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From Scalpel to Song: The Future of Healing

Among the many expressions of the transition between old and new orders your culture now undergoes, one of the greatest and most promising trends is the move away from traditional western medicine and toward a medicine worthy of being called the healing art. To understand the shift, we will first review the philosophical and scientific building blocks of traditional medicine.

The Body As Sinful Machine

For well over a thousand years western culture has been riven by a split between its technological and spiritual life, born of the Church's jealous grasp on Truth and its refusal to revise its doctrine in light of discoveries contradicting its mythological foundation. While many centuries passed with scientific minds struggling to balance their faith and the fruits of reason, the point came when the chasm between dogma and discovery grew so wide that consideration of any "spiritual" influence on the workings of the natural world had to be abandoned. God and His miraculous seven days were summarily shown the door of cultural values, and the Big Bang ushered in.

Contemplation of the human body has especially suffered through western culture's long march, for according to church doctrine it is inherently evil, being the progeny of sinful pleasure. When Descartes sundered the mind from the body, understanding of corporal systems was further hindered, for now the body — still inherently evil — was also disconnected from mind, as if granted its own perverse consciousness bent on dragging the soul down to damnation.

For the last few hundred years the "body as machine" model has dominated the western approach to medicine and healing. Surgery and drugs became the tools of choice in "repairing" the body-machine when, like any mechanical device, it occasionally broke down. No consideration was granted to the sufferer's state of mind, environment, family and emotional life, and so on. This model has often been spectacularly successful in the diagnosis end of medical

treatment — determining the nature and severity of illness — but falls far short in stimulating and working with the body's natural healing abilities or encouraging the sufferer's active participation in the healing process.

Phase One: Holistic Medicine

Fortunately, as with every other aspect of western culture, the old models are being replaced with deeper, richer, subtler paradigms whose primary difference is their grounding in *holism* rather than the mechanistic, separatist foundation of traditional thought. In medicine, this means recognition of the body as an indivisible gestalt of mind and body; granting consciousness, however rudimentary, to the cells and organs; and considering the larger emotional/physical/spiritual environment in which a body dwells as a primary influence on its health or disability.

Simply granting consciousness any influence at all represents a major step forward, for it replaces the "machine" model with a far subtler perspective in which the body is animated by streams of consciousness flowing from the mind and (some would say) from the spirit or soul as well. When meditators were able to lower their body temperature at will, the "machine" model had to be updated, its scope broadened to allow for the subtle interplay between cellular consciousness and the mind's higher consciousness.

This broadening of the traditional "machine" model of the body results in *holistic medicine*, whose philosophical foundation arises from respect for the oneness of mind and body; the subtle but powerful effects of consciousness on matter; the influence of external agents, both physical and psychological, on one's health; and the perspective that each human body is not a self-contained, isolated unit, but is embedded in a web of connections and relationships bearing heavily on one's physical and emotional health.

This is holistic medicine; and as we mentioned, the ramifications, promise, and philosophy of this new approach are

still being explored in a number of disciplines. The promise of widely accepted medical doctrine rooted in holism still lies some time off.

Phase Two: Vibrational Medicine

As promising as holistic medicine is, and however great its theoretical leap from the machine model, it still represents a step forward on your journey to complete health and wholeness, not the final destination. It is human nature to evaluate new ideas through the prism of the extant world-view; thus holistic medicine must "prove" itself through validation by the experimental method of science. This process is hindered by the relative crudity of instrumentation used to evaluate the body's condition, placing an upper limit on progress toward a deeper understanding.

When you feed Beethoven through a cheap car radio your experience of his work is diminished; similarly, the body's subtle energy flows and minute electrical connections pass undetected by instruments unable to perceive or measure them, and pure consciousness cannot be perceived at all.

So although holistic medicine is a step on the path toward a deeper, more comprehensive medicine, it is but a step. Beyond holistic medicine lies *vibrational medicine*, a philosophy and practice of healing rooted in the recognition that the body is essentially energy, energy sculpted into a complex network of patterns manifesting as the various organs, tissues, and so on. Sound and light, also being energetic fields of vibration, are understood to interact with the denser energy patterns of the body and to stimulate healing when properly applied.

Because this field is in its infancy, and because scientific validation lies years away, we offer here a brief overview of the basis of vibrational medicine, the energetic blueprint of the body.

The Body Electric

In deepest terms, the body's blueprint lies outside the physical system.

Each of you springs from a nonphysical "blueprint" of your body which pulses in and out of physical existence. Your senses cannot perceive this steady blinking "on" and "off"; your mind leaps the gaps of "nonexistence" and paints a sturdy picture of endurance and stability.

This blueprint is not simply a mirror image of your body, for it contains within its web of potential every form your body assumes from conception through old age. This blueprint is a bank of probabilities, then, which will be sequentially actualized, thrust into physical manifestation, in accordance with the rhythms dictated by your species' growth template and your private purpose. This blueprint can thus be thought of as your "master body," from which each moment of your body's growth springs in exquisitely detailed and precise form.

The blueprint follows a standard "script" for the human body's growth and maturation, and thrusts into physical form with each new pulsation precisely the "coordinates" required to advance the body's chronological age ever so slightly. These "coordinates" can be thought of as pinpricks of magnetic energy whose patterns precisely mirror the energetic patterns of earth elements.

You understand earth elements as having varying numbers of subatomic particles configured in a variety of patterns, resulting in the elements listed on the periodic table. Deeper than these subatomic elements lies an energetic blueprint which dictates the size, shape, and pattern of each element. This "particle" blueprint is precisely matched by a pulsation from the body's nonphysical blueprint, magnetically attracting and holding in place the various earth elements comprising the human body.

In other words, a three-dimensional gridwork is thrust into physical life, each minute point of which pulses with the vibratory pattern of a given earth element; earth elements are thus attracted into place and held there by the magnetic force of the blueprint. Earth elements take their place in the body's form as directed by the blueprint; and when one element "dies" — for the stable life of these minutes elements is quite brief — an identical element will be attracted to take its place. Thus is the continuity and stability of the body maintained even as it constantly sloughs off its cellular elements.

The "glue" biding these elements together is consciousness. The blueprint is not simply thrust into physical reality as an inert set of instructions, but carries at the microcosmic level a package of information apprising each earth element of the immediate structure it is contributing to, the larger structure (the entire

body) of which it is a part, and the purpose of the individual life and larger species in which the body is embedded. In addition, each person's conscious mind feeds a constant stream of information down to the cellular level, apprising the body of environmental conditions and activity, and this information is carried, in attenuated form, down to the level of each earth element.

An individual's beliefs thus blend with the consciousness fed by the blueprint to create a matrix of consciousness infusing every corporal element. This stream of information — from physical and nonphysical realms — maintains the body's integrity over time and its faithful reflection of your private beliefs about health, aging, and so on.

There is no level of physical reality at which matter is not "alive," possessing consciousness and communicating with the larger networks in which it is embedded. Certainly the consciousness of an atom would seem irredeemably dim were you able to communicate with it, but each level of material complexity carries with it a consciousness of sophistication appropriate for its purpose. Our point is to underscore that the body is not simply a sack of inert elements somehow magically sprouting consciousness above the neck, but is a network of embedded matrices of consciousness whose complexity rises at each greater level of corporal form.

With the understanding that the body is not so much "cells and organs" as it is matrices of vibration of varying complexity; that these matrices are essentially vibrational pulsations sculpted into an infinitude of pattern; and that each level of bodily complexity carries its own brand of consciousness, the foundation of vibrational medicine is laid. Light and sound, being streams of vibrational energy pulsing faster than the body, can, when properly used, entrain with the body, harmonizing and accelerating its vitality.

It is a fundamental law of nature that when two vibrational fields make contact, whatever "differences" exist between them — in temperature, density, and so on — will tend to compromise to a balanced uniformity. When you open a door between a hot room and a cold room, you end up with two lukewarm rooms. Nature always seeks balance, a compromise between extremes.

Thus, if an area of the body suffers from depressed or scrambled energy patterns, entraining the afflicted area to a field of similar vibrational pattern, *especially of a higher frequency*, spurs the weakened area back toward health and balance. It is vital that the vibrational patterns used to effect healing be

of a greater strength and frequency than the body, for nature's urge is always to compromise between fields of varying intensity. Thus the body "accelerates" to entrain with the external vibrational field, and in so doing greatly hastens its recovery.

As a simple example, which would you prefer when coming home in a rainstorm, soaked and chilled to the bone — a bathtub full of lukewarm water or a soak in steaming hot water? You naturally choose the hot water, because your body will "compromise" with its fiery temperature and bring you back to warmth much more quickly than soaking in room-temperature water would do. At the same time, your body's endurance for hot water is shortened because once comfortable warmth is achieved, the water continues to pull your body toward still greater heat, portending danger of overheating.

Now, the use of sound and light in vibrational medicine reflects this understanding — for light and sound are fields of vibration of a frequency far above the body's rather dense vibration. On the one hand, this automatically ensures that any such application will stimulate the body toward an accelerated frequency; on the other, if the difference in frequency between the body and vibrational agents is too great, the body cannot entrain to the higher patterns and no "compromise" can occur. Every cell of your body turns "deaf ears" to frequencies beyond its perceptual range.

Vibrational medicine must therefore be grounded in a precise knowledge of the vibrational patterns of the body's cells and organs, and the allowable "gap" between the body and vibrational remedies. As sound vibration is of a far slower frequency than light vibration, initial experimentation should be focused in this area as results will come more quickly and faithfully.

Your everyday experience confirms this. Consider the disparate intensity of your mental and bodily reactions to various art forms — music vs. painting. Do you react with the same passionate like or dislike to classical music as to Cezanne; rock and roll as to Monet; heavy metal as to Rembrandt? Is the strength of your visceral attraction and repulsion to various musical forms

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matched by equal intensity toward impressionists or cubists? Does purple trigger the same response as jazz?

Our point is that sound vibration, being much closer to the body's frequencies than light vibration, entrains far more readily with your body and therefore triggers stronger reactions as the body is "pulled" toward harmonizing with the musical patterns, or actively resists entrainment with discordant sound. Light is far more distant from the body's vibrations, entrains much less easily with them, and thus triggers relatively subdued responses.

Crucial to our discussion is the understanding that the human experience through history rides atop a gradual acceleration of the earth's vibrations, which in turn slowly accelerates the human body's core energies. As the body accelerates, it becomes less "dense," less bound to matter, and therefore nudges closer to the frequencies of sound and light. Vibrational medicine glimmers at the horizon of medical potential because your bodies have not yet accelerated to the point where such treatments offer consistent, reliable results.

As is the case in many aspects of society, you stand on one side of a chasm, surrounded by the intellectual and religious artifacts of your heritage, spying the gleaming hints of cultural potential enticing you from the chasm's far side, yet no bridge spans the gulf offering smooth passage. Yours is an age of sudden transition from one worldview to another, and the incremental steps of gradual social evolution have been compressed into one great leap.

Thus it is for future generations to make everyday use of vibrational medicine. When the human body has accelerated to the point where its vibrational frequencies have lifted ever higher toward those of sound and light, then so much more profound and reliable will be the results. Still, much progress can be made toward drawing that promising potential closer to manifestation.

Sing For Your Life

One of the most powerful tools of vibrational healing is the human voice. Given that there must be "overlap" between vibrational fields for communication and balancing to occur, it stands to reason that sound frequencies emanating from the human body will naturally entrain with other bodies. Not only is there an automatic sympathy of vibrational frequency, body to body, but because the "consciousness source" of the sound is another human body, the "consciousness" of the receiving body is

able to link with the vibrations at all levels — the denser corporal level and the higher consciousness level. Since every grid-point of your body carries both a physical frequency and consciousness, the richest bond will be with vibrational sources of sympathetic "matter" and "consciousness" patterns.

This was known to many cultures, both among ancient civilizations lost to time and contemporary indigenous peoples. When shamans and healers sing while they work, they use deliberately crafted pitches, tones, and silences to mimic healthy vibrational patterns of the afflicted area. This "rounds out" the healing power of substances such as herbs applied to the afflicted area, for in addition to the physical remedy's direct entraining with the dense matter of the body, the shamanic song entrains with the body's consciousness. This is a multileveled, powerfully complete approach to healing.

Even more powerful than a single human voice is communal singing directed toward healing. Among ancient civilizations, such healers would work by sitting a dozen to a circle with the sufferer lying inside the circle. Through exquisite control of breath and pitch, invisible matrices of vibration would be woven around the afflicted; powerful clouds of song invigorating the body while the loving intent carried on the breath stimulated the lust for life and vitality.

In turn, these song healers took their cues — literally — from the songs of the cosmos, which they perceived in meditation. Each individual in the group tuned to a planet, the moon, the sun, or a gurgling waterfall, and brought forth in vocal form the equivalent vibrational patterns. Thus all of the "elements" of physical life, the cosmic, telluric, solar, and lunar energies, were woven in song carrying the force and imprint of the entire universe. How could the body *not* respond to such a cosmic symphony with vibrant health?

In your time, with the emphasis on external agents as healing tools, the power of song in healing has been lost. Yet as with any other potential, it lies latent in full vitality, awaiting a spark of interest to resume its place in the healing repertoire.

Your technological sophistication allows you to build on the principles of "song healing" and evolve an even more elaborate, sophisticated, and accurate system of healing through sound. As instruments of sufficient subtlety are developed, the human body can be "mapped" as a grid of vibrational seas and islands, with each organ or fluid singing in a unique voice. These vibra-

tional matrices can be precisely duplicated in digital form, and the body immersed in a sonic cocoon of healing energy.

A healing session consists of more than exposing the body to an appropriate vibrational pattern and frequency for the proper duration. Like a symphony, a healing session states its theme at the outset, builds and elaborates on that theme, and then soars to powerful bursts of conclusion. A "sound healing" session would be similarly constructed, in that it would begin by individually stimulating discrete elements of the afflicted area, gently waking them to receive healing, then follow with an integrated sound pattern blending all frequencies of the afflicted area. When the body has reached its limit of absorption of this sonic symphony, the sound would gradually taper off to gently "put to rest" each discrete element by sounding its pitch in gradually decreasing volume. A sound healing session thus begins softly, rises to a crescendo of invigorating stimulation, then tapers off to a whispering coda.

By the time such technologies are feasible, your ability to digitally capture the human voice will be so refined that sound healing will still be transmitted on human breath, though programmed and controlled by computer. The importance of human touch will never be lost, and a new breed of healers who touch the patient during sound healing sessions and blend their voices with the sonic symphony will serve as the heart of the process.

This is one potential strand of using sound for healing, one of many. What of using light, then? Again, because light sizzles at a higher frequency than sound, your ability to harness it for healing, and the body's capacity for entraining with it, are less than is true for sound. Still, as the human body accelerates over time, light will become increasingly useful as a healing tool.

