Cosmic Energy, etc), indeed. It is within you! When you say, "the Higher Self is within me," what do you mean by this 'me'? What is this 'me' or the 'I'? Again, the same question arises. Here, again, we are bodily shackled.

We are men and women, we are humans, and we cannot be anything else. So this 'within' in which the Higher Self seems to be situated is the 'within' 'this body.' You have confined the notion of yourself to your bodily existence finally, though your intention is to break through the barriers of bodily consciousness in search for the Higher Self. The thief has subtly entered through the back door, while you are keeping police and army at the front door to prevent an entry of the dacoits. They have come through the back door and they have done their work, because the Higher Self which is supposed to be the means to break through the barriers of bodily consciousness has confined itself to the body only, again, for, when the Higher Self is *within*, it cannot be but *within the body*. If it is not within the body, within what is it, when you say that it is within? Here is a difficulty before you. Many of the books will not answer this pose. If God is not within, where else is God? And if you say that He is within, within what? Within the body? You are caught again by the very answer that you are giving, which is supposed to be the solution to your problems.

There is also another difficulty that you may have to face. What will you do after Self-Realisation takes place? You may tell us, "how can this question arise?" It certainly arises and it cannot be escaped by most people because we are bound to the action-ridden world. The world is nothing but a field of activity. We do, and do, and do, and work, and work, and we have nothing else of meaning in life except action, doing something, working. So, naturally, the greatest meaning of life being working, doing, acting and moving towards achievement of something,

that being the final meaning, that meaning cannot be abrogated even in what we may call God-Realisation. A heightened form of work may be the advantage we gain after God-Realisation! The Realisation of the Higher Self or the Realisation of God will give me greater strength to work more in this world than I am capable of at present. I may be able to do a greater service to the people than at present. I may live a longer life. I may not die at all after the blessing of God is received. This individual immortality sanctioned to me by the achievement of the Self or the attainment of God will give me such sovereignty over the world that I shall be the master of all things and I shall be a wonder-worker.

The purification of the mind is of paramount importance before you study books and imagine that you are on the pedestal of heightened thinking, perhaps on the way to the Unique (the Absolute, the Supreme) Himself. To be on the way to the Unique is an immense blessing, nothing can be a more glorious achievement than that—but who can be on the way to the Unique? Which man, which woman, which individual can be sure that he or she is on the way to the Unique, if this humility characteristic of an utter submission to a higher authority, which is the divine principle manifesting itself, is not to be discovered in one's own self? Many seekers who thought they were after the Unique had disappointment towards the end of their lives.

The realisation of the Unique (the Absolute, the Supreme, God) is mostly identified with the realisation of the Higher Self. There is no need to go further deep into these quibbles of academic difference made between the Higher Self and God, etc. For all practical purposes, from the point of view of the actual needs of "*Sadhana*" (*accomplishing spiritual practice*) we may conclude that Self-Realisation is virtually the same as what we call God-Realisation. But this is a very difficult issue with which one can with hardship reconcile oneself. We have, again, here the inveterate conviction that the Higher Self is 'within' 'me', well, that may be God. Where is God? The answer is, 'God is within;' whose 'within?' As pointed out, this concept of 'within' is a tantalising thing; one cannot say, where is this 'within' and 'within which person' is God sitting? We may, of course, say, "within everybody." Here is a subtle difficulty that may be posed before you once again. That which is within everything is inconceivable to the mind, because that which is within everything has lost the very meaning of 'within,' because you have conceded that it is within everything; therefore, not 'within me only.' Hence, the word "within" may not apply to God (Cosmic Universal Energy). You cannot also say that the Unique is without. That which is within has also to be without if you conclude that it is within everybody. But that which is



within cannot be without, and that which is without cannot be within, and if you say that it is both within and without, your mind will stop thinking.

We do not know what we are speaking about. Here is a matter for decision only by a competent master. How are we to encounter in our consciousness that which is the Higher Self, which is Unique (*Absolute, Supreme, Divine Idea, etc.*), which is within, which is without, and yet not within and not without? How are we going to think of this? How are we to conceive this? The difficulty in conceiving and entertaining the consciousness of this mystery arises, again, due to the impurities of the mind which we have not got rid of by humble and selfless service. I repeat, again, that this is not an old-fashioned system. There is no other way than to be submissive and humble before the might of this tremendous mystery we call God, the Absolute or the Supreme, we call the Higher Self within.

There is no end to this process, and the concept of end and terminus also arises on account of the notion of space and time. The “Great Universal Cosmic Architect” created the universe sometime in ancient past—so do we believe. Then, by ‘ancient past’ we mean, again, some beginning of time, though we believe that the Universal Cosmic Energy is beyond time. Therefore, to calculate the point of the creation of the world at some origin of time would be to defy our acceptance earlier that the Unique (God) is not in time. These are the difficulties, and why do they arise? Why should these difficulties harass us? They all vanish in a second like mist before the sun if the mind is pure. And what is purity of mind? It is the ability to accept simply, humbly and honestly that our knowledge and power is not adequate to the purpose and to accept at the same time that there are powers more than we. We are not the final explanation of things. Whatever education we may be imparted is insufficient here. The great master was approached, even in unthinkable past, by students who were themselves far superior to most us.

Narada, the renowned Hindu sage, humbly approached Sanatkumara. Do you think Narada was an unlearned person, an uneducated being? There was no science, no art in which he was not proficient, and no wonder and miracle that he could not work. Such a person devoutly went in submission to the master, Sanatkumara. Where was the need? Indra, the ruler of the gods, who can strike threat and wonder and miracle anywhere, went humbly to Prajapati for knowledge. The Upanishads are interesting demonstrative narrations before us of a series of masters themselves approaching greater masters.

We need not be carried away by the complacency common to people that everything is clear to our minds. We will find that while everything seems

to be clear now, when we proceed further and further, we will find it gets blurred more and more, until we see an iron hill in front of us, a mountain, a dark curtain which we will not be able to pierce, because the egoism of the individual is already there, which told that everything is clear. Humility is the hallmark of the spiritual seeker, and the guidance of a master is essential.

To feel that one has everything even when one is alone—this conviction may be regarded as a sign of spiritual progress. Mostly, we feel lonely when we are alone, as if we are discarded persons, and we seek company of people, we befriend others; and the lesser the relation we have with people, the smaller do we feel ourselves to be, and our dimension seems to expand in its importance by the largeness of our social relations. This is usual human feeling. But, the path of the Spirit is different from the path of ordinary human nature.

Assagioli notes four stages in the attainment of the goal of organic unity. First, Thorough Knowledge of One's Personality: One comes to know both the empirical conscious elements in oneself and especially the hidden dark forces of the unconscious. Second, Control of the Various Elements of the Personality: One generally appropriates all of what one is but does not identify with it all; one allows that there is a self beyond what is happening to it. Third, Realisation of One's True Self - The Discovery or Creation of a Unifying Centre : In a series of intermediate stages or plateaus, one strives to become one's Higher Self by identifying with external models or ideals. And fourth, Psychosynthesis: The Formation or Reconstruction of the Personality Around the New Centre: One builds a new, coherent, organized, and unified personality either by projecting an ideal self-image and trying to live up to it or by more spontaneously following a call from within.

What Dr. Assagioli calls "stages" are not intended as discrete achievements along the way to spiritual integration: "all the various stages and methods mentioned above are closely interrelated and need not be followed in a strict succession of distinct periods or phases." These "stages" rather represent general aspects of a growth process and could conceivably be relevant to the transition between any real stages of spiritual development that might be discerned.

That same applies to the second and different account of "four critical stages" that Dr. Assagioli relates to disturbances that can arise during the process of spiritual growth. First, an upheaval of normal living, often occurring with no apparent cause, results in despondency, lack of meaning and purpose in life, and serious questioning. What Dr. Assagioli describes here sounds like the classic "mid-life crisis," popularized by Gail Sheehy (*author, journalist and lecturer, born 1937*). Second, a breakthrough, "the spiritual awakening," brings an

emotional high. Third, cessation of the initial high causes doubt, confusion, and discouragement. Dr. Assagioli sees reference to this effect in Plato's account of the pain of the prisoners in the cave when they first see the light and in John of the Cross's account of the Dark Night of the Soul. And fourth, acceptance of the necessarily transitory nature of the initial experience allows one to begin the long process of restructuring the personality in light of the already experienced goal.

Dr. Roberto Assagioli's distinction between personal psychosynthesis and spiritual psychosynthesis does provide great help. He stands firm in his views. Furthermore, Dr. Assagioli's notion of increasing unification of the personality with the Higher Self and his notion of the reconstruction of the personality in view of that unification suggest development of the intrinsic structures of the personality, with an understanding highly compatible, if not identical, with the Psychologist Jane Loevinger Weissman's (1918-2008) conception of "Ego" development. Dr. Assagioli's conception also suggests heuristically the ultimate goal of that development, namely, that the personality become a perfect expression or reflection of the Higher Self. At that ultimate point in development one would have attained not a momentary but an abiding state of self-realization. These notions, though not always consistently presented by Dr. Assagioli, are a part of his thought. They are valuable contributions for an understanding of spiritual development.

Four other aspects of Dr. Assagioli's position are relevant to the goal of this essay. First, Dr. Assagioli presupposes that psychosynthesis is an adult affair. That the first stage in the process is thorough knowledge of one's personality confirms this reading. Likewise, the conception of intentional integration of all aspects of the person, that is, eventual reconstruction of the personality, also confirms this reading. Dr. Assagioli's overall presentation and his recommendation of specific techniques are obviously geared toward adults. He notes that there are two periods of particularly intense upheaval during life: "first, the tumultuous awakening of new tendencies at the time of adolescence, and second, the awakening of religious aspirations and new spiritual interests, particularly at middle age." The latter is Dr. Assagioli's concern. Note that Dr. Lynda Grant, Dr. Michael Thompson, and Dr. David Clarke indicate these same two periods as critical and explain the crises in terms of alternations in the generic Jungian functions, perceiving and judging.