The vibrational energies emitted by the body's cells not only "sing," they glow. While invisible to all but the rarest of eyes, the body's energy fields emit a constant stream of radiation. This radiation lies outside the range of visibility, yet it carries blended within its overall pattern filaments within the spectrum of visible light. These are so slender that they pass undetected by all but the psychically gifted. Yet these energy patterns carry profound clues as to the health and vitality of the body. As with sound, each organ and fluid of the body glows in a distinct hue when healthy. Instrumentation (or a trained psychic eye) can evaluate the visual information and detect any disturbance in the body.

Because light is so much more powerful an energy than sound, it must be applied sparingly and skillfully. A "light healing" session would begin in darkness, then gradually envelop the body in a pure white glow. White is the blending of all colors, providing the foundation by stimulating the body to a generalized higher frequency. Then the afflicted area of the body would be offered a precisely balanced blend of light frequencies reflecting the healthy patterns of the area. The intensity would be just a notch higher than the extant energy, gently stimulating the body but not overwhelming it. Warmth, not fire, is the healer's tool.

Another "light" healing tool is already in use to some extent: lasers. These precisely focused beams of light can perform "energetic surgery" which, while still intrusive, is much less so than the scalpel. At present this tool is crude, and its potential includes a far more sophisticated matrix of laser beams blended to entrain with a damaged area of the body. Because of its intensity, such an application would be used only in cases of severe trauma to the body, where the tissues are so damaged that they have virtually no innate "spark" to start the healing process. A laser-grid application can "jump start" such healing, though once it has begun the less intensive "light healing" discussed above would then be employed.

Embracing Your Healing Potential

A discussion of high tech potentials for healing with light and sound may excite and delight you, but it may also leave you despairing, living as you do in the waning era of slicing-and-dicing scalpels and toxic pharmaceuticals. Let us then close by affirming that you have

at your disposal the most powerful healing technology ever to be known to your race: the human body.

When you consider that healing is best effected when an afflicted area comes in contact with a similar field of healthy energies; and when the consciousness of the afflicted area is stimulated and invigorated as much as its "matter," then what higher, more precise art of healing could there be than sharing close contact with one who loves you? For here, where skin meets skin, not only do parallel fields of energy overlap, thus entraining the "matter" to its healthy counterpart, but the consciousness of the two bodies flows on a tide of mutual love.

This is not to suggest that severe, chronic or terminal illness can be cured with a hug — rather, it emphasizes the importance of regular affectionate contact for the purpose of *preventing* such conditions, from sprouting in the first place. When you share your life and space with a long-term partner, your discrete energy fields begin to entrain so completely that they create a hybrid energy form, a "couple" vibrational field, which can nourish either partner *in the physical absence of the other*. Thus your partner can send healing energy to you from a great distance, for you are able to drink from the hybrid energy field encasing you both.

Your culture is just now beginning to recognize the importance of touch and affection in maintaining physical and emotional health; and the primary contribution the absence of affectionate contact — especially with children — has on social turmoil. Far in the future lies a pandemic understanding of the body's vibrational fields, the ability to perceive them at will, and the power of one person to envelop another in healing energy precisely directed to an area of incipient

illness. Of course this process also rides on the deeper evolution toward developing "light bodies" increasingly freed from the limitations and density of matter.

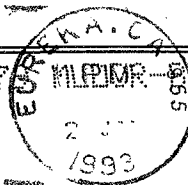
As your species evolves, its focus will be less on employing earthly life as a primarily *material* realm of experience, and more on adventures in consciousness gently rooted in physical life but not tightly bound to it. Thus, the principal emphasis so many place on using their bodies as vehicles for learning and growth — through the cornucopia of illnesses now available — will be forsaken in favor of enjoying the body as a gentle feedback instrument reinforcing the lessons learned in spiritual and emotional experience.

When this stage of human development has been reached, the whole "medical establishment" will be sloughed off, for understanding of the body's makeup and healthy functioning, and the power of another to heal incipient illness through love-distilled touch, will largely obviate the need for dedicated healers. Beyond vibrational medicine, then, lies *conscious medicine* in which one's awareness of one's body is so thorough and richly detailed that no ailment could far proceed before being detected and cured either through private affirmation or the loving touch and song of another.

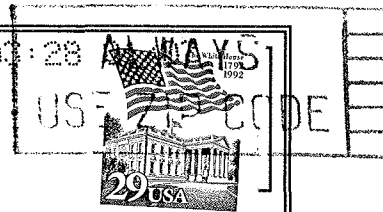
As always, fragments of the future tumble backward in time to prepare your species for growth. When you sing a child to sleep with a gentle lullaby, when you croon romantic verses to a loved one, you lay the groundwork for the era of vibrational medicine, glimmering in tantalizing promise across the chasm of social transformation. Know that each time you use song and loving touch to ease the suffering of another, you bring the mighty promise of vibrational healing that much closer to your experience.

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The Unkindest Cut? The Metaphysics of Circumcision

Among my recent reading was an impassioned polemic on the evils of circumcision. Knowing that this issue has spawned activist groups clamoring to ban the procedure, I was curious as to Alexander's view of the subject.

As expected, Alexander uses the issue as a springboard to discuss larger metaphysical and social issues of interest to men and women alike.

R.S.

Of the many facets of cultural change arising as your society evolves from the old order to the new, the issue of circumcision occupies a fairly minor niche. Still, the issue triggers controversy and passion within its narrow range of activism, clues that circumcision, like so many other issues, is one of innumerable "vents" through which the volatile energy of social transition is expressed.

The controversy arises over whether the procedure inflicts permanent psychological and emotional damage on boys, or if the damage goes no deeper than the anatomical alteration. To appreciate the "metaphysics of circumcision," we first must explore the consciousness of neonatal life, as experienced by both boys and girls.

From Spirit to Flesh

As a rule, a fetus will be selected as the vehicle for a soul seeking incarnation between the third and ninth months of pregnancy, or shortly after birth. There are two reasons for the "delay," for postponing the fusing of spirit and flesh beyond the moment of conception.

First, there are innumerable difficulties that can arise within the budding embryo. The building of a healthy infant is no easy task, and does not result automatically from the fusing of sperm and egg. Genetic incompatibility, severe chromosomal impairments (which occur with some frequency), failure of the woman's body to prepare and sustain proper nourishing conditions, and many other conditions, can result in a self-aborted embryo within several days or weeks of conception. This occurs more often than is commonly believed. Obvi-

ously, a soul seeking incarnation would be prudent to "wait out" this highly unstable period before bonding with an embryonic form.

The second reason for delaying such bonding is to evaluate the mother's reaction to her pregnancy. As you know, a woman can be pregnant for weeks or even months and not know it, though this is rare. Upon learning of her pregnancy, a woman reacts first in intense emotional vitality — whether joy, despair, doubt or confusion. A "contemplative" period usually follows, where the initial emotional intensity ebbs and the woman evaluates more realistically what bearing this child would mean.

Chances are, if the woman has desired a child, that this contemplative period simply means dealing with the practicalities of preparing a suitable nest for the child, with the decision whether or not to bring the child to term never even considered. Other women, who become pregnant through "accident," who lack the financial and physical stability to effectively raise a child, who are pregnant through rape, or who already have more than enough mouths to feed, will most likely give some consideration to not bringing the child to term.

While your senses are designed to block awareness of vast swarms of vibrational information, leading you to conclude that your thoughts are private and contained within your skull, the truth of your greater reality is that you feed a constant stream of energized information through your auric field and out into the larger world. This flow is particularly strong through the crown of the head, as if each of you carries a miniature geyser atop your skull, through which spouts a steady stream of thought-encoded vibration. Each of you thus contributes your private store of thought and experience to the larger pool of human consciousness which envelops the planet and pulls into manifestation collective events reflecting the nature of your pooled consciousness.

This process bears on the issue at hand, for souls who have chosen a specific place and time as offering the cultural conditions likely to enhance their

desired growth for a lifetime, then step more closely to earth to "read" the vibrational flows streaming from women in the contemplative stage of pregnancy, where strong emotion mingles with hard practicality. The intensity of thought generated by women at this stage is quite powerful, as the pregnancy overshadows other aspects of their lives.

(Incidentally, this also means that abortion at this early stage cannot be considered a "crime," as no soul would latch onto an embryo destined for such an early termination.)

These thought-streams carry volumes of information regarding the woman's overall physical health, age, psychological and emotional state, romantic attachments, life stability, and so on. Thus a clear picture emerges as to the likely early childhood experiences to be offered by a mother. Once the contemplative stage has passed, and the woman has decided to carry the child to birth, a soul whose chosen growth and learning for a lifetime resonates with the woman's likely maternal behavior clinches the match.

At this point the soul, which until now has remained at the level of pure consciousness, begins to decelerate strands of energy to envelop and gradually blend into the fetus. It does not take the plunge all at once, crystallizing suddenly into flesh, but slowly builds a "soul envelope" around and through the fetus, even as the fetus itself slowly builds in size and complexity.

This "soul envelope" may either "ride" the fetal growth process without influencing it; or it may "shape" the fetus to provide a more perfect vehicle for its life task. One example would be to increase the production of male hormones in order to enhance a bulky physique and aggressive behavior.

Like a gossamer jellyfish, the soul hovers above the growing fetus, linked to it by tendrils of consciousness decelerating to the vibrations of flesh, yet standing apart from its development. As long as the fetus remains in the womb, many influences affect its viability — the mother's diet, her emotional life, a sudden fall. In addition, because it is not

possible to have "human" experiences in the womb — of flesh meeting flesh, eye meeting eye, interpersonal give-and-take — there is little point in fully "anchoring" until the birth passage is complete.

Another primary reason for not fully anchoring prior to birth is to lessen the experience of pain during delivery. If you can imagine how being so squeezed and twisted would affect your body now, you understand why the soul would just as soon avoid such intense trauma as its first major earth experience! In fact, during the birth process the soul sharply reduces its energetic flow into the body, in a sense "anesthetizing" it during the passage. Would that the mother had similar powers at her command!

The neonate is still helpless, dependent, blurry, not fully "here." Compared to the motor skills and focused awareness of other neonatal mammals, the human child is considerably underdeveloped. The helplessness is part of the overall "program" of human life, for it forces intense, constant nurturance from the child's caretakers, establishing from the first moments of life that it is through human relationships that most learning and growth are won.

During the days and weeks following delivery, the soul slowly anchors more fully to its form. It does so by expanding the bundle of tendrils streaming into the young body, and by increasing the intensity of vibrations transmitted across those tendrils. The process of anchoring is not fully completed until the child is more than a year old.

During the time of transition, during that first year, the soul's energy ebbs and flows between pure consciousness and flesh. A newborn spends much of its time outside its body — baby astral traveling, if you will — rising back into the vast nonphysical realms from which it is only gradually descending.

It does so to exchange information with its "higher self" — that body of consciousness overseeing all its human incarnations — to restudy the planned lessons and growth established for this lifetime, to review past incarnational experiences, and so on.

Pain and Memory

Two key questions are at the heart of the circumcision controversy: whether a newborn feels pain, and whether a child remembers pain — whether its consciousness is forever colored by very early painful experiences.

Two components make up the "pain system" of animate life: a nervous system and consciousness. Given your culture's materialist emphasis, it is only natural that study of pain is limited to

nerves, neuronal pathways, and neurochemical transmitters. The other essential element of the pain system, consciousness, is largely ignored. Yet it is here, in the streams of consciousness flowing between body, mind, and spirit, that the experience of pain is largely regulated and created.

Unknown to current science, sensory data relayed to the brain is not interpreted and acted upon by the brain, but by the mind. The mind is a body of consciousness — the real "you" — which is anchored to your body but rides above it, just as the soul rides above its chosen fetus. The brain, for all its magnificent complexity, is merely the receiver and transmitter of neuronal impulses. It does not "act," or make decisions, on its own. Decisions are always made in the mind, then "stepped down" to the vibrational level of the brain's electrical circuitry in a time gap so negligible as to be undetectable.

Pain is a signal that the body is under stress or assault. Because the body's safety and security are your highest priority, the mind generates an intense field of powerful signals which, fed through the brain into the body, rivet attention on the affected area.

While your experience of touching a hot stove seems to bring an immediate sensation of pain, in truth there is a gap during which the fingers' nerves send messages of intense stimulation to the brain, the mind reads these messages and determines that damage appears imminent, then fires down powerful bursts of energy through the brain, back down to the fingers, where they overwhelm the nerve endings with intense bursts of accelerated vibration.

Feelings of intense pain result when nerves are stimulated beyond their normal capacity, are excited into chaotic overload by a flood of vibration rushing from the mind and brain. The bottom line is that *the body feels nothing; all physical sensations are manufactured in the mind.*

Given that pain is created in the mind, and that the links between soul/mind and body are tenuous and amorphous in the first days of life, circumcision does not generate the *intensity* of pain that would occur later in life during the same procedure. This is hardly to say that it causes no pain at all; how could slicing off a nerve-rich area of skin not cause pain? But at this early age, the experience of pain is brief and ephemeral.

What carries more potential for trauma is not the actual removal of the foreskin, but the setting in which the operation takes place. If it occurs in a hospital, with the boy strapped down to

prevent all movement, under bright lights, with his mother absent, the *psychological* context of the experience generates overwhelming anxiety and fear. Beyond the temporary pain of the actual operation, it is the atmosphere of *isolation* and *assault* in which it takes place that carries potential for more lasting effects.

Emotions are generated and experienced at a "higher" vibratory level than physical pain. The higher a vibrational field's frequencies, the more closely aligned with the level of soul/mind it will be, and the greater and more lasting impact such experiences will have. In the first days of life, when the soul increasingly anchors to flesh largely to enhance the intense pleasure of feeling mother's and others' warmth and touch, an experience in which this comfort is suddenly stripped away, the child's freedom of movement restricted, and strangers inflict brief but powerful pain on one's body, the *emotional* trauma generated by the experience supersedes the physical pain.

The child comes into the world helpless and dependent, and in the best of circumstances is enveloped in a maternal cocoon of safety, warmth, loving touch, and breast-fed intimacy. The *emotional* context of the newborn's experience carries greater ramifications than its *physical* context, for emotions align more readily with the soul/mind than physical sensations do. The emotional experiences of the first weeks of life are the primary contributor to the child's psychological/emotional foundation, with physical sensations reduced to ghostly background traces.

Every life experience contributes to one's private world-view, one's way of perceiving the world, other human beings, the nature of reality. The first weeks of life are the most crucial of an entire lifetime in determining the basic psychological/emotional coloration of the psyche. The primary source material for building this foundation is emotional rather than physical — one's sense of being welcomed into the world, held and

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cuddled, fed at the breast, heard and responded to when crying.

Thus it is the *setting* in which circumcision takes place that determines whether it carries lasting impact — a baby boy held in his mother's or father's lap at home during the procedure is far less likely to carry a lifelong stain in his psyche than the strapped-down, bewildered boy enduring brief agony compounded by his mother's abandonment.

The second issue, after that of pain, is memory: does the boy carry this painful early experience throughout life as a deeply hidden wound whose lifelong ache affects adult relationships and sexuality? Might it contribute in some way to the epidemic violence and profound sexual dysfunction of your culture?

Just as pain is processed "outside" the body, in the mind, so are memories processed and stored outside the physical body, in the energetic fields which surround it. Each event of your life is carried as a vibrational particle of a frequency halfway between the raw density of matter and the free-floating ether of consciousness. Events are "cross-indexed" so that their recall can be triggered by numerous associations — the year, your age, people sharing the event, emotions experienced, lessons learned, and so on.

As is true in all matter-based systems, memories carrying similar information and frequencies tend to clump together — like attracts like. With each passing year your store of memory increases, and the patterns and interactions of these highly vitalized energetic particles grow in complexity. Together they create a robe of memory surrounding your physical body, and this robe's pattern, coloration, and harmony or disharmony reflect the nature of the memories from which it is woven.

Every event you experience is composed of two elements: raw sensory data and interpretation. Your senses drink in a certain matrix of vibration, feeding their disparate frequencies to the brain, where a cohesive picture of environmental conditions is fashioned. But this is not enough — it won't suffice to merely know what is happening around you: you must then *interpret* the picture woven by your senses in order to act appropriately.

As you might imagine, a dozen people sharing an identical experience would bring twelve different interpretations to it. The "interpretive lobe" is built up over a lifetime; it carries core information common to the entire species (such as the urge to beat a hasty retreat from the sight of an erupting volcano) as well as your private interpretations built up from childhood experiences and cultural beliefs.

Every memory you carry holds these two elements of earth experience: sense data and interpretation. Because they originate at different frequencies — one at the density of matter, the other at the high purity of mind — it is the interpretations built up over a lifetime, rather than the raw physical experiences, which most influence your psychological and emotional state, as these aspects of your being hum at frequencies closer to mind than matter. It is not what you experience that shapes your psyche, but the beliefs and values through which experience is interpreted.

In the very young child, when the strands of consciousness enveloping the body are still diffuse and attenuated, the ability to process and retain memory is much reduced. That is, there must be a certain "density" to the energetic fields surrounding the body for them to hold memory particles at full vitality, and to build networks of association among them.

If you cast your mind backward to pull up the earliest memory you can exhume, chances are it occurred around the third year of life, possibly the second. The entire first year of life — in many ways the most crucial — is lost to memory because the energetic fields had not yet fully thickened, and could not "catch" and retain memories generated at that early age.

In addition, given the young child's diffuse consciousness and lack of worldly experience, there is little information through which experience can be interpreted. Every child has certain built-in fear responses — to loud noises, falling, and so on — but the extraordinary subtlety and complexity of adult interpretation requires a childhood and youth brimming with diverse experience through which the young person gradually stitches together a private world-view. Since the interpretation aspect of memory carries the greatest effect on that world-view, and since neonatal "interpretation" is limited to a few gross physical dangers and pleasures, experiences at this early age tend to "evaporate" rather than be stored in the memory field.

Thus, a newborn boy undergoing circumcision within the first weeks of life cannot recall the experience in adulthood because the pain and amorphous "interpretation" of the event faded almost instantly. No clear interpretation was generated, and the energetic fields were not yet sufficiently developed to capture and retain the energetic memory generated by it.

As mentioned earlier, the most powerful effect of the circumcision experience is not the physical pain but the emotional trauma resulting from the

setting in which the procedure takes place. If this emotional trauma is sufficiently intense — the boy strapped down and left alone until a coldly efficient physician removes his foreskin without a word or gentle touch of greeting — then the boy's emotional hysteria can reach such a crescendo that it does leave a permanent trace on his psyche. It would not be retained as a clear, discrete memory, but as a background trace coloring his psyche. Adult relationships, issues of trust, intimacy, and sexuality, could all be compromised by the invisible imprint of a world experienced as arbitrary, cruel, painful, indifferent to helpless suffering.

Such a memory trace is rare. For the most part, given the child's diffuse consciousness and amorphous energetic fields, both the pain and the emotional trauma of the experience evaporate into the ether and leave no trace on the soul.

A Culture of Violence

Does the fact that boys rarely retain any memory of circumcision mean we encourage open season on foreskins? We do not, for let us turn now from the baby boy's experience to the larger cultural framework in which the procedure is embedded. For it is among *adults* that the persistence of circumcision carries greatest effect.

You live in a culture of violence. Not only physical violence, but psychological, emotional, economic, ecological violence. At the root of this violence lies profound disrespect: disrespect for nature and its laws, disrespect for children and animals, disrespect for the earth that sustains you, disrespect for peoples of different tribal and cultural backgrounds.

Beneath this disrespect lies the core value of western culture: separation. The connective strands binding the earth's ecosystems in harmonious unity are rendered invisible by a consciousness seeing only separation, difference, competition and war. Every cultural artifact carries this core value, whether in economics, politics, science, or religion.

The result is a culture beset by fear — fear of not having enough, fear of the natural world, fear of your human family. The system feeds on itself in an ever-escalating cycle of fear and violence, reaching the paroxysms of staggering violence in the home and on the streets that your culture now suffers.

It can be said that for most of its history western culture, for all its technological prowess, has been spiritually at the level of childhood. The self-absorption, lack of empathy, inability to share, and indifferent greed of young children are the hallmarks of western culture,

with a few refinements. In this atmosphere, anyone or anything outside the circle of power is seen not as a divine and worthy creature, but as a threat or a resource to be chewed up and discarded.

The evidence is everywhere around you. The torture of animals in scientific research. Immolation of the rain forest for minerals and beef. Billionaires and starving children living within miles of each other. Children shooting children over tennis shoes. Sport hunting. The moral squalor of politics. Circumcision.

Consider the layers of disrespect and violence which perpetuate this practice. First is the disrespect for nature — as if nature's design of a boy's body is somehow deficient, demands "improvement" at the scalpel-wielding hand of science. Next is disrespect for the boy, for his right to enjoy his whole and perfect body; to know nothing but love and nurturance in the crucial first year of life; for his right to participate in the circumcision decision later in life if that be his choice.

Given science's acknowledgement that no valid medical reasons remain for circumcision, what perpetuates the practice? The desire to have a boy "look like his father"? If the father lost an arm in Vietnam, should the boy be similarly disfigured to enhance family togetherness? Like so many other acts of violence, small and large, circumcision persists through thoughtless custom and inertia, through a cultural milieu of violence and disrespect so profound and pervasive as to be invisible.

You live at the edge of a sea of madness, fed by the streams of violence and disrespect gushing forth from your separation-based culture, and you frantically pile sandbags of law and "get tough" crime policies against the rising tide of madness lapping at your heels. And yet it continues, day in and day out — the razing of the rain forest, children with teeth and bones broken by their fathers, animals tortured in the name of science, foreskins ripped from terrified babies.

The baby boy's experience of circumcision is brief and carries no lasting psychological effect. It is among the larger culture — the world of adults — that the practice scars and brutalizes, as one more instance of thoughtless brutality perpetrated against the weak and helpless; as if each boy and man carries his disfigured penis as a token and reminder of the senselessly barbarous culture into which he was born. As one small step toward restoring cultural sanity and respectful living, the practice of disfiguring boys' bodily perfection might be relegated to the *history* of medicine rather than its current practice.

Q & A

In Conscious Life Alexander said that when food is picked the consciousness begins to slowly leave and when it has left, that is when rotting takes place. What happens when food is picked and frozen? Does the leaving of consciousness also "freeze" where it is and will it still be there at thaw, or does consciousness leave and what we have left is the food structure only preserved, but with no consciousness?

J. R., Tucson, AZ

Two processes are at work here, and while one triggers the other they proceed on independent schedules. Once a living organism has been "unplugged" from its motive power — whether corn pulled from the stalk or a person suffering heart failure — the consciousness animating the form slowly disintegrates itself from the organism's molecular structure. The more complex the structure, the longer the period of disengaging its consciousness. Thus the consciousness vitalizing an ear of corn departs within an hour of its picking, while a human soul releases its physical form for days following physical death.

When consciousness departs from an organism, the many minute elements which comprise it at the subatomic level are no longer fed a "blueprint" holding them in sharply defined structures with other elements. This blueprint overrides each element's natural proclivities, its innate frequencies and patterns which distinguish it from others. The blueprint, a matrix of consciousness, "subjugates" its many constituent elements, dampening their spontaneous individuality while drawing their disparate energies into creation of a larger structure.

As consciousness departs from an organism, the top-down authority of the blueprint wanes and the constituent elements begin to revert to their individualistic natures — a process akin to releasing a classroom of obese schoolchildren onto the playground for recess. This is when "rot" sets in, when the harmonious frequencies of a substance are overwhelmed by the chaotic individualism of its subatomic elements.

Once decay has progressed to a certain point, there is no reviving the organism and consciousness continues its gradual release of form irrespective of the decay process. As you know, temperature greatly influences the rapidity of this process. Heat naturally stimulates subatomic elements to an ever more energetic dance of lusty individuality, while cold suppresses the dance and slows it to a crawl. The release of form by consciousness proceeds on its own schedule regardless of temperature or the speed of decay.

Thus, freezing food does not somehow trap its vitality, to magically awaken at thaw. It may well force the elements within a substance to suspend their return to individualism, thus postponing decay. But food is much more than mere vitamins and minerals; in the best circumstances it is *alive*, brimming with vital energy unseen by the eye but embraced by the body.

Much of your culture consumes foods so thoroughly processed and artificially preserved as to adequately sustain the physical organism but they fail to *vitalize* it. Frozen food is better nourishment at the raw physical level than isolated vitamins and minerals, as the food still carries a full spectrum of symbiotic, interwoven chemical relationships, but it is no substitute for the sheer vital energy of food harvested fresh from the garden.

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Desperately Seeking Salvation: The Rise of Fanaticism

This year, while young, has already offered fearful evidence of the growing dangers of fanaticism. First came the IRA bombings in England which killed two boys, then the World Trade Center bombing, linked to Muslim extremists. Most prominent, of course, is the 51-day standoff in Waco, Texas, which ended in an apocalyptic inferno killing 80 people. In this issue Alexander explores the origins of fanaticism, the reasons behind its recent escalation, and what the future may hold in store.

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The rise of worldwide fanaticism is a signal that humanity is passing through a transitional phase from one world-view to another, and that the vibratory energies of the earth itself are shifting as well. Indeed, as human culture rides the earth's frequencies in fashioning its spiritual and intellectual foundation, any abrupt shift in those frequencies will affect social conditions and personal psychology as well. A thorough understanding of fanaticism requires an appreciation of both the relationship between earth energies and human culture, and the elements of psychological health.

Earth Cycles and Human Culture

In the beginning there was vibration, the primal pulse of the universe, a rhythmic beat slowing the frequencies of pure consciousness down to the vibrations of matter. The universal system was created as a crucible of learning and growth, a matter-based system of directed evolution, into which diverse bodies of consciousness could stream, assume form, and explore themselves. The universe rides through oceans of time, crests and troughs of accelerating and decelerating frequency, rhythmic waves of rising and falling vibration. One small slice of accelerating or decelerating frequency forms an eon of earth time.

The earth's gradual acceleration and deceleration opens "windows" of potential for various life forms to swim, crawl, and fly about its surface. When

the earth's vibration is very slow, ice covers much of the planet and only rudimentary water-based life can survive. As the earth's frequency accelerates, the ice retreats, plant life flourishes, and more complex life forms emerge. This is the era of enormous beasts of the land, sea, and sky, as the earth's languid pulsation literally holds together massive, dense bodies with a fierce gravitational glue.

As the earth's pulsation accelerates, these massive beasts can no longer survive: imagine, as an exaggeration, a dinosaur attempting to navigate the moon's surface, with its lumbering body bouncing and crashing over the light-gravity terrain. On a lesser scale, this governs the appearance and disappearance of species upon the earth. In times of accelerating vibration, massive beasts give way to smaller, lighter, more mobile creatures buoyed by the earth's escalating frequency. Within this many-millennia-long acceleration, a fairly narrow "window" opens which allows participation by the human species.

Humanity's great and obvious difference from other animals is its brilliant intellect, its power of reason and symbolic manipulation. In a sense, the frequency of human consciousness is vastly accelerated above other creatures, allowing it to process information more rapidly and with greater subtlety and nuance. Now, there can only be "so much" difference between the earth's pulsation and the frequencies of consciousness carried by its creatures. Humanity can appear only during "windows" of accelerating frequency, as the earth nears the crest of its vibrational cycle, for at this time the earth's energies can support a consciousness as accelerated as the human species's.

If you consider the vast changes in human culture and technology over the past five or ten millennia, you observe the traces of a species riding a wave of accelerating frequency. With each higher "notch" of the earth's acceleration, human consciousness can reach higher into its bank of potential and pull into expression a loftier intellectual, spiritual, and technological sophistication.

At birth, each person forms a "core vibration," a swirl of energy encased in the spine and brain, based on the earth's frequency at the birth moment. The "gap" between earth and human frequency is standard, so as the earth's vibration accelerates, each successive generation is literally "tuned" to a higher frequency. In truth, the core vibration is not so much a precise frequency as it is a range of potential, a fairly narrow one, with other personality traits and life experiences governing which end of the spectrum an individual operates from. The greater purpose of binding a generation to the same small band of potential is to keep human evolution on a steady, even keel; thus each generation shares a basic world-view, an outlook, a common intellectual and spiritual framework.

The earth's acceleration is not always a gradual, even, steady rise in frequency; there may be sudden fits and starts along the way, as old geological structures struggle against a rising frequency: in a sense, the earth passes through periods of adolescence, with its growth spurts and awkwardness ultimately leading to new maturity. These periods of unstable earth energy naturally give rise to unstable human cultures as well, since the once-sturdy vibrational foundation is suddenly heaving and buckling. These are periods of warfare and famine, revolution and bloodbath, as climactic changes affect agriculture and seasonal extremes, while cultural chieftains seem helpless to maintain the order and stability of the past.

The Rise and Fall of Human Culture

Within its narrow window of sympathetic vibration, the human species evolves through successive cultural expressions. Every human culture passes through the same stages of life defining individual existence: birth, growth, maturity, decay, death. Cultures, like individuals, carry the core vibration extant at their birth, reflected in the world-view held by the common man and woman. As time flows on, and the earth's vibration gradually accelerates, a

culture's foundation begins to lose synchrony with the earth's vibration; cutting-edge thinkers and philosophers, reaching higher into the ethereal banks of potential, offer new visions of how society might be formed and run.

Inevitably, these new visions trigger opposition from the old guard, those of less imagination and prescience, whose lives and livelihoods are securely rooted in the traditional world. At first, efforts to suppress and demonize the free-thinking advocates of change are successful, as their numbers are few and their prescient insights do not resonate with the great body of society. Over time, as the earth's acceleration continues and an entire generation is suffused with a higher consciousness, once-utopian "visions" appear more realistic, even as the traditional world-view becomes a creaking anachronism. As the old order dies off and a newer generation takes the reins of power, the formerly ridiculed visions become the foundation of a new order.

This is true of cultures as a whole, and of the many subsets within a culture. Religion, science, and governance — the three pillars of human culture — each pass through the evolutionary process of new ideas initially ridiculed, gradually accepted by the mainstream, vigorously defended against insurgent challenge, then finally jettisoned from the ship of state by the irresistible force of cultural evolution.