Second, Dr. Assagioli adopts an explicit, neutral stance toward religion. Of course, Dr. Assagioli is concerned about religious or spiritual experiences, but not about the religious formulations of those experiences nor about institutionalized religion. Dr. Assagioli's indifference about how the Higher Self is related to the Universal Self (*God, the Absolute, the Supreme, Cosmic*

*Universal Energy, etc.*), as noted above, is evidence here. Psychosynthesis is a "scientific conception" and does not "appropriate to itself the fields of religion and of philosophy.... Psychosynthesis does not aim nor attempt to give a metaphysical nor a theological explanation of the great Mystery-it leads to the door, but stops there." Dr. Roberto Assagioli's position represents a clear and nuanced insistence that certain aspects of spiritual development can be adequately treated apart from theological presuppositions. And, this is very important to us in this New Age.

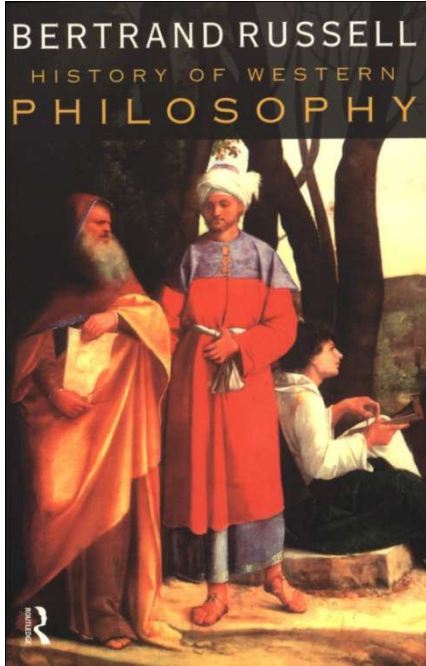
Third, Dr. Assagioli insists that there are "higher urges within man which tend to make him grow towards greater realizations of his spiritual essence." He relates these "urges" to the Self and the superconscious, namely, to what he describes as the spiritual. Dr. Assagioli holds that "spiritual drives or spiritual urges are as real, basic and fundamental as sexual aggressive drives."

Finally, given his insistence on the reality of the spiritual, Dr. Assagioli argues for a conception of psychology broad enough to deal with spiritual development. He explains, "We are not attempting to force upon psychology a philosophical, theological or metaphysical position, but essentially we include within the study of psychological facts all those which may be related to the higher urges."

Dr. Assagioli's presupposition squares with that of this essay, namely, that certain aspects of spiritual development can be treated within a psychological perspective when adequately conceived.

# VIII

## Philosophy and Occultism



**Philosophy** is not a theory but a vision of life (*Darshana, sight*). It is not merely “love of wisdom” but signifies a real ‘possession’ of it. The philosophers are, therefore, not professors, academicians or doctrinaires, or even ‘spectators,’ but true participants of life in its real meaning and relationship. To be a philosopher, it implies more substance than what is often taken to be its value in life. A philosopher is not concerned with human beings alone: his concern is with all creation, universe in its completeness. His thought has to reflect the *total* import of existence in its togetherness.

A philosopher’s task calls for a great strength of will and clarity of understanding side by side with an exalted moral consciousness. The usual prerequisites for a student of philosophy have been stated to be:

1. Viveka, or discrimination of reality, as distinguished from appearances.
2. Vairayga, or disinterest in those appearances which are divested of reality.
3. Sama, or tranquillity of mind.
4. Dama, or self-restraint, meaning control over the clamours of sense.
5. Uparati, or freedom from the distractions characteristic of selfish activity.
6. Titiksha, or power of fortitude in the midst of the vicissitudes of life.
7. Shraddha, or faith and conviction in the meaningfulness of the pursuit of philosophy.
8. Samadhana, or ability to concentrate the mind on the subject of study.
9. Mumukshutva, or a sincere longing to attain the practical realization of the Absolute.

Without the equipment of these necessary qualifications, a student under the scheme of philosophy will be a failure and cannot get at either its method or its purpose. Though the discipline needed is arduous indeed and no one, ordinarily,

can be expected to be full with it to perfection, it has to be accepted that it is an inviolable condition of the pursuit of philosophy, at least in an appreciable measure. Otherwise, philosophy would only shed as much light to the student as the sun to the blind.

Philosophy has often been identified with a life of contemplation without action. That this is a misrepresentation based on ignorance would become obvious from the nature of philosophic wisdom, as has been stated well. Though wisdom is a state of consciousness and implies concentration and meditation, it does so not in any exclusive sense, for philosophic wisdom is all-inclusive. It synthesises the different sides of the psychological nature, e.g., the knowing, willing, feeling and active. Any lop-sided emphasis is contrary to the requirements of a wisdom of life. The teaching of the Bhagavad Gita, a monumental embodiment of the gospel of the philosophic life, is a standing refutation of the notion that philosophical knowledge is equal to actionlessness. A philosopher, in his heightened understanding, has also the power of sublime feeling and action for a universal cause.

Philosophy is not also opposed to religion; on the other hand it is the lamp which illumines the corners of religion both within and without. Philosophy supplies the “*raison d’être*” of religious or metaphysical (occult) practices, even of ritual, image and symbol. If religion or metaphysics is the body, philosophy is the life in it. Philosophy ennobles religion or metaphysics (occultism), sublimates art and stabilises the sciences, such as sociology, ethics and politics. It was the hope of Plato that the philosopher and the ruler be found in the same person, if the world is to have peace. Philosophy is also the remedy for the illnesses which psychoanalysis and psychosynthesis have been attempting to trace back to a supposed irrationality of behaviour. Philosophy discovers the rationality behind the so-called irrational urges.

In India, philosophy as *Darshana* (*sight or vision*) has always been associated with practice or *Sadhana*. What goes by the name of *Yoga* is the implementation of philosophy in practical life, with reference to the psychological functions predominating in an individual. Philosophy has therefore relation to one’s *being* more than to one’s intellectual grasping of outer situations. The philosophic truth is neither the inner nor the outer merely, for it is the *whole*. The cosmic gets mirrored in the consciousness of the *philosopher* who lives it more than anything else.

Philosophy is different from any kind of extreme, whether in thinking or living. The *golden mean* is its rule, which excludes nothing, but includes everything by way of transformation to suit the constitution of the whole which is its aim. To arrive at this finale of knowledge, it considers the cases of perception, inference and intuition; observation, implication and the testimony of experience. It neither denies nor affirms peremptorily. Philosophy is necessary for every stage

and kind of life to make it a joy. There is no satisfaction where there is no meaning. Philosophy is the discovery of the meaning behind life.

Philosophy is impartial judgment without prejudice, underestimation or overestimation. It recognises the values accepted in the different fields of knowledge and iterated in the various viewpoints of observation and logic in order to construct an edifice of integral envisagement. From this it follows that philosophy does not take sides, has a place for every stand point of thinking in its proper perspective, and its function is to so fit everything into its broad scheme that nothing is either ignored or made to strike a dissonant note in the harmony of its development. Its position is that of the chief judge in the government of the universe. It listens, understands, sifts, weighs and considers the status of any given circumstance not from the standpoint of the circumstance in its isolatedness but in its relation to the whole of existence. No one can, therefore, afford to turn away from the divine gift called 'philosophy'.

## Occultism, Metaphysics

The ancient truism of "Man, know Thyself" have always been taught by enlightened and wise men. This imperative we have historically followed to the best of our abilities, somewhat like a blind man groping in the dark. The Great Teachers and Enlightened Ones (*Buddha, Krishna, Jesus, to name a few*) down the ages have portrayed for us an ideal and their example has cast light and shown us the way, inspiring and leading us onward on the Path.

It is a fact that man has increased his ability to create and also his ability to impact that which is around him. However, it is questionable whether man has developed the reflective consciousness required that would allow him to exercise his developing abilities in a thoughtful, mature and responsible manner. In order for man to know his impact, he must come to know himself, only so will he be able to direct his energies, take responsibility for his actions and ultimately become Self-reliant.

With the dawning of the New Age of Aquarius in which we are now in, a new light is making itself known across the planetary horizon. This light carries with it a new teaching. Here, in our modern day, at the beginning of the New Age, aspiring men, like the psychologist Roberto Assagioli has been answered in the call for aid in the quest for man to know himself. Man has, been awarded the potent and sacred teaching on the *Seven Rays, as taught by the Tibetan D.K. through Alice A. Bailey*, that has long been safely guarded by the Teachers on the Inner Side. It is a teaching that echoes the ancient teachings on the significance of the number seven.

The occultist believes his duty rests with humanity, rather than with self-interest. Man must develop his talents as the preoccupation with self is really in the interest of evolution and of humanity. In a large sense Esotericism or Occultism as well as Esoteric Astrology important branches of the science and art of astrology, difficult to prove, but sacred. The Esoteric branch of Astrology assists a person to intuit the beauty of the Universe for himself; the exoteric branches pay attention to man's inclination and behaviour as he is physically affected by our Solar System. One branch balances the other in perfect unison.

"I am me, a Living Soul of humanity, part of space, imbued with and impinged upon by hosts of intelligences in this Solar System, integrally part of a Seven Sun circuit and focusing through all this are the Rays"

We are searching for Light and Truth, and we know if we find some Ray of it, parts of the Truth will be withheld from us, and we will comprehend the plain Truth. While a certain Truth could be explained to a student, he would not truly comprehend it until he had in some way experienced it, and mainly through study (*gnosis*) and meditation. We have no words to describe invisible realms, behind the scene of visibility how far it all goes.