This process can be smooth or traumatic depending on the power and dominance of the old guard, the mental agility and social awareness of the people, and the *modus operandi* of heretical visionaries. Where the old guard commands a strong military and police force and is ruled by ruthless suppressors of new ideas; where the people are either too drunk, too lost in hedonistic pursuits, or too apathetic to protest their condition; where visionaries take up arms in a quixotic assault against the old guard — here are the seeds of trauma and violence. Where the old guard recognizes that its day is done; where an involved, intellectually vibrant people fearlessly demand change; and where visionaries urge their followers to meet official brutality with nonviolence, the transition is made more smoothly.

Human evolution is thus an eternal cycle of creation and destruction; of wrestling lofty ideals into form and order, building flourishing civilizations led by intellectuals, free thinkers, and visionaries; then gradually hardening into sociosclerosis and decay, triggering a new round of revolution and visionary insight starting the cycle anew. No cultural form lasts forever; while every

culture thinks of itself as the pinnacle of human potential, its decay and collapse inevitably become the grist of future historians. Do you imagine that capitalism, democracy, and Christianity will be the pillars of human culture five centuries hence?

The Psyche Unhinged

As mentioned, each individual carries a core vibration defining the range of intellectual, spiritual, and technological potential available within his or her lifetime, a range shared with others of common age. Waking consciousness operates on a frequency between the earth's solid pulsation and the ethereal whirl of pure consciousness, one's "higher self." Since pure consciousness lies outside the physical system it has no "frequency" per se, but gains the qualities of matter as it decelerates to link with flesh. Thus, the defining "ceiling" on consciousness is not determined from above, but from below, by the earth's vibration reflected in humanity's core vibration.

The core vibration is the basis of human psychology — of intellectual abstraction, artistic creativity, love and communion with others, the depth and range of emotion. The core vibration sets the upper and lower boundaries of potential experience for all parameters of human psychology.

Naturally, when the earth's frequency accelerates at a steady, even pace, unnoticed beneath the bustle of cultural machination, each generation rests secure on its core vibration: new ideas and forms arrive slowly and are gradually assimilated into the cultural mainstream without undue stress. The world one is born into is largely the same world one leaves at death, with the changes so incremental as to pose no threat to cultural or psychological stability.

In times of rapid acceleration of the earth's pulsation, not only do cultures fall apart more readily, but human psychology suffers a greater fragility and turmoil as well. The body mediates between earth and mind by absorbing the earth's energetic patterns and synthesizing them with the lighter frequencies of waking consciousness. When the earth's vibration suddenly shifts, the harmony between body and consciousness is impaired; the body cannot mediate between earth and mind as it is meant to.

In a sense, the smooth channels of communication between body and mind, and thus between earth and mind, are constricted, no longer passing the strength and fidelity of energetic communication they once did.

This loss of harmony among earth,

body, and mind triggers an inner panic; as if the sturdy foundation of psychological health and cultural stability suddenly crumbles under the fierce shudders of an earthquake. The mind feels itself increasingly cut off from the earth, from resting securely in a familiar environment of soothing vibration, from feeling "at home" in the world. There are three possible reactions to this inner panic:

1. One may eagerly embrace cultural and psychological disequilibrium as the catalyst for overdue change;

2. One may sink into apathy and indifference as the world increasingly fails to make sense, and sublimates gnawing *angst* into distractions: drugs, sex, television, religion, the occult, etc.;

3. One may furiously try to restore cultural and psychological stability by rejecting all new and progressive ideas, getting "back to basics," struggling to resurrect an imagined "golden age" of yesteryear.

This last reaction is sensible enough, in a twisted magical logic: If the earth's vibration is shifting and old forms are crumbling, then by rehabilitating those old forms, the earth's energy will return to its former frequency, and all will be well. Unfortunately, this childlike "magical thinking" does not square with reality, for the earth moves ever forward and carries human culture upon its quickening pulse.

Our discussion of earth vibrations feeding through the body to nourish the mind is not an abstraction; it has a literal reality. In a sense, the mind has vibration receptors, just as the brain has neurochemical receptors on its far grosser level. The mind's receptors are stimulated with each earth pulse, whose energy rises through the body and brain, and vitalizes the points of contact between brain and mind, the interface between matter and consciousness.

When the vibratory patterns of earth, body, brain, and mind are in harmony, the interface is washed with a full richness of vibration at each earth pulse, which reinforces and sustains the psychological foundation. When the harmony among levels of being is disrupted by a sudden shift somewhere in the hierarchy, the brain-mind interface is no longer bathed with its full complement of energy. This bleeds off the deep security

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arising from earth/mind synthesis, and leads to one of the three reactions discussed above.

Quite literally, the psyche no longer receives the supportive energies from the earth that it knew at birth. Just as a starving or freezing person shuts out all extraneous distractions and focuses solely on resolving an urgent condition, so may a psyche drained of its full complement of birth energy narrow its focus, lose its resilience and subtlety, and be rendered fragile, brittle, inflexible. All the psyche knows is its desperate drive to restore the soothing flow of sympathetic earth energies it has lost.

This is the birth of intolerance, rigidity, hysteria, fanaticism. When the world changes too quickly, when people feel left behind by the steamrolling juggernaut of cultural transformation, when ideas and forms that worked so well in childhood are scorned as exhausted anachronisms, when stability and order break down and chaos rises in their place — these are the conditions giving rise to the panic and fury of fanaticism: a desperate attempt to restore the world to order and sanity by imposing a rigidly defined social order based on irrefutable (often religious) principles brooking no dissent or deviance.

In another instance of magical thinking, the fanatic hopes that by bringing resolute order to the external world, his internal chaos will cease. He has the process reversed, of course: external order arises naturally from a people of psychological calm and stability.

It should be clear that among the most maniacal of true believers, the driving force is not religious principle or social philosophy, but madness seeking validation. A culture bouncing atop a rapidly shifting earth energy is robbed of its comforting harmony with earth, and psychological stability suffers. In some, it suffers so severely that for all intents and purposes a person no longer operates from the common world-view, but retreats into a private realm of magic and superstition where everything makes sense, everything is explained, and order is restored.

Whether expressed by a Bible-thumping fundamentalist, an unrepentant Marxist, a white supremacist, or a UFO conspiracy theorist, in all cases the root is the same: an unhinged psyche desperately seeking stability and order which can only be won in battle against a demonized "Other," the externalized symbol of one's own inner chaos.

This raises the perennial paradox of the human condition: You must base personal and collective reality upon principles which cannot be proved or disproved. The foundation of psychic

stability is a clear, unshakable faith that the world works in understandable ways; that certain influences naturally act upon the earth and the human species; that while these forces may never be fully tamed, they can at least be understood and appeased; that you are not powerless against them.

Human psychology requires this deep foundational structure, and every culture spins its own mythic web, yet proving or disproving their validity lies beyond reason's reach. No one can prove that God exists, nor can anyone prove He does not. No one can prove that Buddha's description of the laws of karma is accurate, nor can anyone prove it is not. No one can prove that you are alone in the universe, without guidance from unseen beings, nor can anyone prove you are not.

Western science, born in reaction against tired religious dogma, attempted to circumvent this mythological confusion by proposing that only the physically perceivable reality is valid. The necessary corollaries of this precept are that matter is primary and consciousness secondary; that consciousness therefore cannot exist apart from matter and cannot influence matter; that only observable laws of physics govern the universe; that the soul does not exist; and that the senses are the final arbiters of reality. Unfortunately, no one has ever proven these axioms to be true — thus the very foundation of science is based not on established truth but on unproven beliefs taken on faith.

Grinding Toward The Millennium

If it seems that your era plays host to a rather severe cultural and ecological crisis, and that the process of forging a new holistic perspective as the foundation of your culture seems agonizingly slow, your observation is correct: both the profundity of the paradigm shift and the difficulties in establishing a new order are especially great during the current period of cultural transformation. There are two reasons for this.

First, the earth is passing through one of its turbulent "adolescent" phases, when its vibrational frequencies accelerate in fits and starts, struggling to reach a new equilibrium. Like fleas on the back of a running dog, the human species is carried along for the ride, not knowing quite where it is headed. The smooth, even acceleration of past centuries is lost, and a sudden velocity overtakes the ponderously slow mechanisms of cultural transformation. A glance at the technological breakthroughs of the last century, compared with scientific

advances in the preceding two millennia, should suffice to establish that yours is an era of unprecedented acceleration.

The second influence on the process of cultural transformation is the fractured state of the western cosmology. The tenacious grasp of the keepers of the Christian faith on their ancient dogma, their refusal to revise it in light of scientific discoveries, forced the split between science and reason. This not only splintered the church into myriad factions, but it caused outright rejection of spiritual influence by scientists determined to unshackle reason from the church's superstitions. The result is today's divorce between reason and spirituality, science and religion, creating a culture of cosmological schizophrenia.

What is truth, what is real, who are you, where did you come from — to these deepest of questions there is no unified answer, only a cacophony of contentious ideologies.

This is not the most advantageous condition for a culture to be in as it enters a stage of sudden acceleration. Riding through the earth's "adolescent" phase is challenging enough, but when a culture is simultaneously in the end stages of a splintering, exhausted cosmological confusion, the trauma and turbulence of the transition are magnified many times.

One of the greatest challenges is that the western economic system, capitalism, is rooted in fear: no one is guaranteed food and shelter, but must constantly struggle for it, and even when one has it, one must worry about losing it. The homeless hordes crowding the streets testify to the cruel extremes of the system, and trigger a quiet panic among those currently self-supporting but aware that a few misfortunes could land them on the streets as well.

Fear, of course, is the enemy of change, evolution, progress, transformation. The fear of bankruptcy, of losing one's home, which plays softly in everyone's mind as an internalized Big Brother keeping the system running, militates against an openness to cultural transformation because change always involves risk; and risk is what everyone is struggling to avoid. Thus, there is a deep psychological inflexibility built into the western mind, based on fear engendered by a harsh economic system, which robs society as a whole of the openness and flexibility it needs to ride the waves of transformation in eager anticipation of a brighter tomorrow.

This exacerbates the process discussed earlier, where one of the possible reactions to cultural crisis is a furious resistance to novel ideas, a desperate longing for the safety and security of

childhood, of parents and authority, of an omniscient and loving God, of a sturdy social order. The elemental low-grade fear of western culture is magnified by the fear of cultural change into outright panic. Among the most affected, the ego is overwhelmed by towering threats to its existence and it maintains a constant fight-or-flight vigilance, painting the world in black-and-white extremes of good and evil, bleeding all nuance and shading from a complex and ambiguous world, building to the crescendo of the Apocalypse.

Apocalypse Now?

For those outside the world of cults and fanaticism, the single-minded obsession with a world-consuming Apocalypse, and its just-around-the-corner imminence, are a puzzlement. Why the anticipation, even welcome, of a world reduced to cinder, and why must it always be coiled and ready to pounce at any moment? Given the understanding that fanatics live in constant terror of annihilation; that their egos suffer constant assault from paranoid delusions; and that all ambiguity has been bled from the world, leaving a stark landscape of righteousness versus evil, the vision of an impending Apocalypse completes the picture, for it promises an end to the ego's great suffering, and to the body's struggle to maintain its adrenaline-stoked vigilance.

In a sense, apocalyptic visions are externalized projections of the ego's suffering, death, and rebirth. The ego's natural inclination is to operate through reason, to absorb and process information through a conscious sifting and sorting, piecing together a richly complex world understanding. All this is swept aside in a mind consumed with fear, paranoia, and apocalyptic fever; the ego and its handmaiden, reason, suffer a slow death. This exacerbates the fanatic's psychological instability, and in the longing for a return to the halcyon days of reason and security, all external threats must be destroyed, allowing the righteous to reclaim the earth and the ego to be reborn into a safe and secure world.

Apocalyptic visions always include scenes of mass destruction, fire and wind, earthquakes and lightning, and the mass annihilation of everyone outside the circle of righteousness. At base this vision is an "ethnic cleansing" on a global scale, sweeping away the wicked and corrupt in waves of fire, restoring the earth to its Edenic purity.

A mind consumed with such visions reduces others to ciphers, no longer flesh-and-blood human beings, but belonging to one of two camps: the small circle of the righteous, and the vast swarm of the wicked. The wicked are

stripped of their humanity, reduced to pure evil unmitigated by lives and loves of their own. As unadulterated evil, as caricatures of wickedness, those outside the circle of righteousness are justifiable targets of violence, for their death only reduces the ranks of depravity standing between the fanatic and realization of a pure, virtuous world restored to moral order. There is no contradiction to a "pro-life" fanatic in gunning down and bombing others, for people are not people in a fanatic's eyes; they are ants to be crushed underfoot without a thought to their humanity.

Apocalyptic tribes often bring about their ruin through self-fulfilling prophecy, as their closely guarded compounds and stockpiles of weaponry naturally invite interest from neighbors and government. This heightens their paranoid sense of persecution, and aggrandizes their self-importance, for, certainly the interference of others arises from their desire to destroy this small circle of virtue and unleash unchecked depravity across the globe. The more paranoid such groups become, the more weapons they gather, the greater the likelihood of government intervention, and of a miniature Apocalypse playing out in tragic fulfillment of their fears.

We wish we could offer the comfort that millennial fever will diminish in the future, but its causes all appear to be growing in severity. The earth's fitful acceleration continues and will for some time to come. This fractures the foundation of cultural and psychological stability, meaning both cultural unraveling and personal fragility will increase. At the same time, western culture's old separatist world-view has reached the end of its usefulness, and collapses in a heap of ecological and social disaster. This puts further strain on psychological stability and social institutions, which in turn

accelerates cultural decline, in a spiraling cycle of personal and cultural upheaval. These are ripe conditions for rising fanaticism and apocalyptic violence.

The best way to navigate these increasingly choppy waters is to maintain an unnatural state of cosmological ambiguity. The mind naturally seeks a sturdy cosmological foundation on which it securely rests and through which life experience is filtered. You live in an age when the old cosmologies of religion and science are rendered glaringly deficient, yet the new holistic cosmology has not yet crystallized into common acceptance.

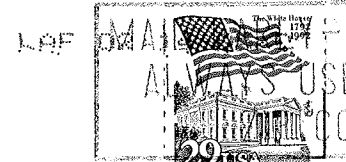
Many search among eastern and native cultures for new sources of truth, yet these world-views spoke to their time and place and cannot serve as the foundation of western culture's 21st-century cosmology. You hover in cosmological purgatory, riding the transition from one world-view to another, your feet dangling in the ether of ambiguity. If you can ride the transition out by keeping an open mind, considering the viewpoints of diverse cultures while not claiming them as your own, and avoiding fanatical extremism, then your transition will be as smooth as it can be, given the circumstances.

Such flexible minds are essential to begin piecing together a new cosmology, making it real and practical and utilitarian, thus demonstrating to the fearful and fanatical that their worst nightmares need not be realized; that the birth pangs of cultural transformation lead not to apocalyptic chaos but to the warm, safe, secure world for which every heart yearns.

Questions Invited

Questions of general interest are invited to be addressed by Alexander for the annual July-August "questions and answers" issue.

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The ALEXANDER JOURNAL

No. Twenty-Two

July-August 1993

OF NUKES AND CUKES Answers to Readers' Questions

Many thanks to all who sent in questions for the annual Q & A issue. Space allows for only a few to be answered here; the others will be printed as room permits in future issues.

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I'm wondering what the purpose of "enlightenment" is and if "enlightenment" should be a goal? I started out my life in the Judeo/Christian tradition where Salvation/Heaven was the goal and progressed to the New Age where Enlightenment/Satori is the goal. But after years of reading just about everything I can find on just about every "path," and especially after hearing and reading Alexander, I am left with the feeling that setting enlightenment as a goal is not only unnecessary but may even be counterproductive to one's purpose in life.

J.R., Tucson, AZ

While it is true that the purpose of incarnating in human form is to grow toward enlightenment, the "you" who travels this path is far greater than the body and mind defining your self-identity. It is the aggregate of all your incarnations, offshoots of a common greater entity, that together grow from dark ignorance to pure self-realization.

Each offshoot—a single human life—is cast into a unique life context, composed of birth family, culture, epoch, social station, and so on. Each such offshoot is pegged at a certain "rung" on the ladder of spiritual growth, which carries a defined range of spiritual and intellectual potential. The goal of each lifetime is not to reach ultimate enlightenment, but to realize the highest potential available to a soul given its rung on the ladder and other life circumstances.

In other words, the journey to enlightenment is divided into stages of growth, just as life itself progresses from infancy through childhood, youth, adulthood, maturity, and old age. No one expects a newborn to zoom through these stages in the span of a month; by the same token, no single incarnation can travel the entire path from ignorance to enlightenment within a single lifetime's

span. A greater entity divides its soul journey among many incarnations, each assigned to one rung on the ladder.

We link the various stages of spiritual growth to the human life journey. Souls at the earliest stages of development are *baby souls*, enraptured by the body's sensual delights and the dazzling technological fruits of reason. *Young souls* retain a strong physical focus, but temper it with a growing mental and spiritual life as well, often manifesting as social and community involvement, which they pursue with characteristic vigor and enthusiasm. *Mature souls* have grown beyond the temptations and delights of physicality, and move into greater mental and spiritual abstraction, with less direct social participation than young souls. And *old souls*, those on the brink of releasing the human incarnational cycle, have grown beyond any involvement in the machinations of complex society; they are as likely to be found squatting in a cardboard box in threadbare bliss as preaching homilies to eager disciples.

Because all time is simultaneous, the greater entity need not plant its offshoots with their developing spiritual maturity aligning with the flow of linear time. In fact, this very rarely happens. Each incarnation is "tuned" as a baby, young, mature, or old soul, then planted in a time and place most conducive to fulfillment of its life tasks. As a result, your "next" incarnation in linear time terms could well be far cruder spiritually than your current condition, while your most exalted spiritual life lies in the past.

There are several fallacies in "seeking enlightenment" through deliberate effort — such as devoting one's life to spiritual practice, becoming a monk, meditating furiously, forswearing involvement in the profane everyday world. First, one's spiritual maturity — baby, young, mature, old — defines the range of spiritual growth one will likely gain in a given life. It is as pointless for a baby soul to avidly pursue enlightenment (though most baby souls would much rather pursue the opposite sex) as it is for a six-year-old to impatiently demand that puberty strike tomorrow.

Each stage has its own built-in growth, which cannot be rushed or forced.

Second, spiritual growth rarely arises from spiritual practice. Spiritual growth arises naturally, spontaneously, from life's myriad everyday encounters, as well as its more profound and challenging events such as illness and death. Relationships, in particular, are the crucible through which almost all "spiritual" growth occurs, as souls mature from the grasping selfishness of baby soulhood to the rarefied appreciation of the divine spark animating every being which is the hallmark of spiritual old age. It is largely futile to attempt to "short-circuit" this process by deliberate pursuit of "enlightenment." When you live your life at the apex of its potential, meeting every challenge from the highest intellectual and spiritual perspective you can fashion, then you are achieving spiritual growth without even labeling it as such.

What spiritual practice can offer is *insight*. Sudden breakthroughs in consciousness, direct experience of the oneness of creation, intuitions piercing through encrusted dogma, feeling divine energies pulsing through the body — these are the hoped-for fruits of meditation, yoga, psychedelic drugs, and other spiritual practices. As valuable as they are in themselves, it is intended that these insights then be carried into everyday life, not kept locked in one's heart as private treasure. For it is in commerce with the great wide world that such insights prove their worth, in lightening the burdens and deepening the lives of others. This process — of private insight translated into beneficent action — is the essence of spiritual growth.

So while growth toward "enlightenment" is indeed the underlying purpose of life, it arises as naturally and spontaneously as growth from infancy to old age, and with as much deliberate thought. By bringing to relationships the highest, purest love and empathy one can muster, and meeting life's challenges with grace and equanimity, one automatically advances one's soul on its journey toward enlightenment.

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In your discussion of consciousness and spoiling food, you said that decay is slowed by cold. What about canned food? People used to can before preservatives were used. Also, is there another way to get vital energy without having a garden? Can it be gotten through meditation, for instance?

J.S., Columbus, OH

The same principle holds true for canned food as for frozen food: while nutrients are preserved, the vital life force is not. The life force begins to dissipate as soon as a plant is severed from connection with the earth, or when an animal is killed. The dissipation continues at its steady pace irrespective of the food's handling: whether eaten fresh, cooked, frozen, or canned.

It is quite possible to sustain the body on food devoid of vital life force; in modern society, with its emphasis on canned, processed, and frozen foods, many diets are entirely composed of lifeless foods. The body does receive the nutrients it needs to sustain itself, but suffers for lack of ingesting the vitalizing life force. This is one of many factors contributing to the epidemic of illness in your society: your bodies are not surrounded by the healthy vital glow offered by consuming fresh foods.

Meditation is a mental exercise which may offer some benefits to the body, but creating the vital life force is not among them. There is only one source: fresh foods. It is not necessary that one's entire diet be grown in the backyard to gain the benefits of fresh food: a little life force goes a long way! Simply growing a salad garden and enjoying a fresh-picked salad with dinner does much to counteract the enervating effects of a steady diet of lifeless food.

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Re organ transplantation: In view of the information (Issue #19) on common vibrational fields and the need to balance or compromise any differences in vibrational patterns it seems most unlikely that any transplanted organ will ever have a sufficiently similar compatibility to be acceptable.

H.P., Port St Lucie, FL

Actually, as far as the vibrational patterns of a transplanted organ go, its effect on the acceptance or rejection by the body is virtually nil. As you know, acceptance or rejection results from many factors which determine whether a body accepts a foreign organ as "itself" or rejects it as a foreign invader. This is entirely a biological, chemical process; and is not affected by the vibrational

patterns — the greater energy fields — surrounding the organ and its new body.

When you travel by airplane, you may experience "jet lag," one element of which is that your body has suddenly been transported from one field of telluric vibration to another, without the smooth and gradual shift naturally occurring when you walk or ride a bicycle from place to place. Your body naturally entrains to the extant earth energies, wherever it is, and any sudden relocation to a new area triggers confusion and disorientation until the energies of the new area surround and harmonize with the body. The body's desire is not to retain the energies of one locale and resist assimilation, but to adapt to whatever vibrational field it finds itself in.

This same process occurs during organ transplantation. Every organ naturally seeks to entrain with the energies of its greater body, so as to receive the clearest stream of information as to the body's condition, and to work at peak efficiency with its neighboring organs and systems. It is not a question of "compromising" between the transplanted organ and its new body, but of the organ gradually entraining with its new host. Where people differ dramatically is in their minds and spirits; their bodies all function pretty much the same. Thus, an organ from one body can, over time, insinuate itself into the rhythms and patterns of its new host until it is indistinguishable — at the energetic level — from the organs the body has carried from birth.

So acceptance or rejection of a transplanted organ operates at biological levels, not at energetic levels. There may be some small influence, where a borderline case of acceptance/rejection may be tipped one way or the other depending on the ease or difficulty of the organ's entraining to its new host, but such cases are rare.

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In Alexander's writings he says that the Christ Entity returns every 2,000 years to bring the physical plane back to its proper relation to All That Is. What, if anything, happened 4,000 years ago? Moses was 3,300-odd years ago, Buddha was 2,500-odd years ago, Mohammed was 1,400-odd years ago. None of this matches up. Why not?

B.H., Houston, TX

There are several considerations to take into account when attempting to neatly line up the historical appearance of famous religious figures with a "cycle" of 2,000 years. The first is to realize that not every intersection of the

Christ Entity with the earth plane results in the birth of an avatar whose teaching is so profoundly revolutionary that it becomes the basis of a new religion.

As with all systems bound to matter, humanity is ensconced within feedback loops which keep it "on track" spiritually, intellectually, and culturally. The Christ Entity, as we call it, is a gestalt of highly purified consciousness which intersects with the earth system approximately every 2,000 years. As it approaches, it evaluates the condition of humanity's cultural and spiritual life to determine what, if any, wisdom is needed to restore humanity to its proper course, and what form that wisdom should take.

If the race is humming along on a smooth unfolding of its potential, no adjustment will be needed or offered. If slight deviance from its course is detected, a minor adjustment will be offered, perhaps through an increase in the number of spiritual "teachers" who do not carry the rarified consciousness of a genuine avatar, but who nonetheless, through their joint efforts, elevate the species's spiritual awareness. Where a deep gap is detected between the race's spiritual condition and its expected situation at that time, more dramatic steps are taken, including birth of an avatar whose teaching radically challenges the prevailing system.

Not every great religious figure is an avatar. Moses, for example, however important an historical figure he may be, was not an offshoot of the Christ Entity, so his appearance on the historical time line need not match up. The intersection of the Christ Entity with linear time four millennia ago did not produce a single avatar, but rather an era of prophesy, disseminated through a number of prophets, some of whose words remain in the Old Testament. The intention was to prepare the race for the sea-change shift in religious thinking reflected in Jesus' replacing the child-drowning Jehovah of old with the new Christian God of love, charity, and forgiveness.

Another consideration is that the cyclical timing of the Christ Entity is relative to each culture; it does not embrace the entire globe at once. A culture needs to build to a certain critical mass and maturity before it reaches the sophis-

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tication and size allowing for growth of widespread, commonly shared religious life. This threshold of complexity might be considered the "starting point" of the Christ Entity cycle for each culture, which then flows on cycles independent of other cultures. So, again, there is no need to try to line up the appearance of the world's great avatars on one time line.

In addition, there are other, smaller cycles influencing humanity's spiritual and cultural evolution. The intersection of the Christ Entity every two millennia or so is the largest and most influential of these cycles, but many other spiritually balancing influences interact constantly with the race. Some of these may produce figures whose teachings so resonate with their time that they are heralded as messengers of the divine, and are venerated as such by future generations, even though they spring not from the Christ Entity but from a lesser consciousness.

As detailed in our book *Divine Grace*, for the last three decades or so western culture has been passing through the initial stages of intersecting with the Christ Entity. The explosive events of the Sixties are a clue that your culture had veered off its course, was not living at the peak of its spiritual potential. This indicates that a more overt, direct seeding of spiritual energies will be implemented in the decades to come.

This time, however, such higher knowledge will not flow through one individual, but through a multitude, in lesser and greater degrees — for the crux of the new teaching will be that All That Is resides within each heart and is intimately accessible to all; this revises the Christian heaven-hell scheme, with its mandatory baptism and salvation as steps leading to reunion with a distant God. Naturally, this more egalitarian spirituality will flow through a chorus of voices rather than a single throat.

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In several of your articles you have singled out western capitalism "as being rooted in fear, no one is guaranteed food and shelter but must constantly struggle for it." Given the fall of communism, and the fact that most economic systems, including that of the United States, embrace a combination of capitalistic/socialistic ideologies, why this focus on capitalism? Given the need for food and shelter, what global economic system can truly work without forfeiture of freedom?

C.L., Brea, CA

It was not our intention to suggest that there is a "free lunch" available to

all without effort. One must always make an effort to feed, house, and clothe oneself. Rather, our discussion of capitalism is intended to illustrate the unhappy results of an economic system rooted in separation and fear, as capitalism is. Pure capitalism demands that each individual, irrespective of intelligence, talent, or ability, feed himself or starve. This is in stark contrast to a community-based economy where surplus gathered by some is automatically spread throughout the community, with the expectation that compensation will accrue in some form at a later time — if only in old age, when one is relieved of daily labor and supported by the young and strong.

Thus, capitalism gives rise to a society gripped with fear, as each individual faces the imperative to feed himself, clothe himself, and house himself, with no automatic "safety net" of aid from friends or relatives should hard times fall. This fear is especially strong among the lowest classes, who the masters of the system ensure receive just enough to keep body and soul together, and no more. The vast disparity in wealth and comfort between the decaying tenements of the poor and the opulent mansions of the wealth is an affront to spiritual and natural law.

Cultural systems, such as economics, governance, and technology, ride atop a deeper set of values. It is in the western value system, especially its core value of *separation*, that the conflict with natural and spiritual law arises. Rather than single out the western economic system, it is better to take a broader look at society as a whole. Is it working? all systems smoothly functioning? everyone fed, sheltered, clothed? all children happy, loved and self-confident? everyone engaged in meaningful, productive work? Since this is not the current condition of your society, you know that some element of its foundational value system is awry.

The error in communism was to attempt to *force* everyone to participate in a system which distributed wealth evenly, smoothing out capitalism's rough edges. As long as a culture rides on a core value of separation, and everyone thinks only of his own benefit, no economic system can offer both freedom and fair distribution of wealth. Only a culture founded on a more evolved consciousness can offer freedom and equality, for one would be *horrified* at the thought of stockpiling wealth while others starve; surplus wealth would be felt as a tumor on the soul and eagerly distributed to those in need.

As humanity evolves spiritually, it grows through phases of economic, governmental, and technological experi-

mentation. Capitalism is an experiment, an attempt to improve on the feudal system of inherited wealth and privilege. As the capitalist experiment plays itself out, you discover its deficiencies and dark effects; these are meant to steer you toward fashioning an improved economic system, one rooted in higher spiritual values. Such a system will naturally emerge as your culture makes the transition from the separatist worldview to one rooted in holism.

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I should like to get Alexander's views on the subject of euthanasia as performed on terminally ill patients who are either comatose or are suffering from an illness for which there appears to be no cure. Is this practice a violation of the principles of Divine Grace, or is there some justification for it in certain cases?

E.C., Peterborough, NH

Euthanasia can be lumped into the same category with murder and suicide: all are ego-based decisions to terminate the life of another (or oneself) rather than accepting the wisdom of the higher self in its determination as to when the life essence should be withdrawn from its corporal form. What complicates the issue is that many terminally ill persons who would naturally die without technological intervention are being similarly "abused" in that their body's natural communication with its higher self is disrupted through medical intervention. This clouds the higher self's perception of the body's genuine condition, and makes more difficult the determination of when the body should be released.