As the spiritual man thinks less about the personal more selfish side of life and in terms of being a link in the macrocosm, he is increasingly drawn to the entire Cosmic Universe. He as an individual is tuning into nature's system and its secrets. Esotericism and Astrology as the Seven Rays are concerned, allow one to leave the centre of one's being to move out of the personal nucleus into the all-inclusive whole. In doing so one loses neither individuality nor identity, the Sun and the Ascendant remains with him or her regardless, and along with the accompanying Planetary Powers.

Just as man is part of humanity, so is his etheric part of humanity's etheric body. Throughout all creation there is unity, and no such thing as separateness except in the minds of unknowing men.

A man should become aware of his several realms of consciousness. His indwelled subconscious mind is instinctively obeying, reacting, and responding according to what it has been taught. Then, there is his thinking or translating conscious mind, man's link between his Higher Self (Soul) and the lower self.

Most important is the "superconscious mind" or Soul consciousness, which is man's connection with the one life pervading all and for Eternity.

All there is motion, its movement a matter of polarity, of likes and dislikes attracting and repelling, and all the motion is electrical.



Life itself is energy like electricity, through it man lives in an ocean of desire until he renounces his lower side, so releasing his Soul. His lower self much achieve “oneness” with his “Higher Self”, the Soul.

Not only is man bathed by and impinged upon by energetic interplay from above, but Earth, too, is a planet emanating magnetism. We are embraced by these uprising vibrations as well for there we reach out impersonally to play our part, the microcosm in the macrocosm.

Through every minute of the day the Seven Rays of the Universe come spiraling through, streaming down along various sources to settle different backgrounds which the astrological aspects activate.

These Rays belong to the entire Universe, not just to the planet Earth. Rays are Universal forces. Astrology as we view it is Solar related. Rays and Astrology must work together. Rays first because they are Universal; Astrology next because it is Solar related. Both Rays and Astrology affect us in different ways. Nature is the aggregate of all there is, known and unknown. Rays are a part of it, such subtle celestial forces of which little is known.

### **The First Three Rays are the Rays of Aspect**

|                    |                                |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>The 1st Ray</b> | The Ray of Will/Power/Purpose  |
| <b>The 2nd Ray</b> | The Ray of Love/Wisdom         |
| <b>The 3rd Ray</b> | The Ray of Active Intelligence |

### **Followed by the Four Rays of Attribute**

*(Working in effect to broaden, distribute and define the three major Rays)*

|                    |                                       |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>The 4th Ray</b> | The Ray of Harmony through Conflict   |
| <b>The 5th Ray</b> | The Ray of Concrete Science/Knowledge |
| <b>The 6th Ray</b> | The Ray of Devotion/Idealism          |
| <b>The 7th Ray</b> | The Ray of Ceremonial Order           |

### **Astrological Sympathies of the Rays**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>First</b>  | Pioneer impregnating the Rays into astrology                                      |
| <b>Second</b> | Teaching astrology under the Rays   |
| <b>Third</b>  | Organising, synthesising, interpreting astrology under the Rays                   |
| <b>Fourth</b> | Esoteric astrology under the Rays   |
| <b>Fifth</b>  | Mathematics and the practical side of astrology under the Rays, medical astrology |

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>Sixth</b> | Devotee and active servant of the spiritual science of astrology under the Rays |
| <b>Seven</b> | Foundations expressing new age astrology under Ray stimulus                     |

A Ray is but a name for a particular force or type of energy, with the emphasis upon the quality which that force exhibits and not upon the form aspect which it creates. The seven primordial energies are beyond complete, exact depiction in words, or even in thoughts on the planes of this world. They are too essential and encompassing to be wholly contained or isolated within our narrow band of the Greater Range. This is a list of some of the more common synonyms:

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Ray One</b>   | Will, purpose, power, destruction ( <i>destroying to rebuild</i> ) |
| <b>Ray Two</b>   | Love, wisdom, inclusiveness, coherence, magnetism                  |
| <b>Ray Three</b> | Active Intelligence, adaptability, creativity                      |
| <b>Ray Four</b>  | Harmony through conflict, beauty, sensitivity, unity               |
| <b>Ray Five</b>  | Concrete knowledge, science, mind, analysis                        |
| <b>Ray Six</b>   | Devotion, idealism, adherence, force                               |
| <b>Ray Seven</b> | Order, ceremony, organisation, group, magic                        |

The Ray teaching gives us a picture of energetic creation and of life at all levels of being. It provides a means of explaining the intricate interrelationships of all things, spiritual and material; and, it proclaims their oneness and interconnectedness. As part of this picture of the energetic cosmos, human beings are, of course, themselves composed of Ray energies, as so above so below. The various bodies or vehicles of incarnation of the individual human being - the personality, the mind, the Soul, etc. - are said to issue forth on one or other of the Rays.

The psychological application of the Ray hypothesis is of particular interest because it provides a practical energy framework for understanding the make-up of individuals and groups. The Rays of a person, when determined, studied and understood, will enable that individual, or his counsellors or therapists, go to the source. Knowledge of one's energy-essence and underlying vital composition can be invaluable in developing a balanced program for life.

The author of the information anent the Seven Rays is the Tibetan Master, Djwhal Khul, who dictated his teaching telepathically to Alice A. Bailey. He has been our primary source of information on the Seven Rays for more than seventy years. There have long been hints of this doctrine concealed within the teachings of all great philosophies and religions, but it has not been systematically presented. Astrology, since ancient times, has been divided into exoteric and esoteric branches. The Ray teaching, however, has remained esoteric and largely hidden from the world.

The reason for the new emergence of this ancient knowledge at this time and in this New Age seems quite simple. Humanity, the World Disciple, is apparently now ready, and stands on the threshold of a great awakening. New responsibilities, new opportunities and new light are being urged upon us by the Teachers of the race. Concurrent with this expansion is the need for a deeper, conscious penetration by the human race into the essential nature of reality. What was once occult mystery is now rapidly becoming practical science.

Modern physics has concluded that all is energy, that within every form lies an essential network and pattern of energy. The Seven Ray teaching, in scientific terms, is an hypothesis that asserts the following:

All energy within form is fundamentally septenate in character. The energy, as well as the forms derived from it, can be described through seven discrete and archetypal streams.

The seven streams of energy, it is said, are the very vibrations within matter, space and form which define and infuse all objects, all beings and all events in manifestation. They combine and interweave to create all the complex systems we know as reality, from the grandest interstellar spectacle to the smallest mundane occurrence of daily life. As concepts they will be found to be familiar, simple and direct of apprehension. They strike a chord in our consciousness and are, quite literally, closer to us than breath.

In order to understand the "seven streams of force", we are constrained to use verbal and numerical descriptions. But bear in mind that any words we may use are mainly attempts to translate a quality into a form. And, in translations of any kind, something of the original is always lost.

The following summaries of the rays based on research in the teachings of the Tibetan, may help to explain the range and focus of each of the seven qualities:

### **The First Ray:**

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Ray One:</b> | Will and Purpose      |
| <b>Signs:</b>   | Aries, Leo, Capricorn |
| <b>Planets</b>  | Vulcan, Pluto         |

This energy is the beginning and the final synthesis - the source of all energies. It is the essence of power and energy itself. The first ray is the force of purpose, direction, centralisation and one-ness, of which the will is the keynote. It is characterised by the qualities of intensity, dynamism, quickness, and dominance. It often results in detachment, isolation and crystallization. And out of its force

and directness is conceived the power of creative destruction (*destroying to rebuild*).

### The Second Ray:

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Ray Two:</b> | Love and Wisdom       |
| <b>Signs:</b>   | Gemini, Virgo, Pisces |
| <b>Planets</b>  | Jupiter, Sun          |

Consciousness is born of the second energy, in the union of duality, spirit and matter. This is the source and blending of light and love, magnetism and relationship, inclusiveness and coherence. It is the ray of wisdom, sensitivity and intuition, as well as clarity and attention to detail. This energy is a qualifying, teaching and healing force. It often results in attachment and attraction, and, curiously, establishes our awareness of fear, the antithesis of love and relationship. The second ray is the energy of the entire solar system and hence is also a ray of profound synthesis.

### The Third Ray

|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Ray Three:</b> | Active Intelligence      |
| <b>Signs:</b>     | Cancer, Libra, Capricorn |
| <b>Planets</b>    | Earth, Saturn            |

Activity and intelligence work out from this source, a result of purpose and wisdom. It is the energy of full and great manipulations, creativity and adaptability. Needs are recognised through this force, plans are formulated, material is selected and business is undertaken. The third ray is clear, inherent mental and intellectual ideation in pursuit of truth, with the objective of manifesting in matter and substance. It is the power which evokes form.

### The Fourth Ray

|                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Ray Four:</b> | Harmony through Conflict     |
| <b>Signs:</b>    | Taurus, Scorpio, Sagittarius |
| <b>Planets</b>   | Mercury, Moon                |

This energy stands symbolically in the centre of the seven and is the magnetic relation of opposites, the point of harmony, bridging and mediation amidst conflict, pain and struggle - in a sense, the fruition the duality rooted in the second ray. It stimulates creativity, art and beauty and is characterised by sensitivity to colour and sound. Discrimination, quickness and a searching for

perfection reside here. The intuitive, relational force is strong in this ray, which evokes life, love and understanding.

### The Fifth Ray

|                  |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Ray Five:</b> | Concrete Knowledge and Science |
| <b>Signs:</b>    | Leo, Sagittarius, Aquarius     |
| <b>Planet</b>    | Mercury, Venus                 |

This is the energy of concretion into substance, of knowledge and science, and of stimulation in the three worlds. It leads to the searching, analysis and development of ideas, which in the end produces light and wisdom. It is the energy of differentiation and investigation which can lead to separateness, cleavage and crystallization. But the thoroughness and discrimination with which the fifth force works in the mind and the intellect leads the way ultimately to understanding and to the revelation of truth.

### The Sixth Ray

|                 |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Ray Six:</b> | Devotion and Idealism      |
| <b>Signs:</b>   | Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces |
| <b>Planet</b>   | Mars, Neptune              |

The seeds of all devotion and desire pour forth through this energy. It generates adherence, intensity and persistence. The determination resident in this Ray is a fiery essence, sometimes full of force, fury and even fanatical display and militant violence. Abstraction and aspiration characterise the sixth force, in the sense of an idealistic nature, loyally oriented toward the causal levels of being. The Sixth Ray is the power to recognise what is right and righteous, the upward tendency and the capacity to see the light.

### The Seventh Ray

|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Ray Seven:</b> | Ceremonial Order         |
| <b>Signs:</b>     | Aries, Cancer, Capricorn |
| <b>Planet</b>     | Uranus                   |

This last of the seven is the most tangibly expressive on the outer planes. It is the quality of relationship between spirit and matter and is thus magical. It is rhythm which builds, integrates, circulates and manifests. It is the bringer and producer of newness in form. The relational power of this Ray motivates law and order, rule and ritual, organisation and group consciousness. It is practical

understanding and vital energy externalised, which embodies both centre and the periphery. consciousness.

### **The Hidden Knowledge of the Seven Rays:**

“The seven brothers are all the children of the same Father, but the elder three partake of the Father`s nature. The younger four resemble the Mother. The three elder sons go forth into the Universe of stars, and there they present the Father. The younger four go forth into the Universe of stars and show the nature of the one the Father loved.” (Alice A. Bailey)

### **Each human being belongs to a Ray:**

The Seven Rays are a person`s innate characteristics. Each one of the Seven Rays is in our makeup; but one ray predominates in each of us. This dominant Ray is more evolved than others and is considered the individual`s ray type. The number seven is deeply rooted in the physical to which the rays correspond.

There are the seven centres in the brain, the seven centres of force (*chakras*), and the seven major glands which determine the quality of the physical body. The human in its nature is a sevenfold being with the potential of seven states of consciousness. Each human being has a particular ray quality which has been swept into manifestation by the impulse of one of these rays. These seven rays exist in the cosmos and are essentially white light, but when they hit the human atmosphere they become a prism of many colours. Everything in the solar system that has a living quality to it belongs to one of the seven rays.

**1. First Ray:** Monadic plane - crown centre; colour white, or electric blue, gemstone - diamond. The qualities of the first ray are power, will, courage, leadership, and self-reliance. The aspirations of the first ray are to conquer, to attain, and to find ultimate reality. The weaknesses of the first ray are tyranny, self-will, pride, domination, selfishness, and thirst for power. The sources of suffering for the first ray are defeat, degradation, humiliation, and displacement. The methods of achievement of highest attainment are concentration, will power, and discipline.

**2. Second Ray:** Buddhic plane - heart centre; colour - golden yellow, azure blue, gemstone - sapphire. The qualities of the second ray are universal love, wisdom, insight, intuition, sense of oneness, compassion, and cooperation. The aspirations of the second ray are to save, to heal, to illumine, to teach, to share, and to serve. The weaknesses of the second ray are sentimentality, sensuality, impracticability, and unwise self-sacrifice for others undermining their self-reliance and increasing their selfishness. The sources of suffering are heartbreak, loneliness, isolation, exclusion, neglect, broken faith and trust, mis-judgment,

and disloyalty.

**3. Third Ray:** Etheric plane - navel centre; colour - emerald green, gemstone - emerald. The qualities of the third ray are creative idealism, comprehension, understanding, mental power, dignity, adaptability, and impartiality. The aspirations of the third ray are creative activity and understanding. The weaknesses of the third ray are indecision, seeing too many sides, coldness, cruelty, failure to support in a crisis, deliberate deceit, intrigue, and cunning. The sources of suffering are indignity, proven incompetence, and darkness.

**4. Fourth Ray:** Physical plane - root centre; colour - bronze or red, gemstone - jasper. The qualities of the fourth ray are stability, harmony, balance, beauty, and rhythm. The aspirations of the fourth ray are to beautify. The weaknesses of the fourth ray are moods of exaltation and despair, sensuousness, posing, self-conceit, and self-indulgence. The sources of suffering are frustration and failure to express perfectly.

**5. Fifth Ray:** Mental plane - throat centre; colour - yellow, gemstone - topaz. The qualities of the fifth ray are analytical, logical, accuracy, and patience. The aspirations of the fifth ray are to discover, and a thirst for knowledge. The weaknesses of the fifth ray are self centeredness, smallness of vision, pride, criticism, materialism, separating, and a one-track mind. The sources of suffering are mental defeat and scorn.

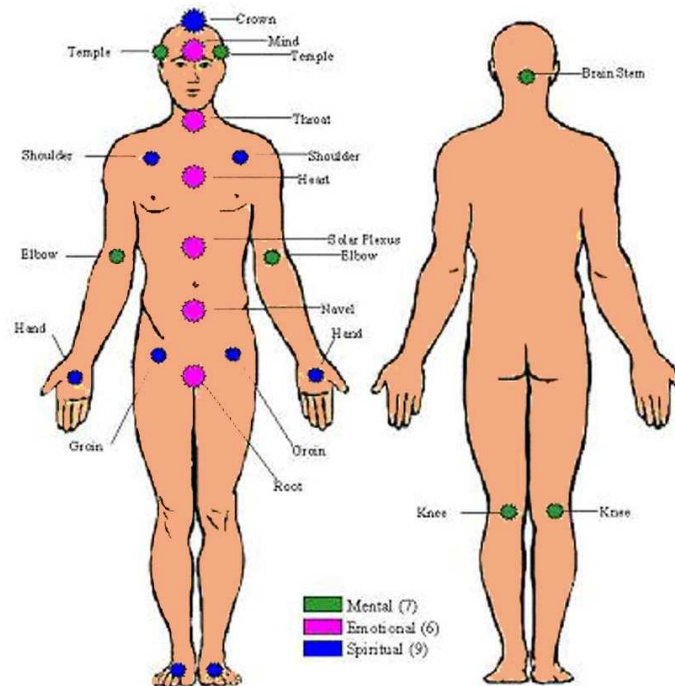
**6. Sixth Ray:** Emotional plane - solar plexus centre; colour - red, gemstone - ruby. The qualities of the sixth ray are one - pointedness, fiery enthusiasm, devotion, loyalty, and sacrificial love. The aspirations of the sixth ray are to serve, to adore, and to worship the cause. The weaknesses of the sixth ray are being over emotional, impulsiveness, intolerance, narrowness, and blind devotion to personalities, fanaticism, and sensuality. The sources of suffering are disloyalty of those who were loved and trusted, being misunderstood, and judged.

**7. Seventh Ray:** Atmic plane - Ajna centre; colour - purple, gemstone - amethyst. The qualities of the seventh ray are grace, precision, ordered beauty and activity, chivalry, skill, dignity, careful attention to detail, and splendour. The aspirations of the seventh ray are to harness, to synthesize, and to make manifest. The weaknesses of the seventh ray are formalism, love of power, using people as tools, extravagance, plausibility, and regimentation. The sources of suffering are humiliation, loss of power, frustration, rudeness, and discourtesy.

# The Importance of Activating and Balancing the Chakras

## (Energy Centres)

### Twenty-two Chakra System



The human form is linked into multiple aspects of itself, each section expressing a range of frequencies or vibrations, within a network of zones of energy, spheres within spheres. Chakras are energy vortexes in our emotional, mental and spiritual bodies. The physical body is a series of separate, yet related systems of energy. This system is referred to in the ancient texts as the Chakras. A Chakra is the interface point between the physical and non-physical form. They lie along a linear pathway (along the spine) from the Crown Chakra, located at the top of the cranium, to the Root Chakra, located at the base of the spine.

There are altogether over seventy-two Chakras on the body of which twenty-two work with our inner self, including the seven primary Chakras (six emotional and one spiritual) with colours representing the Seven Rays. Activation and balance of energy flow in Chakras allow the body system to be at optimal with the Higher Self.



Each Chakra acts a transformer within the body. The purpose is to bring into the system a higher frequency of vibration, from the subtle portions of the Matrix Grid, into the thicker frequencies for purification and healing of negative energies. There are seven endocrine glands, each with a vibration and colour, and one is assigned to each of the “Seven Primary Chakras”.

### **Seven Primary Chakras and Endocrine System (Glands)**

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Head Centre</b>                     | <b>Pineal Gland</b>   |
| <b>Centre between eyebrows</b>         | <b>Pituitary Body</b> |
| <b>Throat Centre</b>                   | <b>Thyroid Gland</b>  |
| <b>Heart Centre</b>                    | <b>Thymus Gland</b>   |
| <b>Solar Plexus Centre</b>             | <b>Pancreas</b>       |
| <b>Sacral Centre</b>                   | <b>The Gonads</b>     |
| <b>Centre at the base of the spine</b> | <b>Adrenal Glands</b> |

Each colour expresses a range of frequencies that fall within specific wavelengths of radiant information. The colours of the visible light system are just above Infrared and below Ultraviolet. The Chakras are specifically designed to act as one level of a tuning antenna, aligned with a note on the scale of seven. They intercept specific wavelengths of energy containing radiant information and bring that information down into the density of the body structure to utilize. Additionally, more refined tuning occurs at the molecular level, as genetic receptors receive information at an even greater level of vibration frequency.