Medical advances have brought many troubling questions which your forebears never needed to consider. Is the decision to sustain life through artificial methods meant for the true benefit of the patient, or is it the fear of death driving medical personnel and family members, acting out of their own ego-based self-interest? Is the decision to "pull the plug" motivated by a sincere desire to end the patient's suffering, or by impatience or concern over cost?

From a karmic perspective, the questions boil down to this: What is the *intent* of those making such decisions? Negative karma accrues only when *intent* to cause harm to another is followed by *action* bringing harm. In the case of traumatized family members first deciding to place an elderly person on life-supporting equipment, then later shutting the equipment off when it becomes apparent that recovery is not possible, the *intent* is pure and their actions there-

fore carry no karmic residue. Where such decisions are driven by self-interested motives, playing with the life and death of another may carry profound karmic effect.

This, however, only addresses those making such decisions, not the suffering invalid. As a rule, the higher self seeks to gather as broad a field of experience as possible from each incarnation, and does so by prolonging life to its natural limits. There are compensations, there is learning and growth, even when a comatose body fed by tubes lies in apparently senseless catatonia. For at such times — spirit tenuously wedded to flesh — consciousness retains its human identity even as it gains a new elasticity and soars through depths of experience normally reserved for those beyond the veil. In a sense, medical technology has created a new state of consciousness, a forced, prolonged state of dream-like astral travel, stretching the soul to limits hitherto denied those in flesh. Would you deny your loved ones such delight!

If we appear to be avoiding offering a clear and definitive answer to the question, this is deliberate. On one hand, medical intervention allows the body to prolong its time on earth, which benefits the soul in its search for experience. On another hand, if the motives for unnaturally sustaining life or pulling the plug are impure, much negative karma may accrue. On another, the technologically created and unnatural state of prolonged coma offers the soul an unprecedented depth of experience. On another, no body will live beyond the death moment determined by its higher self. If we can offer any guideline, it would be this: Act always out of love and empathy, not fear or avarice, and trust that the results will bring the greatest benefit to all involved.

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In Whatever Happened to Divine Grace? Alexander spoke of the 7-year cycle of nuclear disasters and the strong probability that another will occur in 1993. What is the current status of this "prediction"?

J.C., Santa Barbara, CA

As we explained in *Divine Grace*, the "event" of nuclear disaster rides a cycle of approximately seven years; and the severity of its expression reflects several trends: (1) the energy and intent behind the world's preparation for war; (2) whether humanity is increasing or decreasing its use of nuclear fission for power and weaponry; (3) the overall relationship between humanity and nature, whether respectful or exploitative.

Since the last manifestation of the "event" of nuclear fiasco [on April 26, 1986, a reactor explosion at the Chernobyl power plant in the Ukraine killed 31; thousands have since died of radiation-related illnesses], humanity has made improvement in all three of these areas. The Cold War has ended; the former adversaries of the Soviet Union and the United States have matured into a new respectful relationship; the Berlin Wall has been torn down. This greatly reduces the "war preparation" consciousness streaming into the collective pool of consciousness which draws future events toward manifestation.

It is true that many smaller wars plague the globe, but these reflect ancient hatreds and animosities which have always simmered, and are now being released in a paroxysm of violence. The principal contribution to the "war preparation" stream, the Cold War, has ended, and with its demise much darkness has been dispelled.

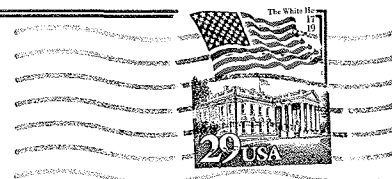
The overall trend is to turn away from nuclear fission as a source of electrical power and weaponry. Construction

of new plants has virtually stopped; reactors are mothballed before being brought on line; and the renewable energy movement has grown in influence and sophistication. Nuclear weapons are actually being destroyed by the former superpower adversaries. These trends all "lighten" the magnetic attraction toward an event of nuclear fiasco.

Finally, because nuclear fission, the splitting of the atom, represents arrogance and contempt on humanity's part, the event of nuclear disaster is affected by the overall human attitude toward nature. There can be no dispute that humanity is evolving toward a more respectful partnership with nature, a greater humility and appreciation, where before there was only arrogance, exploitation, and contempt. Partly this newfound respect arises from awareness that human activity is seriously taxing the earth and that it is in humanity's best interest, if it is to survive, to ameliorate its effects on the planet.

Because all three contributing influences have changed for the positive in the last seven years, when the "event" of nuclear disaster did manifest this past spring, it did so with much less severity than in its last appearance, the explosion at Chernobyl. [On April 7, 1993, an explosion at a nuclear weapons complex sent a radioactive cloud over Siberia; the accident was rated a "third-class incident" on the seven-point International Atomic Energy Agency scale (Chernobyl was a seven)]. No one died this time; large areas were not inundated with radiation; the lasting effects will be relatively slight. Still, the event should serve as a warning, to those with ears to hear it, that the arrogance and contempt so perfectly embodied by nuclear fission must be completely abandoned if humanity is to restore itself to a harmonious relationship with nature.

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Cosmic Adventure Travel: Touring the Spiritual Hierarchy

As a diversion from the Journal's usual practical, worldly focus, this issue is "pure" metaphysics — a tour through the spiritual realm lying beyond our awareness.

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As you know, in deepest terms all of creation is One, an intimately interconnected gestalt of consciousness and form springing from the Universal Mind. Yet this is not how you experience reality — with your body neatly bounded by your skin, and a singular life history and temperament forming your unique character. The notion of universal oneness remains an abstract concept, while all around you the evidence of your senses affirms a world of fantastic diversity, myriad discrete species affirming their uniqueness through form and color and consciousness.

Scientists group the world's many species in classifications of increasing size and scope: each individual belongs to a family, a phylum, a genus, a species, etc. Humanity is joined with other warm-blooded creatures in the "mammal" division, and so on. Each individual being is both a discrete entity and a member of increasingly inclusive categories of broadening scope. Ultimately, of course, all earthly beings can be lumped under the rubric of "terrestrial life," a single overarching category in which all life is, indeed, "one."

As on earth, so in heaven. Just as there are levels of increasing complexity of consciousness among earthly creatures, and ever-expanding families of shared attributes, so is the spiritual realm structured into "levels" whose entities grow in size, complexity, and purpose.

We should affirm that the spiritual hierarchy does not occupy some distant "place," like the Sunday School heaven floating above the clouds. All levels of the spiritual hierarchy blend and interpenetrate one another. What holds them apart as distinct bands of activity and purpose is the vibrational qualities of each level, especially their frequency.

Now, frequency in the nonphysical realm differs from your experience,

since in the physical system frequency is inextricably bound to matter. In the spiritual realm, frequency refers to qualities of consciousness rather than "higher" and "lower" pitches of a musical scale.

You might imagine the spiritual realm as a vast chorus broken into smaller clusters of stylistic variety — here a barbershop quartet, there a Gregorian chant, over yonder a full-costume opera. Characters are free to flow from one venue to another, contributing to and learning from each genre until they are ready to move on. The greater a soul's progress, the more complex the domain it seeks, and the greater the number of souls participating in each shared realm of activity.

So the different "levels" of the spiritual hierarchy are not sharply demarcated planes from which all other spirits are barred, but are naturally occurring clusters of entities sharing a common stage of development and mutual purpose. All levels naturally intermingle, just as they swarm through the earth system outside your senses' scope. For the sake of using familiar terminology, we will refer to frequency as "higher" and "lower" throughout this discussion.

With that said, let us begin at the "lowest" level, the astral plane, hovering just beyond the reach of your senses.

The Astral Plane

The astral plane is the "way station" between earthbound life and the spiritual hierarchy. It is a field of tremendous bustling activity, as one might expect to find "behind the scenes" of the earth's exuberant and diverse living systems. The astral plane is the portal through which consciousness crystallizes into flesh, and to which consciousness returns upon release of physical form. Entities seeking incarnation in a given time and place crowd the astral plane, scanning the available pregnant women for the most compatible match. The astral level also hosts the wandering consciousness of sleeping humanity, gathering to plot the events of the next day, week, and year.

As you might expect, the astral plane carries the slowest vibrational frequency within the spiritual hierarchy. It pulsates just above the frequencies of matter, easing the ability of pure consciousness to tap into the thoughts and activities of earthbound creatures. This negligible gap between earth and astral levels also eases the death transition of souls departing their bodies. Let us take a look at this process more closely.

The ease of transition is largely determined by the death experience. A long, lingering illness culminates not in a "moment" of death, but in a slow, gradual release of the body, a flickering between earth and astral levels as vitality ebbs from the body. Those dying such "natural" deaths are often able to report visions of previously departed loved ones, of celestial radiance, of ineffable feelings of warmth and love embracing them, as they ebb and flow between earth and astral planes. When the last flicker of vitality ebbs from the body and washes into the astral plane, the transition is complete.

Those experiencing sudden and immediate death, such as a high-speed car accident or death from a bullet, often suffer a bewildering transition bereft of the easy ebb-and-flow of a "natural" death. Here, consciousness is *propelled* from earth to astral plane with a powerful force, leaving a disoriented soul to flounder in confused bafflement.

But only briefly. For the astral plane is "peopled" with entities whose purpose is to act as midwives to crossing souls. While we call them "astral beings," they do not naturally reside on the astral level, but on levels a few steps above. The natural order is for entities of a given station to serve as guides and mentors to beings a few steps "below" their standing. This is part of every soul's growth process — tutoring lower-level souls in the knowledge mastered along the ladder of enlightenment.

The astral beings devoted specifically to "midwifing" souls crossing the death boundary we term "welcomers." Their job is to ease the transition in any way necessary, to facilitate the shift from a sensory-based reality to a con-

sciousness-based reality. Their first act upon greeting a freshly crossed soul is to open a "channel" to higher dimensions and direct a flow of accelerated energy around the rookie soul. This is experienced as a sudden rush of love and warmth of a purity and intensity never experienced on earth. This convinces the soul to release any residual regret over leaving the earth plane and usually triggers a great eagerness to move on.

In the first moments after crossing, some souls easily relinquish processing information through the body's senses, while others insist on retaining their "sight" and "hearing" and "touch." Since welcomers have a tremendous store of "tricks" at their disposal, they can play along with a soul needing to retain its earthly senses, and "appear" in whatever form is most comforting. A historical religious figure, a beloved relative, even an animal — whatever best eases the soul's transition.

Those souls easily relinquishing dependence on sensory processing will encounter their welcomer not as a specific being, but as an invisible though strongly felt "presence." In either case, the dominant feature of the welcoming pageant is the rush of warm, loving energy enveloping the just-crossed soul.

Once a soul understands where it is and that it has died, its first task is to conduct a life review. Every moment of life is stored within your body's energy fields as a matrix of energy; at death, this lifetime accretion is propelled into the astral plane as the energetic biography of your life. Under a welcomer's tutelage, this memory stream is "played back" and reviewed for moments of significance, especially actions saddling the soul with karmic debt. The playback may be conducted more than once, until the soul clearly absorbs the full meaning of its life actions and whether any karmic residue must be recast into fresh lifetimes.

While all of this post-death activity occurs on the astral plane, life's other great passing — from soul to birth — is mediated here as well. Every living being emits a steady stream of vibratory information into the atmosphere, a ticker-tape torrent of experience and thought and dreams. Souls nearing incarnation cluster at the boundary between astral and earth planes — in vibratory terms, they decelerate from higher dimensions — the better to absorb the personality-streams flowing from pregnant women. Once a woman has passed the first trimester of pregnancy and her fetus appears healthy, choices are made between mothers and souls seeking incarnation.

Once a match is settled, a soul gradually links with its fetus by project-

ing a strand of decelerated vibration into the womb, enveloping the fetus with its signature vibration. The soul does not leap into the earth system all at once, but gradually trickles across the boundary between astral and earth planes. Even for a period of up to six months after birth, a soul frequently crosses the boundary to the astral plane, to review its reincarnational history and the tasks established during prebirth planning.

The astral plane is a way station, the nexus between earth and the higher realms, where souls thicken into flesh and then dissolve back to spirit. It is not intended that souls remain on the astral plane for very long; they are either coming or going. Because the astral plane "works" largely the way the earth works, and because newly crossed souls are often dazzled with their newfound powers of telepathic thought transmission, some souls linger at the astral level for years, even decades, reluctant to release this last vestige of earthly experience. No pressure is ever applied to take up the soul's higher journey; souls are gently encouraged to move on, but not forced to do so.

These lingering, often malcontent souls can, under certain circumstances, intrude in the earth system, so eager are they to return without first completing the necessary planning. Entities speaking through Ouija boards are often of this ilk, earthbound souls offering gibberish or, worse, foul language and doomsday predictions. Even these amusements gradually lose interest for astral-level souls, and like all souls they eventually agree to pass to the next realm of the hierarchy.

The Expanding Soul

One of the most difficult concepts for earthbound beings to swallow is the gradual absorption of individual souls into greater bodies of consciousness. The fear of losing oneself, of being swallowed up and lost to eternity, often surpasses the fear of death itself. Recognize this fear as the natural reaction of the ego to any anticipated injury to its bodily integrity. Then recognize that the ego evaporates at death; so there will be nothing to fear, because there will be *nobody* to fear for. As a consolation, the energetic biography propelled at death into the astral plane remains there forever as the eternally vital history of your life. However, this is not *you*, in the sense of containing your consciousness, but is simply an energetic record of your life.

The essential you, your core of consciousness, does move on through the spiritual hierarchy and does *actively seek*

to contribute to ever expanding bodies of consciousness. If you look back on your life and recall being three, ten, fifteen, thirty, you agree that these were all "past" versions of yourself, but they have been incorporated into who you are today and do not retain their own individual vitality. So it is with the soul: it seeks eternal growth and expansion through blending with other soul fragments.

At each higher level of the spiritual hierarchy, the number of such fragments carried within an entity grows. This serves two purposes: the wealth of biographical experience which can be drawn upon naturally expands, and the power and insight of the blended field of consciousness is magnified exponentially. If you know the power of "putting your heads together" with others in sparking enhanced creativity, imagine the force of a thousand souls joined in fevered telepathic discourse!

The Omega Level

The omega level lies above the astral, and is the next stop on the soul's ascending journey. Entities at this level contain, on average, between 20 and 100 soul fragments. These are the intellectuals and philosophers of the hierarchy: they immerse themselves in understanding the principles and forces governing operation of physical systems.

The omega level is the hierarchy's university, for souls must completely grasp the immensely complex, interwoven systems which underlie physical reality. Their studies are not broken down into discrete subjects like biology, chemistry, geology, etc., because the physical system is understood as one indivisible gestalt of energy. Instead, the crystallization of energy patterns into air, liquid, and bedrock is studied, especially the relative balance of elements necessary to sustain animate life.