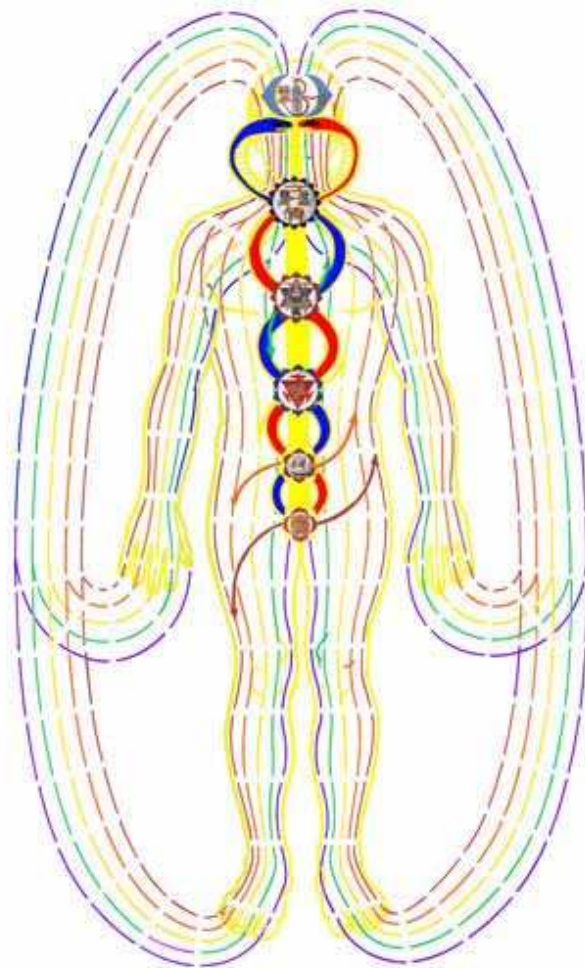
The spin rate of the Chakras is a part of the fine tuning of this system. The higher chakras spin faster than the lower ones. There is a direct relationship between each individual chakra centre and the specific ranges of energy within the human/creation Matrix. The chakra is the interface point, the energetic organ linking various aspects of the physical body to its non-physical counterparts...i.e. the Matrix Grid.

It is through this interface that the reality of the human experience becomes apparent. The human being is not the individual and independent being as we perceive. The body is connected to one level of an interlocking series of grids. These grids, having seven sections or sets of vibrations, with seven levels of knowledge in each section, are ranges of experience referred to as Dimensions.

Only the Root, Solar Plexus and Crown Chakra are able to access and receive energies from the Higher Self. Any other Chakra can receive these energies only after they have been filtered through one of these three Chakras.

Through aging, illness, and absorption of negativity in your life, the Chakras begin to collapse into the body and slow their rate of spinning. The ancients knew of this and designed mantras and meditation techniques to maintain the vitality and spin-rate of the chakras. A chakra activation (*and balance*) meditation practice is recommended daily (*or at minimum once a week*).

Opening and activating your chakras allows your Kundalini energies to flow up the subtle channels to your crown. It is important to first work on opening up your subtle channels (Nadis) through special physical and pranayama breath exercises. Once your channels are open, clearing the chakras will allow the energies to fully open up and charge your system. Even sexual energies can be directed up to the crown as the Kundalini energy is activated during sexual arousal.



Chakra Flow

# Seven Ray Tabulations

## Sources of Information for the Seven Rays



### Citations from Alice A. Bailey:

“All knowledge is a form of light, for it throws light into areas of awareness of which we have hitherto been unconscious.”

“All wisdom is a form of light, for it reveals to us the world of meaning which lies behind the outer form.”

“All understanding is a form of light, for it causes us to become aware of the causes which are producing the outer forms which surround us.”

### Planets, Colours, Chakras and Jewels of the Seven Rays

| Ray          | Character           | Planet Rulers | Colour | Chakra / Gland | Jewel    |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------|--------|----------------|----------|
| <b>Ray 1</b> | Will - Power        | Pluto/Vulcan  | Red    | Crown/Pineal   | Diamond  |
| <b>Ray 2</b> | Love Wisdom         | Sun/Jupiter   | Indigo | Heart/Thymus   | Sapphire |
| <b>Ray 3</b> | Active Intelligence | Earth/Saturn  | Green  | Throat/Thyroid | Emerald  |

|              |                   |              |          |                       |          |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|----------|-----------------------|----------|
| <b>Ray 4</b> | Harmony/Conflict  | Moon/Mercury | Yellow   | Base/Adrenals         | Jasper   |
| <b>Ray 5</b> | Concrete Science  | Venus        | Orange   | Ajna/Pituitary        | Topaz    |
| <b>Ray 6</b> | Abstract Idealism | Mars/Neptune | Sky Blue | Solar Plexus/Pancreas | Ruby     |
| <b>Ray 7</b> | Ceremonial Order  | Uranus       | Violet   | Sacral/Gonads         | Amethyst |

**Colours** vary according to 'exoteric' and 'esoteric' viewpoints, hence different harmonics of vibration. Don't worry too much about seeming contradictions in various texts. Go with your intuition. **Chakra** assignments vary : in 'average' humanity the non-sacred planets rule except for Venus and Uranus. For "disciples and initiates", the sacred planets rule except for Pluto which rules the Base. The whole subject is extremely intricate.

## Virtues and Vices of the Seven Rays

|  |
|--|
| <b>Ray One – Will-Power</b>  |
| <b>Virtues:</b> Strength, courage, steadfast, truthful, fearless, trustworthy, large-minded<br><b>Vices:</b> Ruthless, hard, cold, prideful, arrogant, ambitious, tyrannical, cruel, controls. |
| <b>Ray Two – Love-Wisdom</b>   |
| <b>Virtues:</b> Calm, strength, endurance, patience, love of truth, intuition, serenity.<br><b>Vices:</b> Coldness, indifference, self pity, fear, love of being loved, personal wisdom        |
| <b>Ray Three – Active Intelligence</b>   |
| <b>Virtues:</b> Abstract views, sincerity, clarity of intellect, patience, caution, planning.<br><b>Vices:</b> Mental pride, devious, scheming, inaccuracy, obstinacy, critical, busy          |
| <b>Ray Four – Harmony - Conflict</b>   |
| <b>Virtues:</b> Affectionate, sympathetic, courage, devotion, generous, quick intellect.<br><b>Vices:</b> Worrier, inaccuracy, self-centeredness, cowardice, extravagance, moody.              |

|   |
|---|
| <b>Ray Five – Concrete Science</b>  |
| <b>Virtues:</b> Perseveres, commonsense, accuracy, rational, uprightness, keen intellect.<br><b>Vices:</b> Narrowness, harsh criticism, unsympathetic, arrogant, pride, prejudice, cold |
| <b>Ray Six – Devotion - Idealism</b>  |
| <b>Virtues:</b> Devotion, single-minded, tenderness, intuitive, loyal, reverence, loving.   |

**Vices:** Selfish, jealous, sentimental, deceptive, fiery anger, narrow, fanatical.

### **Ray Seven – Ceremonial Order**

**Virtues:** Strength, perseverance, courage, courtesy, detailed, self-reliance, practical.

**Vices:** Formal, bigotry, pride, opinionated, superficial judgements, narrow.

## **Glamours of the Seven Rays**

### **Ray One**

The glamour of physical strength.  
The glamour of personal magnetism.  
The glamour of self-centredness and personal potency.  
The glamour of "the one at the centre."  
The glamour of selfish personal ambition.  
The glamour of rulership, of dictatorship and of wide control.  
The glamour of the Messiah complex in the field of politics.  
The glamour of selfish destiny, of the divine right of kings personally exacted.  
The glamour of destruction.  
The glamour of isolation, of aloneness, of aloofness.  
The glamour of the superimposed will upon others and upon groups.

### **Ray Two**

The glamour of the love of being loved.  
The glamour of popularity.  
The glamour of personal wisdom.  
The glamour of selfish responsibility.  
The glamour of too complete an understanding, which negates right action.  
The glamour of self-pity, a basic glamour of this ray.  
The glamour of the Messiah complex, in the world of religion and world need.  
The glamour of fear, based on undue sensitivity.  
The glamour of self-sacrifice.  
The glamour of selfish unselfishness.  
The glamour of self-satisfaction.  
The glamour of selfish service.

### **Ray Three**

The glamour of being busy.

The glamour of cooperation with the Plan in an individual & not a group way.

The glamour of active scheming.

The glamour of creative work—without true motive.

The glamour of good intentions, which are basically selfish.

The glamour of "the spider at the centre."

The glamour of "God in the machine."

The glamour of devious and continuous manipulation.

The glamour of self-importance, from the standpoint of knowing, of efficiency.

## **Ray Four**

The glamour of harmony, aiming at personal comfort and satisfaction.

The glamour of war.

The glamour of conflict, with the objective of imposing righteousness & peace.

The glamour of vague artistic perception.

The glamour of psychic perception instead of intuition.

The glamour of musical perception.

The glamour of the pairs of opposites, in the higher sense.

## **Ray Five**

The glamour of materiality, or over-emphasis of form.

The glamour of the intellect.

The glamour of knowledge and of definition.

The glamour of assurance, based on a narrow point of view.

The glamour of the form which hides reality.

The glamour of organisation.

The glamour of the outer, which hides the inner.

## **Ray Six**

The glamour of devotion.

The glamour of adherence to forms and persons.

The glamour of idealism.

The glamour of loyalties, of creeds.

The glamour of emotional response.

The glamour of sentimentality.

The glamour of interference.

The glamour of the lower pairs of opposites.

The glamour of World Saviours and Teachers.

The glamour of the narrow vision.

The glamour of fanaticism.

## Ray Seven

The glamour of magical work.

The glamour of the relation of the opposites.

The glamour of the subterranean powers.

The glamour of that which brings together.

The glamour of the physical body.

The glamour of the mysterious and the secret.

The glamour of sex magic.

The glamour of the emerging manifested forces.