We should mention here that these "omega entities" are composed of soul fragments who have entirely released the earth system. Having grown through a reincarnational cycle from the selfish grasping of baby souls to the exalted wisdom of old souls, and having released all karmic attachments, they now work to release the earth system entirely and move on to other dimensions. Before they can do so, they must master the principles through which physical reality is created.

When a single soul, late of the astral plane, arrives at the omega level with karmic baggage or a less-than-saintly life history, there is no possibility of it blending into a larger entity; it remains enmeshed within the reincarnational

cycle. Therefore, an omega entity will offer a tutorial — a much-abridged version of the knowledge omega entities seek to master — so the soul comes to understand how the physical system operates, how karma works, how life tasks are impressed into each lifetime, and what options it has in fashioning its subsequent incarnations. This is a beginner's course in physical reality and human life, enough to ensure that every soul carries a firm understanding of the greater context in which its past and future lives are embedded.

The mentor-pupil relationship holds on every level of the hierarchy. That is, souls ascending the levels of the hierarchy are immediately engaged by entities holding mastery of each level's knowledge and activity, and will be offered an encapsulated summary of the learning to be gained there. If a soul is just "passing through" on its way to another revolution through the reincarnational cycle, this summary will be succinct and couched in simple terms. If a soul arrives as a fragment released from the earthly cycle and seeks to master a given level's wisdom as part of its growth, such a fragment will be "absorbed" into a larger entity, contributing its store of knowledge to the whole and gaining its collective wisdom.

With each step "up" in the hierarchy, involvement and interest in the earth system wane. Earth is but one small venue available to consciousness seeking physical experience; even the totality of all physical systems is one small corner of activity. Once a soul has completed its reincarnational cycle, and contributes its store of experience to ever-expanding bodies of consciousness, the attachment to earth, and the learning to be gleaned from earth experience, lessen.

As we have seen, the astral level is intimately connected with the everyday bustle of the earth system, managing its flow of souls in and out of flesh. At the omega level, a more abstract, cerebral approach governs, where the underlying mechanics of sustaining the physical system are of greater interest.

The Theta Level

Above the omega lies the theta level, another great step away from direct involvement and toward greater abstraction. Here, after mastery of the omega level's learning, the scope broadens to a spacious appraisal of the creation, operation, and cessation of entire systems of activity, the physical system being but one such domain.

Consider, as an example, the relationship between consciousness and

matter as you experience it — though you take the parameters of your system for granted and perhaps have never given it any thought.

Within a certain range, consciousness affects matter. The most obvious example is your body's receptivity to chronic negative thought patterns, which may manifest as disease; conversely, a flood of positive, healing thoughts can restore the body's health. Some claim the power of bending spoons or stopping clocks with their mental powers; this steps over the boundary of the commonly accepted "limits" to the influence of mind on matter. So there is a built-in relationship between consciousness and matter where the mind is granted some power to affect matter, but only within a limited range.

This relationship between mind and matter is but one of the parameters "set up" within each physical system. In other systems, consciousness is so powerful and matter so receptive to its sway that the beings there need no developed bodies; they manipulate their environments through focused intention alone. At the other end of the spectrum are systems where consciousness is so sluggish and matter so impervious to its influence that it is only with difficulty that one could convince one's hand to pick up a spoon, much less expect it to bend through sheer force of will.

This spectrum — from stark duality of mind and matter, to their intimate synergy — is but one of the myriad parameters involved in establishing physical systems. Theta entities study the historical experiences of systems in all their parameters, to judge which seem to offer the greatest opportunities for growth — for growth, after all, is the ultimate purpose of existence.

A system in which life is too "easy" offers only superficial experience, while a system fraught with immense challenge crushes too many souls in despair. By tweaking and adjusting the various parameters governing physical systems, theta entities study diverse "workshops" of experience.

Physical systems do not exist for their own benefit, of course, but as venues of activity for bodies of consciousness seeking matter-based experience. Thus, theta entities are intimately involved in the relationship between consciousness and matter, and focus especially on those venues where conditions support a profusion of animate life. This requires a mastery of the omega-level "physics" as background, upon which theta entities build their study of animate life and its many permutations.

Because humanity is a special case, radically standing apart from other spe-

cies with its rational/mythic/emotional life, some theta entities "specialize" in human life, including its emphasis on relationships and the operation of the reincarnational cycle.

Reincarnation is far too vast a subject to delve into here, but we might briefly mention that it is a far more messy and convoluted process than the common picture of souls leaping from one body to the next and magically working out their past difficulties.

Because free will is the cornerstone of your system, each incarnation is free to do whatever it pleases — including adding to its karmic burdens rather than releasing them, or failing to resolve karmic debts which its higher self intended it to. The theta entities come into the picture as the guides leading souls through the process of recasting their karmic ties into fresh lifetimes.

As a soul ascends through the astral and omega levels, it understands the meaning of its just-released lifetime and how physical reality works. At the theta level, any souls bound to each other through earthbound negativity will "meet" after their deaths to review the origin of their karmic bond and, with a theta entity's counsel, to recast that bond into a new alliance offering promise of its release.

Souls within the reincarnational cycle lack the wisdom and knowledge to hammer these complex and intricate relationships together on their own, and theta entities help by offering their wisdom to less evolved souls. Each reincarnational relationship is an immensely complex blending of private and mutual purpose, with no guarantee that the anticipated resolution will result.

With their vast store of human experience — theta entities usually comprise between 500 and 1,000 soul fragments — theta entities juggle the myriad factors involved and fashion a relationship offering at least a possibility of karmic resolution.

The theta level is the highest to have any direct involvement with earthly affairs, with the churning tumult of life and love in which you are immersed. Theta guides' sagacious counsel offered to karmically bound souls is the apex of the reincarnational cycle — from that

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point, soul fragments head "downward" to the astral plane to approach reincarnation. Above the theta level, earth and all physical systems become even more abstract and remote, as other dimensions offer expanding opportunities for growth and wisdom.

The Zeta Level

Beyond the theta level lie infinite gradations of mind, ever-expanding aggregations of consciousness ultimately leading back to the source, the undifferentiated Universal Mind. These realms, if they hold knowledge of earth at all, do so only as a distant awareness held by their soul fragments, a few highlights of lives spent in human or animal form, diluted by the vast experience gained in other realms. There is one exception to this vast gulf between earth and the higher realms, which we term the zeta level. This is the level from which we — and many other entities — communicate.

Having passed through and mastered the knowledge of the astral, omega, theta, and other levels, zeta-level entities are a unique lot in that they participate in one final "altruistic" venture with earth before releasing direct involvement. To do so requires, first, that entities at this level have experienced life in human form, so they retain knowledge of how the system operates from the perspective of those enmeshed within it; and almost always, that they shared a prior lifetime with their present human hosts, creating a "bridge" of intertwined consciousness and experience which serves as the foundation of the relationship.

The zeta level offers its entities an opportunity to zero in on and closely observe the workings of one planet within the physical system, as a "case study" of the broader principles mastered before reaching this stage. Of particular interest are worlds in trouble — where something in the planning and structure of the system has gone awry, where the creatures involved are maladapted to their circumstances. We trust we need not offer copious evidence that this is the condition of your planet now, ravaged by a mercurial experimental species (this means you).

You have been so conditioned to think of yourselves as the pinnacle of evolution that you lose sight of how brief your time on the planet has been, how ill-adapted you are to earthly life in many ways, and how rarely you operate from your exalted reason and much more often from irrational motive such as emotion and mythology. There is no other creature on the planet so poorly designed to withstand the rigors of your environs — while every other creature is encased within protective fur or feathers or scales, you stand naked and vulnerable before the wind, the rain, the sun,

thorns and insects. What other creature sports such tender, vulnerable skin on its feet? Your eyesight, your hearing, your smell, are but a dim fraction of the sensory powers of "lower" species.

Now, we are not trying to foster a species-wide inferiority complex. There is a reason for your weak and vulnerable design: it forces development of reason. With your powers of thought, memory, discernment, and speech, you are able to forge social alliances and manipulate the environment in ways no other species can match. You can fashion clothing and footwear to house your tender nakedness, agriculture to release you from year-round foraging, machines to carry your burdens for you. Reason — not your maladapted bodies — makes you the masters of the planet.

And yet you are far more than your rational minds. You are deeply spiritual creatures, immersed in myth and fairy tale, inspired to altruism and savagery by religious beliefs lacking a whit of rational foundation. You are emotional beings, moved to tears and sacrifice and war by the mercurial swirl of emotions running roughshod over reason in their all-consuming intensity. You are psychologically complex, your minds a dissonant chorus of voices echoing from childhood, compelling behavior which mocks your claim to reason.

So this experimental species — capable of love and barbarity, art and devastation, reason and madness, truth and deception — stands at a crucial juncture now, struggling to synthesize its conflicting intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and psychological aspects into a unified, integrated consciousness, a suprahuman awareness. If it succeeds, the result will be a race which is truly the masters of the planet — and with humility takes its proper place within the natural world that sustains it.

Because this transition is so critical, and its outcome so uncertain, this era has seen an unprecedented intervention by zeta-level entities into the earth sphere in the form of "channeled" entities. The intention is to "tip the scales" in favor of accelerating the species's struggle toward holism and humility, and thus to avert eco-suicide. We should note that not all "entities" speak from the zeta level — some originate no further than a corner of the channel's mind — and due to the distance from earthly affairs, their perception is not always accurate. Probabilities blur together, and the daily routines and mechanics of earthly life are but dim memories. Still, the desire is to offer information which may help accelerate the species's struggle toward realization of its evolutionary potential.

Beyond the Zeta

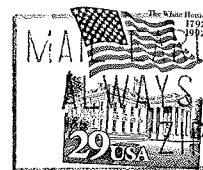
As mentioned, there are virtually infinite gradations of consciousness beyond the zeta level, ever-expanding entities of increasingly immense dimension, their mass-minds mastering ever more complex and abstruse aspects of reality. The goal of all life, all consciousness, is ultimately to return to the source, the Universal Mind, and contribute one's store of experience gathered along the journey.

Each of you, in your private life, is driven by this fundamental ambition — to live and prosper, realize your highest potential, gather diverse experience, leave your mark on the world. In doing so you take the first steps on a journey of unimaginable expanse and depth, from the astral plane, through the spiritual hierarchy, to the Universal Mind.

Happy trails!

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OF MYTH AND MADNESS THE "HUMAN EXPERIMENT" REVISITED

I was intrigued by Alexander's brief mention, in the last Journal, of humanity's "experimental" status in the Earth system, and our struggle to synthesize our spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects into a more integrated and harmonious consciousness. Because this raises so many questions, I opted for a computer-trance "dialogue" with Alexander to explore them. Ramón



What is the origin of human consciousness?

All consciousness is contained within All That Is, the ultimate Source of all creation. Within the unimaginable complexity of that original gestalt, a virtually infinite chain of hierarchies splinters this primal consciousness into a profusion of discrete fields of experience. One such major division is between physical and nonphysical realms: whether consciousness shall be wedded to matter or operate as pure thought-waves. Within the hierarchy of physical life lie all universal systems; and within each universal system, an immense variety of form and function is tailored to that system's parameters.

Human consciousness is one small subset of overall Earth consciousness. It is a "wild card" thrown into the system as an experiment during those eras when the Earth's core vibration pulsates at a frequency compatible with human life. As the Earth's vibration cyclically quickens and slows, a "window" opens near the peak of acceleration which offers just the right "flavor" of energetic environment in which human consciousness can flourish; both the body's light, mobile form and the mind's laser-like reason are bolstered by the accelerating, often volatile energy patterns.

It is common to claim that humanity's difference lies in its *reason*, its ability to perceive, evaluate, differentiate, and manipulate. Yet this quality is common to

all sentient life, for self-preservation demands perception and evaluation of circumstances, and choosing among a repertoire of responsive actions. You leap from in front of a careening car; a fly leaps from a looming fly swatter.

What distinguishes humanity is not its rational mind—though it is "pitched" at a considerably higher level than most other creatures—but in two other qualities of its consciousness. Most significant is humanity's *spiritual* essence, which spawns great religions and private madness as humanity is ever compelled to search for *meaning* beyond mere survival. Other creatures live in an unconscious faith in the natural world's smooth, harmonious operation, its abundance, its dependable cycles and seasons.

The key distinction between humanity and other species—and this is the element that raises humanity to its "experimental" status—is that "faith" rises from unconscious background to conscious imperative. Rather than resting serenely in the animals' deep unconscious knowing, humanity must *search* for existential security by constructing elaborate mythologies which render the world sensible and your place upon it secure. In a sense, you have been "driven from the Garden" of unconscious faith, thrown into the jungle of existential insecurity, and are forever compelled to struggle back home by forging bridges of myth.

Fundamental to human consciousness is the inescapable urge to find *meaning and purpose in life*. You "sense" there is more to your lives than securing the rudiments of food, shelter, and offspring—which seems to satisfy the animals—and yet you are frustrated because your senses, on which your rational minds depend, are of little use in pursuing the deeper questions which so compel you. It is as if you are ordered to perform a task and then denied any instructions or tools with which to pro-

ceed. This is the primal conundrum of the human experience: the drive to find meaning in life even as your customary tools—reason and the senses—are inadequate to the task.

The second primary quality of human consciousness is its relative fragmentation—a certain disjointed looseness among the various aspects of consciousness. As you know from your own experience and observing the world around you, human behavior is not always the product of cool reason choosing behavior which best serves the instigator and the others affected. People act from blind rage and envy and greed; people go mad; people kill each other and themselves. Human consciousness is like Switzerland: a loose confederation of independent cantons operating with autonomy even as they cooperate to ensure cohesion of the larger body. (When it comes to the issue of pacifism, however, our metaphor breaks down!)

So the four major "components" of human consciousness—spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical—are granted unusual autonomy, collecting independent stores of experience and memory. This can lead either to a smoothly functioning, stable personality which integrates its diverse elements; or to a fragmented, chaotic jumble of battling "sub-personalities" struggling for supremacy and control.

What's the point of this "looseness"? What purpose or advantage does it have over other species' more tightly integrated consciousness?

It isn't an "advantage" over the framework of other species, simply a difference, another unique quality to human experience. For one thing, it ensures a greater diversity of personality and experience: two persons sharing an event may carry radically different reactions and later memories, based on their childhood experience, the overall stability of their

psyches, and so on. If you think of the range of personality among domesticated animals, for instance, and compare it to the human species, which appears more diverse? The range of personality is exponentially broadened by granting this "looseness" to human consciousness, in turn enhancing diversity of experience.

Another purpose of this "looseness" is the innate challenge it presents as each person struggles to integrate his or her spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects. The whole field of psychotherapy exists because of the difficulties in maintaining cohesion and balance among the psyche's aspects, and of the struggle some suffer in "processing," or working through, traumas of the past. This both enriches and broadens the experience of being human.

Let's go back to our need for myth and religion, our incessant search for meaning in life. How does this lead to enormously complex mythological systems enduring thousands of years? Why doesn't each person find some private meaning, rather than pooling our resources into massive religions?