## Dual Expression of the Seven Rays

**Ray One - Will-Power.** Purpose. Destruction.

**Type A:** Persistent. Never gives in. Depended upon by others.

**Type B:** Destroys conditions which prevent free expression of life force.

**Ray Two - Love-Wisdom.** Inclusive Coherence. Magnetism.

**Type A:** Magnetic, radiant, sharing, compassionate, empathetic, loving understanding.

**Type B:** Emphasis on wisdom, not knowledge. Dispassionate understanding.

**Ray Three - Active Intelligence.** Adaptability. Creativity.

**Type A:** Philosopher, theorist. Emphasis on abstract ideas.

**Type B:** Business acumen. Extremely practical. Manipulative, gamesmanship.

**Ray Four - Harmony through Conflict.** Beauty. Unity.

Sensitivity.

**Type A:** Ability to bring harmony from conflict. Sensitive to discord.

Mediator.

**Type B:** Colourful character. Strong contrasts. Artistic. Volatile. Tends to force.

**Ray Five- Concrete Science.** Science. Analysis. Mind.

**Type A:** Researcher. Intellectual. Descriptive accuracy and documentation. Clarity.

**Type B:** Technician. Applies technical intelligence. Practical in applications.

**Ray Six - Devotion or Abstract Idealism.** Persistence.

**Type A:** Receptive. Passive. Loyal. Tranquil. Worshipful. Gentle

influence.

**Type B:** Fiery zeal. Devoted striving toward ideals. Strong aspirations. Aggressive.

**Ray Seven - Ceremonial Order.** Group magic. Organisation.

**Type A:** Highly organised. Plays by the rules. Meticulous in action.

**Type B:** Emphasis on creative process. Manifests ideas into forms. Creative.

## Seven Rays Miscellany

| Ray   | Plane    | Sense     | Religion                | Animal       | Master           |
|-------|----------|-----------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Ray 1 | Logoic   | Touch     | Hindu                   | Elephant 2/1 | Morya            |
| Ray 2 | Monadic  | Intuition | Buddhist 6/2            | Dog          | Koot Hoomi       |
| Ray 3 | Atmic    | Sight     | Chaldean                | Cat          | Venetian         |
| Ray 4 | Buddhic  | Smell     | Egyptian                | Cat          | Serapis          |
| Ray 5 | Mental   | Sight     |                         |              | Hilarion         |
| Ray 6 | Astral   | Taste     | Christian. Islam.       | Horse. Dog.  | Jesus            |
| Ray 7 | Physical | Hearing   | Religion is Ritualistic |              | Ray Seven Chohan |

## Vocations of the Seven Rays

### Ray One - Will or Power.

Politician, occultist, leader, explorer, executive, manager, dictator.

### Ray Two - Love Wisdom.

Teacher, healer, sage, server, scholar, humanist, philanthropist.

### Ray Three - Active Intelligence.

Philosopher, organiser, astrologer, economist, historian, business.

### Ray Four - Harmony through Conflict.

Artist, mediator, architect, poet, psychologist, musician.

### Ray Five - Concrete Science.

Scientist, researcher, alchemist, engineer, analyst, inventor, technician.



**Ray Six - Devotion.**

Ministers, mystics, missionaries, devotees, orators, crusaders, zealots.

**Ray Seven - Ceremonial Order.**

Builder, administrator, designer, revolutionary, magician, esotericist.

## The Seven Rays in Nations and Cities

**Ray One** India 1/4, Germany 4/1, China 1/3, Great Britain 2/1, Japan 1/6, Geneva 1/2.

**Ray Two** Great Britain 2/1, USA 2/6, Occident 2/4, New York 2/3, Darjeeling 2/5.

**Ray Three** China 1/3, France 5/3, Orient 4/3, Jewish Race 1/3, New York 2/3,

**Ray Four** Germany 4/1, Austria 4/5, Brazil 4/2, Italy 6/4, Spain 6/7, Russia 7/6, Tokyo 6/4.

**Ray Five** Austria 4/5, France 5/3, London 5/7, Darjeeling 2/5.

**Ray Six** Spain 6/7, Russia 7/6, USA 2/6, Italy 6/4, Japan 1/6, Tokyo 6/4,

**Ray Seven** Spain 6/7, Russia 7/6, London 5/7.

The Seven Rays correspond to many "septenaries", which provide the basic building blocks of occultism. Planets "rule" rays, similar to astrological rulerships, hence the interface between Rays, planets and zodiac signs. Remember though, do not make the mistake of trying to ascertain the Rays from the horoscope; determining the Rays, then interpreting the horoscope in light of the Rays, is ideally the correct procedure.

## The Seven Rays in Literature, Music and Art

**Ray One**

**Literature:** Strong, trenchant. Little care for style or finish. Dramatic, emphatic. Succinct.

**Music:** Delights in big orchestrals. Sometimes tone deaf.

**Art:** Loves contrast and lots of colour. Rarely an artist. Sometimes colour blind.

### Ray Two

**Literature:** Instructive, comprehensive, tranquil. Inclusive. Gives whole picture in detail.

**Music:** Closely related to this Ray, as well as the fourth Ray. Song of Krishna. Cosmic sound.

**Art:** Always seeks to teach through art. Pictures have meaning.

### Ray Three

**Literature:** Abstract, intellectual, wordy, complex, vague, brilliant with rays 1,4,5,7.

**Music:** Love music but won't produce it unless influenced by Ray 4.

**Art:** Thoughtful, interesting subjects, though technique not fine.

### Ray Four

**Literature:** Poetic, dramatic, picturesque, exaggerated, "word painter", pessimistic, colourful.

**Music:** Melodious. Mercury the inventor of the lyre and music. Devas. Taps into Buddhic..

**Art:** Colour great, drawing defective unless influenced by Ray 7.

### Ray Five

**Literature:** Technical, clear, precise, pedantic, lucid, long-winded, explanatory.

**Music:** Uninteresting though technically alright. Sculpture lifeless.

**Art:** Rare unless 4th and 7th rays influence. Colour dull.

### Ray Six

**Literature:** Poet of emotion. Inspired, enthusiastic, idealistic, sentimental, religious.

**Music:** Melodious composer of sacred music, devotional chants, hymns.

**Art:** Devoted to beauty, colour, loveliness, but skill not great without Rays 4 and 7.

### Ray Seven

**Literature:** Ultra polished, formal, fluent, proper, correct in form. Manner rather than matter.

**Music:** Formal or innovative. Rays 4 and 2 needed. Smooth, ordered style. Chaotic at times.

**Art:** Perfect sculptor. With ray 4, highest type of artist. High expression of form and colour.

## Rays in Manifestation

|                |                                  |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Ray One</b> | Not in manifestation.            |
| <b>Ray Two</b> | In manifestation since 1575 A.D. |

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Ray Three</b> | In manifestation since 1425 A.D   |
| <b>Ray Four</b>  | To come slowly into manifestation after 2025 A.D.                       |
| <b>Ray Five</b>  | In manifestation since 1775 A.D.  |
| <b>Ray Six</b>   | Passing rapidly out of manifestation. It began to pass out in 1625 A.D. |
| <b>Ray Seven</b> | In manifestation since 1675 A.D.  |

These are of course all lesser cycles within the influence of the sign Pisces. You will see that four rays are in manifestation at this time—the second, third, fifth, and seventh." (*Esoteric Psychology Volume One, page 26*)

## Esoteric Astrology

### Zodiac Rulers : Exoteric and Esoteric

| Exoteric/Esoteric Rulers | Exoteric/Esoteric Rulers    |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Aries - Mars Mercury     | Libra - Venus Uranus        |
| Taurus - Venus Vulcan    | Scorpio - Mars/Pluto Mars   |
| Gemini - Mercury Venus   | Sagittarius - Jupiter Earth |
| Cancer - Moon Neptune    | Capricorn - Saturn Saturn   |
| Leo - Sun Sun/Neptune    | Aquarius - Uranus Jupiter   |
| Virgo - Mercury Moon     | Pisces - Jupiter Pluto      |

### Septenaries

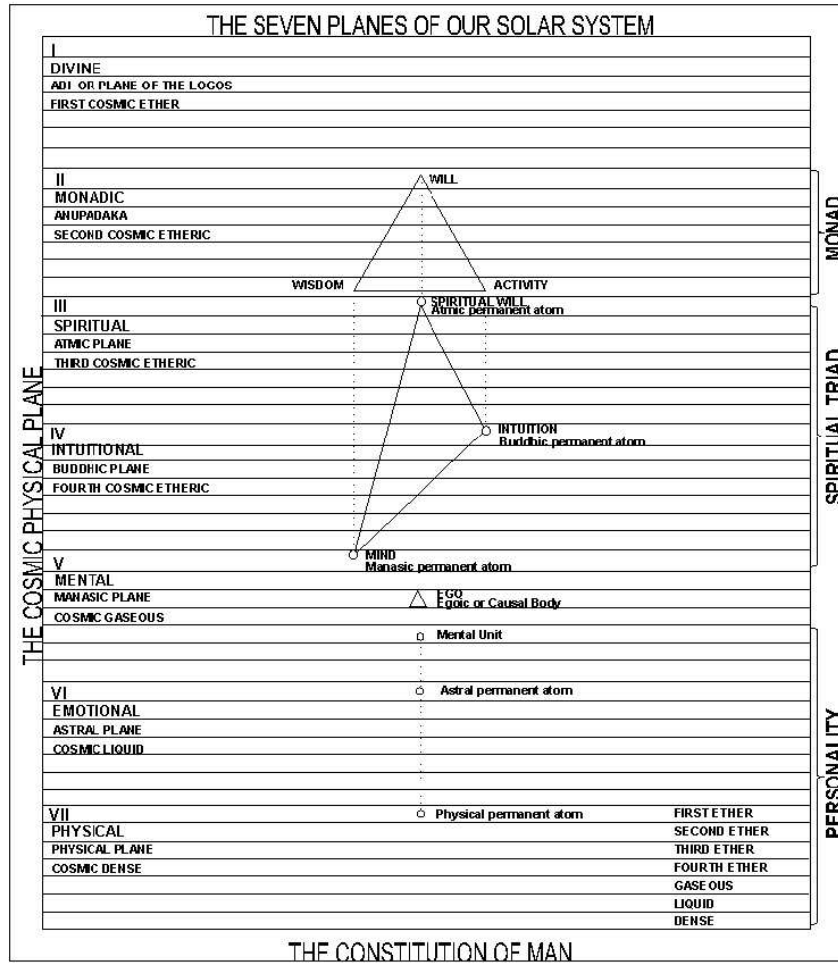
|                        |                     |                   |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 7 Solar Systems        | 7 Rays              | 7 Human Chakras   |
| 7 Stars in Great Bear  | 7 Sacred Planets    | 7 Colours         |
| 7 Stars in Pleiades    | 7 Planetary Chakras | 7 Musical Notes   |
| 7 Planes of Perception | 7 Endocrine Glands  | 7 Masters/Chohans |

### Trinities

| Ray One      | Ray Two      | Ray Three           |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Will-Power   | Love-Wisdom  | Active-Intelligence |
| Monad        | Soul         | Personality         |
| Life         | Quality      | Appearance          |
| Crown Chakra | Heart Chakra | Throat Chakra       |

|                    |                 |                  |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Shamballa          | Hierarchy       | Humanity         |
| Sun                | Ascendant       | Moon             |
| Rajas              | Sattvas         | Tamas            |
| Activity           | Harmony         | Inertia          |
| A                  | U               | M                |
| Manu               | Maitreya/Christ | Mahachohan       |
| Great Bear         | Sirius          | Pleiades         |
| Hierarchical ruler | Esoteric ruler  | Exoteric ruler   |
| Father             | Son             | Mother           |
| Shiva              | Krishna         | Brahma           |
| Osiris             | Horus           | Isis             |
| Sushumna Nadi      | Ida Nadi        | Pingala Nadi     |
| Sacrifice petals   | Love petals     | Knowledge petals |
| Electric fire      | Solar fire      | Fire by friction |
| Buddha             | Dharma          | Sangha           |
| Dharmakaya         | Sambhogakaya    | Nirmanakaya      |

CHART III



## Glossary Terms

**Adept** A Master of Wisdom. Has taken 5 initiations and passed into the 5<sup>th</sup> or spiritual kingdom, from the 4<sup>th</sup> or human kingdom.

**Agni** Lord of Fire and one of the oldest and most revered gods in the Vedas. Symbol of the mental plane - the fires of mind or manas.

**Akasha** Sanskrit root "kas" - to radiate or shine. Higher correspondence of ether and relates to the substance which is Buddhi.

**Akashic Records** Records of all karmic action "impressed" upon the ethers. Most psychics perceive the distorted reflections on the astral plane.

**Angel** See "Deva".

**Angel of the Presence** The devic aspect of the "causal body" of a person.

**Antahkarana** Path or bridge between higher and lower mind, serving as a medium of communication between the two. Built through meditation and visualisation, service to humanity and study of occultism.

**Ashram** A centre to which the Master gathers aspirants and disciples for personal instruction

**Astral Body** The emotional or feeling body. Watery in nature and the seat of our desires. One of the most difficult bodies to control.

**Atlantis** A continent now submerged in the Atlantic ocean, according to occult teaching and Plato. Home of the Atlantean or 4<sup>th</sup> rootrace.

**Atma** Universal spirit. The divine Monad. The 7<sup>th</sup> principle.

**Aura** A subtle or invisible essence or fluid which emanates from human and animal bodies. It is psychic effluvium, partaking of both mind and body. It is electro-vital and electro-mental. Etheric, astral, mental bodies.

**Avatar** A special emissary of Light and Love that incarnates for the benefit of humanity, having technically no karmic obligation to incarnate. There are many types of avatars, from the earthly to the cosmic.

**Black Magic** The use of power and the manipulation of matter for selfish ends. Materialistic focus of forces that negate the evolutionary urge.

**Bodhisattva** One whose consciousness has become intelligence or buddhi. Name of office Lord Maitreya, known in the west as the Christ. The World Teacher is the Master of Masters and teacher of angels and humanity.

**Brahma** The third aspect of the Hindu trinity - Siva (father/ray 1- will), Krishna (son/ray 2 - love) and Brahma (mother/ray 3 - intelligence)

**Buddhi** Universal soul or mind. It is the 4<sup>th</sup> plane of perception of pure intuition, and is the state that all humanity is evolving toward.

**Causal Body** It is not really a body, objectively or subjectively, but is the centre of Egoic or Soul consciousness, formed by the conjunction of buddhi and manas. It is relatively permanent throughout our long series of incarnations, but is destroyed after the 4<sup>th</sup> initiation is reached and we have achieved mastery over the three lower worlds.

**Chain** Seven "chains" of evolution within a planetary "scheme". There are seven "globes" of evolution within a planetary chain.

**Chakra** Sanskrit - "wheel or disc". An energy centre within one of the subtle bodies, formed by the intersection of many "nadis" or strands of etheric substance, forming the seven main chakras of the human being and the 22 minor chakras. There are also 343 "points of light" which correspond to the acupuncture points. Chakras can be energy centres in the solar system or the cosmos, or a human being.

**Chela** A "disciple" or pupil of a spiritual teacher or Master.

**Chohan** Lord, Master, a Chief. A sixth degree initiate. A custodian of one of the seven rays.

**Christ** The World Teacher of humanity and angels alike. The Master of Masters. Embodier of the second or Love aspect of Deity. Known as Maitreya in the East. Set to "reappear" to fulfill His mission started more than two-thousand years ago.

**Deva** (Angel) In Sanskrit, a resplendent deity. Responsible for building all forms, from nature to the solar system, which consciousness uses as a vehicle - from a flower, to a human being, to a planet. Hence, the lesser builders and the greater builders refer to the different deva groups.

**Dharma** That which one must fulfill as an incarnate Being. One's duty as an understanding of the Law. Ethical doctrine - justice, harmony, virtue.

**Dhyani Buddhas** The five Buddhas - Vairocana, Aksobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha and Amoghasiddhi. Same as Kumaras. See "Kumara".

**Dweller on the Threshold** The "shadow" or unredeemed aspect of the personality that is built up over lifetimes - it can assume the shape of a grotesque thoughtform. The Soul goes into battle with the Dweller at a critical stage of its evolution, and eventually emerges triumphant. This process may take several lives.

**Ego** The soul as an individualised unit of consciousness within the greater ocean of consciousness.

**Egoic Groups** The "causal" bodies of individual men and women, as they exist on the mental plane, as an expression of the Ego. They congregate in groups according to ray colouring.

**Egoic Lotus** The three tiers of petals (knowledge, love and sacrifice) that are opened over the immense period of time that is the Soul's journey. Eventually the three petals of the central bud (the jewel in the lotus) are opened when the individual achieves "Liberation".

**Elementals** The spirits of the elements of earth, water, fire and air. They are the lesser "devas" or "builders". They can inhabit the residual etheric/astral bodies of humans that are still breaking down after death, much like a hermit crab inhabits a shell.

**Esoteric** That which is hidden or veiled. It is subjective wisdom that can only be perceived with the developed subtle senses.

**Etheric Body** The subtle part of the physical body. The physical plane is divided into seven subplanes (as are all planes). The lower three subplanes represent the physical body, and the higher four subplanes represent the etheric body.

**Fifth Principle** Mind - the intelligent thinking principle which differentiates the human kingdom from the animal kingdom.

**Fohat** Cosmic electricity. Primordial light. The universal propelling life force. Ceaseless destructive and constructive power.

**Glamour** Illusion or maya, specifically on the astral plane. The former refer to the mental and physical planes respectively. Glamour is astral energy colouring mental energy so that it distorts reality.

**Globe** An evolution within a "chain" period : seven globes to a chain. Earth is currently in her fourth "globe" period.

**Gnosis** Knowledge of God. The Mysteries of Being. Wisdom. Sophia.

**God** Deity or originating cause. (*the Absolute, the Supreme, Divine Idea, Divine Mind, Universal Mind, Universal Cosmic Mind, etc.*) See "Logos".

**Gunās** The three divisions of matter : Tamas (inertia), rajas (activity) and Sattva (Harmony).

**Guru** Spiritual teacher. A Master in metaphysical and ethical doctrines.

**Hierarchy** Group of spiritual beings on the inner planes of the solar system who are the intelligent forces of nature and who control the evolutionary processes. Divided into twelve Hierarchies. The Occult Hierarchy or Masters of Wisdom, disciples and initiates are a reflection.



**Individualisation** The moment when "the spark of mind" was implanted in humanity, over eighteen million years ago, through the stimulation of the "lords of flame", from the Venus "chain" of the Earth "scheme".

**Initiations** Successive expansions of consciousness that mark vital stages of the soul's journey. When one is "initiated", one has already been self initiated, because "to initiate" means to start something that will eventually lead to the higher expansion of awareness. There are initiation ceremonies which "confer" initiation, and give the candidate an expanded experience that they will never forget, inspiring them onward in their evolution.

**Intuition** "The synthetic understanding which is the prerogative of the soul..". That which is beyond feelings and thought -buddhic awareness.

**Kalachakra** The Wheel of Time. Kalachakra tantra most esoteric Mahayana Buddhist teaching given by "Lords of Shamballa".

**Kali** Hindu goddess of life and death. Kali Yuga (age/cycle) is the present age of death and destruction - a period of 432,000 years.

**Kama-manas** Desire mind. The combination of astral and lower mental energy. Source of all our "glamours".

**Karma** The Law of Cause and Effect. Physical action. The Law of Retribution. Karma of merit/demerit. The whole universe is conditioned by this law. Moral effect of an act committed which gratifies personal desire.

**Kumaras** Hindu for "The mind-born Sons of Brahma". The highest seven self conscious beings in our planetary scheme. There are three "exoteric" and three "esoteric" and Sanat Kumara is the "One" in between who mirrors the unformed (arupa) realms into the formed (rupa) realms. These Kumaras originally came to Earth from the Venus "chain" of the Earth "scheme".

**Kundalini** The power of Life - one of the forces of nature (feminine) that lies coiled, serpent like at the base of the spine. It creates the foundation of matter, into which spirit incarnates. Awakens naturally through evolution, but can have very destructive effects if prematurely activated through wrong meditation or yogic practices.

**Lemuria** Continent which preceded Atlantis, the last remnants of which are Australia, Borneo, Madagascar and Easter Island. It was in this race/continent that the "spark of mind" was implanted in humanity.

**Logos** "God" (the Absolute, the Supreme, Divine Idea, Divine Mind, Universal Mind, Universal Cosmic Mind, etc.) in a relative sense. There is a Planetary Logos and a Solar Logos. Logos = word : the creative word (mantram) brings all forms into manifestation, whether it is a solar system or a human being. In the biblical sense, derived from Greek, it also means "Word".

**Lords of Flame** One of the great Hierarchies of spiritual beings who guide the solar system. Closely related to the Kumaras.

**Lotus** Description of any energy centre, human or cosmic. The petals of a lotus represent different qualities, colours and stages of evolution. They may be folded and unawakened, or unfolded and awakened.

**Macrocosm** The greater body of manifestation in which we (the microcosm) live.

**Maitreya Buddha** Forthcoming Buddha of Compassion. The Christ.

**Mandala** A mystical diagram in which are drawn symbols representing aspects of Deity, and used to invoke that energy.

**Mahachohan** Lord of Civilisation. Head of the third great department of the Hierarchy. Embodiment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ray or 3<sup>rd</sup> aspect of Deity - Active Intelligence, which gives birth to the 4 rays of attribute.

**Mahamanvantara** A great cycle of manifestation for a solar system. A "manvantara" is a lesser cycle within this greater cycle, but still of vast duration by human standards - 308,448,000 years.

**Manas** Mind, mental faculty. Individualising principle. Divided into two parts - higher mind/lower mind.

**Mantrams** A form of words or syllables rhythmically arranged, so that when sounded, certain vibrations are generated. "The word made flesh", in the sense that a "Mantram" is powerfully and transforming, healing and renewing.

**Manu** The representative name of the great Being who is the Ruler or primal progenitor of the human race. "Manu" and "Manas" come from the sanskrit root "man" - "to think".

**Manvantara** Period of activity as opposed to a period of rest. Frequently used to express a period of planetary activity and its seven races.

**Maya** Illusion on the physical plane. That which the whole planet is enmeshed. See "Glamour".

**Masonry** Ancient esoteric tradition whereby an attempt is made to align with the forces of Deity, through ritual, allegory and symbol, and thereby anchor those forces upon the physical plane. The "Builders" of Masonry are an allegory for the building, by the soul, of the causal body. Some more modern orders admit women.

**Mayavi Rupa** Sanskrit "illusory form". Body of manifestation created by a Master through an act of will, for use in the three worlds.

**Microcosm** The little universe, or a human manifesting through its body, the physical body.

**Monad** The One. The threefold spirit on its own plane. The unified triad of atma, buddhi and manas. The immortal essence of ourselves which uses the soul to incarnate through, just as the soul incarnates through our personality.

**Mother of the World** Great "deva lord" who embodies the substance of all planes of perception. She is responsible for the Law of Karma working out through her many deva "agents".

**Nadi** A channel for the conveying of prana in the etheric vehicle.

**Nirmanakaya** The perfected beings who renounce nirvana (the highest state of spiritual bliss) and choose a life of self sacrifice, becoming members of that invisible host which ever protects humanity within karmic limits.

**Permanent Atom** Small force centres on each of the planes which hold the memory of all incarnations, and which the reincarnating soul draws upon when building new bodies of manifestation.

**Personality** The sumtotal of the threefold lower self : physical, astral, mental.

**Plane of Perception** There are seven planes of perception on this "cosmic physical" plane - physical, astral, mental, buddhic, atmic, monadic and Adi. These planes are subdivided into seven subplanes each, making 49 subplanes in all. An essential part of "septenaries" in occultism that can be applied with the 7 rays to broaden understanding.

**Planetary Logos** The informing entity of any planetary scheme, which is made up of many other globes and chains - the physical planet just being one expression of the great life incarnate in a scheme. The Kumaras or Sanat Kumara is simply the personality expression of this great being.

**Prakriti** That which caused the universe to manifest itself.

**Prana** The Life principle, the breath of life.

**Pranayama** The science of rhythmic breathing as applied in meditation.

**Raja Lord** Angel who ensouls and is the controlling intelligence of a plane.

**Raja Yoga** True system of developing psychic and spiritual powers and union with the soul. It involves the exercise, regulation and concentration of thought. It is the "kingly science" and supercedes hatha and bhakti yoga.

**Ray** One of the seven streams of force from cosmic sources that enter our solar system and condition all life within it, including all the kingdoms of nature on Earth. The planets in the solar system are really the "vehicles" that pass this energy on. Each individual has their own "ray make-up".

**Reincarnation** Doctrine of cyclic rebirth by the evolving consciousness through all types of environments in accordance with the Law of Karma.

**Root Race** One of the seven major races that evolve upon a planet during a "world period". Most Asian races belong to the fourth Atlantean rootrace, and most of the west are of the fifth or Aryan rootrace. There are seven subraces to each rootrace, just as there are seven subplanes to each plane.

**Round** A periodical life-wave that pours through a globe, chain and scheme.

**Sangha** Community of monks. One of three precious jewels that must be held by one wishing to tread the path of Liberation.

**Sanskrit** Ancient language of India, in which the sacred texts are written.

**Scheme** The "system of worlds" that constitute the evolution of a Planetary Logos – e.g. Earth, Venus etc. This system includes chains, globes and rounds, or periodical life waves moving through it.

**Senzar** The secret language or "mystery speech" of initiated adepts all over the world. It is very ancient, and predates Sanskrit.

**Shamballa** The City of the Gods. "Shangri-La". It is situated in the Gobi desert, and is where Sanat Kumara is "anchored" in etheric substance.

**Siddhis** Psychic powers developed through yogic practices. Many types.

**Sirius** Star from which this Solar System emanated - important for Earth in this cycle.

**Solar Logos** The great entity incarnate as our solar system. The planets in this Being's body represent its major "chakras".

**Soul** (Higher Self) "Neither spirit nor matter but the relation between them. It is the middle or love principle and that which reincarnates in different bodies.

**Substance** The principle underlying dense matter.

**Sutratma** The "life" thread anchored in the heart - linking spirit, soul and body via the "permanent atoms".

**Tantra** The union of male/female forces in the body that evokes the wisdom principle and hence highest spiritual awareness. Often distorted into lower sex yoga practices.

**Triad** Atma, buddhi, manas - expression of the Monad.

**Vedas** Most sacred and ancient of Sanskrit works, written in hymn form.

**Wesak** A festival which occurs at the Taurus full moon every year, celebrating the birth of the Buddha, and where the Hierarchy gather to receive newly released forces to the planet. A time for Initiation.

**White Magic** Conscious cooperation with spiritual law and the deva forces to bring about manifested change, for the motive of service to humanity.

**Yoga** Sanskrit "unite". Hatha (physical). Bhakti (devotional - astral). Karma (yoga of action). Raja ("kingly" - mental) Agni (fire - intuitive/buddhic)

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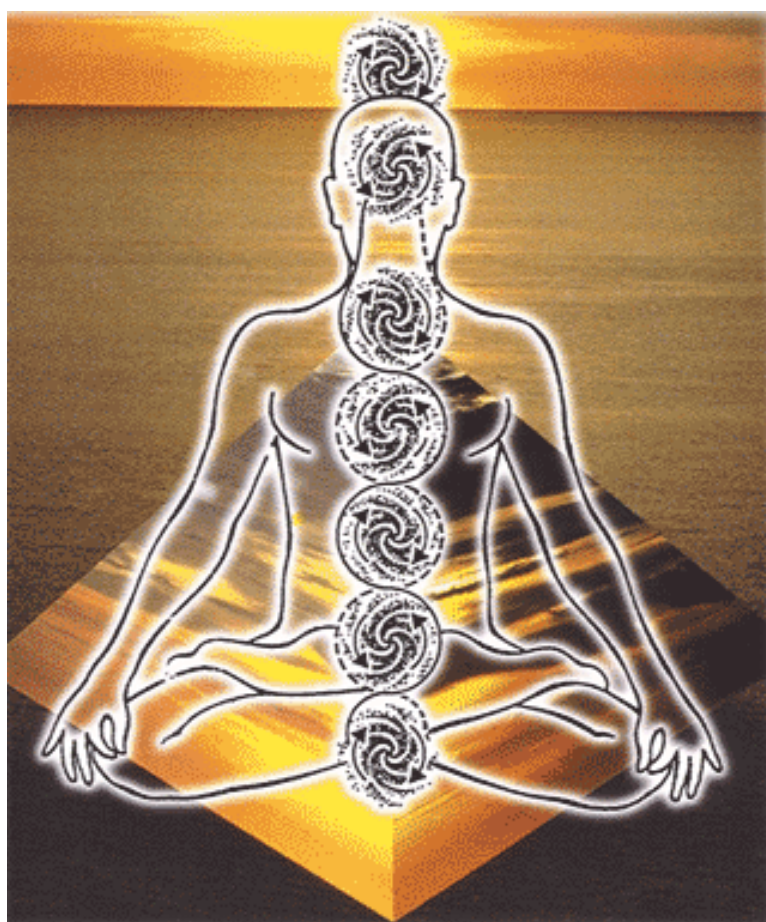
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