Remember that what drives the spiritual search is existential insecurity, that gnawing sense that there is a deeper purpose to it all, which your senses and reason are powerless to find. There is safety and security in numbers, for if everyone in your family and community shares a mythic framework, if the elders you so respect as a child confirm its validity, then the gnawing insecurity is eased. Insecurity and doubt are replaced with confidence and certainty. You don't need to fashion a private mythology, for your culture provides you with one already smoothed and polished to a well-worn fit. To strike out on one's own, to reject the cultural mythology, would be to backslide into insecurity and solitary exploration—and rare is the person who willingly chooses such a path.

Many in our "rational" age feel that religion is the opiate of the gauzy-eyed masses, that we would be better off dispensing with these irrational, unprovable mythologies and operating through pure reason. That was a cornerstone of communism, and we see how that played out. You're saying that it's not possible to live without myth of some kind, that we

must invent answers to insoluble questions in order to achieve some sense of security and mastery.

That is correct. And even those who claim to disdain "religion" and to operate through pure reason are as rooted in myth as the Muslim on his knees facing Mecca. By "myth" we mean the foundational beliefs and stories which attempt to answer those gnawing questions: Who are we and why are we here? Western science has its answers: the universe exploded into being in a fiery Big Bang, and humanity evolved from sea slime. These are both *rational* explanations, in that they follow logically from scientific premises, but those premises are themselves mythic in nature and ultimately false.

Science has taken an interesting tack in your culture because it approaches the fundamental challenge of human existence—searching for meaning while reason and the senses render that search fruitless—by *insisting* that reason and the senses are the only valid means of conducting the search! It is like telling a child he cannot build a tree fort with chopsticks and balsa wood, to which he indignantly replies that he most certainly can, and sets about attempting to prove it. So science rattles around in its self-circumscribed cage, concocting all manner of elaborate balsa-and-chopstick theorems to definitively settle questions as to the origin and nature of life, but ultimately it fails.

Our world has suffered many egregious expressions of religious faith, for it seems religion so often turns inside out and becomes a force of evil rather than good, a source of intolerance, discrimination, even murderous pogroms against those of other faiths. Why does religion, born of the search for meaning and presumably speaking to humanity's highest values, end up justifying our most barbarous acts?

Remember that religion is born in answer to a gnawing existential insecurity, replacing it with the soothing security of religious faith. This works fine in a world peopled with widely scattered tribes sharing minimal intercourse, for each culture can maintain

the unquestioned sanctity and security of its mythic foundation. Problems arise when cultures clash—for here we find not one but two sets of answers to life's deepest questions, and they are not compatible. It is not possible that two widely disparate cosmologies are correct, so one must be wrong. Who wants to admit that their entire life is rooted in lies?

Because religion is so inconsequential in much of your culture, relegated to a portion of one day a week, it is difficult for you to conceive how utterly central a part myth plays in most cultures. It is the foundation of personality, family life, governance, technology. It is the common thread binding members of a culture into fraternal cohesion. When a people's myths are threatened by contact with outsiders, it is no exaggeration to say that the culture is doomed to extinction unless it can prove that its cosmology is superior, is the one "true" way of answering life's deepest questions. When faced with a threat of this magnitude, it is natural that resort to any means is justified in order to preserve and protect the culture's underpinnings. The victor of a "holy war" not only demonstrates the superiority of its culture—and thereby reconfirms the validity of its myths—but proves that God (whichever god) is on its side. This "tests" a culture's myths in the heat of real-world battle, fortifying them through tangible validation.

This is a crucial point: myths must have *utilitarian value* to endure; they must give rise to practical, concrete benefit. They must suffuse and enhance healing, food gathering, weather, and victory in battle. Myths which fail to offer practical benefit will not endure; a culture will find new, more beneficial myths to believe in.

When you say that myths must have practical benefit to be maintained, I can't help but think of how often people stubbornly cling to beliefs which clearly have ill served them. For instance, this

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past summer when the Midwest suffered terrible floods, I read about ministers scrambling to explain this enormous disaster in the midst of a region known for its rock-ribbed Christianity. Presumably, if God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked, San Francisco would have cracked off into the Pacific by now, but it sat high and dry while the Midwest suffered months of flooding. And yet still the people there praise the God Who presumably either sat by and did nothing while they suffered, or actively sent the disaster to their midst.

A good point, but there are several aspects to consider. First is the bedrock need all people share for a mythic foundation to their lives, a clear and resolute answer to the questions: "Who are we and why are we here?" When a culture develops such a mythic framework over millennia, it does not easily dispense with it just because it doesn't solve every problem or forestall every disaster. When a native culture experiences a drought, the people don't throw up their hands and agree to jettison their creation myth and its attendant gods, and find something better to believe in. No, they say the gods are angry and must be appeased. When the Mississippi River rises past the second floor, you can't expect Midwesterners to say, "That's the last straw, forget this Judeo-Christian God, we'll be Hindus from now on." They say, "God moves in mysterious ways," meaning they acknowledge their impotence to fathom the mind of God and understand His every act or seeming indifference. A well-worn and cherished cosmology is not so easily dismissed.

Another aspect to consider is that because human consciousness is so "loose," the mind can play tricks with itself and simply refuse to reconcile whatever it chooses not to squarely face. This "cognitive dissonance" is a key attribute of your species, and in truth has the valuable quality of allowing you to "float" in a psychological haze when the alternative might be raving madness. The mind shoves unpleasanties behind locked doors and under rugs, refusing to deal

with them until stability has been restored and one can calmly reevaluate one's beliefs in the light of new experience.

Of course, there is no guarantee this reevaluation will ever take place, and it is possible to live an entire life carrying irreconcilable beliefs in discrete mental closets, opening one closet at a time and allowing the beliefs to parade about in temporary majesty until you lock them back up and operate from a different set of beliefs. This is quite common in your culture: you go to church on Sunday and sing praises to the Judeo-Christian God—He of the miraculous seven days—and then in school on Monday morning it's back to the Big Bang in a spiritless void. Never the twain shall meet, but many do quite well at juggling these irreconcilable creation myths.

It sounds like cultural schizophrenia.

That it is, and it cannot endure forever, for to be truly stable, cohesive, and effective, a culture must operate from one clearly stated, universally agreed-upon cosmology.

In fact, your cultural schizophrenia is downright dangerous, for in splitting spirit from reason—each with its private cosmology—you allow technology to run roughshod over hill and dale, scattering toxic wastes and irradiated food in its wake. You don't share a universal cosmology with which to evaluate new technologies as they are proposed; and science, bereft of spiritual influence, thrashes about without a moral compass.

That reminds me of your saying previously that our rational/technological progress far surpasses our spiritual

progress (mainstream religion is 5,000 years old; we communicate through a personal computer that didn't exist when I was born). I understand a little gap might be interesting, but 5,000 years seems a bit of a stretch. Why aren't there built-in "checks and balances" to keep our disparate aspects at the same relative level?

There are "checks and balances" in the sense that the core vibration of the planet binds each generation in a common framework, delimiting the upper and lower extremes of its social, spiritual, technological, and cultural life. Just because the *ideas* of western religion are millennia old doesn't mean their *expression* hasn't changed over that time; it certainly has. When is the last time you saw someone nailed to a cross? Or heard of Jews having knives held to their throats and being offered baptism or death? Or saw church leaders preside over the castration and guillotining of homosexuals? *Some* progress has been made over the centuries, has it not?

It's simply that the ideational foundation of western religion has remained static for these many millennia, and as a result it cannot speak with clear authority to the many conundrums raised by scientific progress. Controversies over abortion, surrogate parenthood, genetic engineering, food irradiation, etc., illuminate the clashes which erupt when a culture lacks symbiotic harmony between its technological and spiritual facets. Just because you *can* do certain things, does this mean you *should*? The "shoulds" are the province of moral and ethical values, and here there is no consensus, no overarching spiritual principles informing the debate.

In the final analysis, there is an ultimate set of "checks and balances" to

CALVIN AND HOBBS By Bill Watterson



keep a culture together, for in the most extreme cases of cultural dissonance, a society will simply collapse as its cosmological foundation crumbles beneath it. From the rubble, a new culture will form, building from scratch a new cosmology which binds its people in a universal embrace of shared meaning, harmonizing reason and spirit, science and faith.

This is precisely the process you move through now: and the evidence of cultural collapse is everywhere before you in rising violence and madness, the fear and terror gripping so many lives, the sundering of social cohesion into narrow interest groups, the growing "meanness" to life. Above all else looms the ecological crisis—which, however threatening it appears, portends greater calamity than you now imagine—which will force a culture that has long scorned and reviled nature to live respectfully within her boundaries.

So there are indeed checks and balances—small adjustments as one generation flows into another; and the ultimate "check and balance"—usually pictured with shroud and scythe—lurking in the wings of any foundering culture, prepared to step forward and set things right.

What is the relationship between personal psychology and the "global pool" of human consciousness you have spoken of before? How much effect does the global pool have on everyday experience? I ask because it seems as if personal psychology is becoming more brittle and inflexible—that there is, as you say, a rising madness around us. Is this because the global pool of consciousness reflects the turmoil and instability of our cultural transition?

In a sense, yes. The global pool of human consciousness is the deepest foundational layer of personal psychology; each of you is tapped into this subconscious stream of energy and intent, and builds your private psychological edifice upon it. Because human culture is one small subset of the larger earth system, the global pool is itself plugged into even deeper strata of energy and intent, and is affected by them. When the earth passes through a phase of adjustment and rebalancing, as now occurs, the energy feeding into the global pool shifts from quiescent and stable to volatile. This has its benefits to human culture—witness

the explosive upheavals and liberating energy of the Sixties, for instance.

The drawback is that it becomes increasingly difficult to secure the elements of a richly rewarding life, which include participation in a vibrant, healthy culture; maintaining long-term relationships with loved ones and children; joining with others in celebrations of common spiritual values; and enjoying meaningful, rewarding work over a span of years. Times of transition tend to sunder these elements which those in quieter times take for granted, and this places greater stress on personal psychology. Such chronic stress produces the kind of brittleness and inflexibility you mentioned.

The trick is to be able to ride out the transition without going mad, surrendering to cynicism, joining the forces of destruction, or retreating to fanaticism. It's so difficult because it requires you to answer those deepest questions—who are we and why are we here?—with a resounding, "I don't know and neither does anyone else!" This violates the very essence of your being, to have as the foundation of private and cultural life a secure cosmological framework which affirmatively answers these questions and eases your existential insecurity.

If it is of any help, you might recognize that while your culture passes through a phase of confusion over these primal questions, this confusion in no way obscures the fact that there are answers, that *your lives do have meaning and purpose*. You are simply searching for a new, more sophisticated framework with which to express this incontrovertible reality.

Then are we moving toward greater synthesis of our spiritual/mental/emotional/physical aspects? What would that feel like; how would we operate on a daily basis; how would we behave and think differently? Is this something the species is moving toward?

Of course it is, because the light at the end of the tunnel of cultural dissolution is the beacon of reintegration and restored stability, both on a personal and collective level. From a historical perspective, humanity is far more often "together" than it is now, as you pass through this difficult transitional period. The "looseness" of human consciousness is exaggerated into fragmentation and madness during this phase, but will heal into a more highly evolved cohesion and stability than has heretofore been experienced. That is what the "New Age" is all about, or is heading toward, the reintegration of the spiritual into personal and cultural life.

The best example of such a cohesive psychology is found among young children: they know who they are, what they want, and they pursue it with undistracted tenacity. They have no doubts about their goodness, their rightness, their purpose in being here, the meaning suffusing their lives. Their emotional aspect, which is the most prominent at that age, works harmoniously with its cognitive, spiritual, and physical partners to weave a life of purposeful activity, wonder and joy, magic and mystery, love and affection, dreams and visions, creativity and play, and the deep abiding certainty that it all makes sense. And that, our friends, is your vaunted New Age. ❖

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FAMILIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

An "Earthly Cycles" Sneak Preview

*Alexander's newest book, **Earthly Cycles: Reincarnation, Karma and Consciousness**, will be leaping off the press next month. To tide you over, we offer here an abridged version of a chapter from the book's opening section, where Alexander discusses the various qualities of the soul which are blended to create each person's unique "template" of personality.*

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Just as your life grows as a unique offshoot of your higher self, so is your higher self itself an offshoot of a still greater body of consciousness. This is the level of "families of consciousness," vast fields of intent dividing the host human consciousness into the broad themes of human life. Each family of consciousness plays a role in the organization, operation, cultural evolution, and stability of human society. This is the basic bedrock foundation of the psyche; one's family of consciousness is the immutable cornerstone of the psyche carried from lifetime to lifetime.

Families of consciousness focus not at the level of personal experience, but as broad themes from which are woven cohesive human culture. Each family tends to influence body type, intelligence, birth family, and occupational choice. As we explore each family, we will describe its qualities only as *general guidelines*, not as chiseled-in-stone absolutes!

The Watcher Family

Function: "Scribes" of the species.

Intelligence: Medium-high to brilliant.

Occupation: Scholars in academia or as writers and historians; desk jobs emphasizing independence and intelligence but not great creativity, such as accountants, tax attorneys, bureaucrats; newspaper reporters and journalists; teachers and professors of bright high school or college students; diplomats; and a few outcasts, pariahs, and soapbox orators.

Family life: Dependable, devoted, responsible lovers, spouses, and parents.

What they lack in romantic fire they make up for in stability and loving attention.

On an individual and collective level, you are surrounded by innumerable swarms of probabilities, from which you pull slender strands into manifestation, event after event, in an unfolding path of crystallized experience. At the level of the higher self, and more so at the family of consciousness, these probabilities blur into a swarm of undifferentiated potential, making it difficult to distinguish which precise strands are manifesting as physical experience.

The Watcher family serves as the "scribes" of the race, feeding to the higher fields of consciousness a constant ticker-tape account of cultural events and milestones. Watchers are planted in every culture, in every age, so their pooled consciousness apprises the higher realms of humanity's activities and progress all over the globe.

Watchers carry keen intellects, the better to absorb and analyze their culture's doings, yet they do not translate their elevated awareness into social activism. They observe, they analyze, they preserve the cultural history of the race, they offer enlightened counsel on social problems and potential solutions.

Watchers are not given to great passions; they observe the fiery religious crusades, boisterous political campaigns, and swooning romantic delirium of others with bemused bewilderment. Watchers make devoted spouses and parents—attentive, kind, patient—but they do not generate wild lustful passion, even in youth. Stable, gently affectionate, often generous and self-sacrificing, they bring to family life a bedrock stability.

Because Watchers have a direct "pipeline" to the higher realms of consciousness, they are frequently drawn toward spirituality, though in an abstract, intellectual way. They may become scholars of mysticism, eastern and pagan religions, or researchers into the paranormal. Their sharp intellects force them beyond the stale gruel offered by mainstream religion, but lacking activist zeal, they prefer

to dutifully drop their offering in the collection plate and study Zen or Native American spirituality in the privacy of their home library.

The Builder Family

Function: Performs physical labor under others' supervision.

Intelligence: Low to medium-high.

Occupation: Laborers of all types, soldiers, house builders, farm workers, demolition crews.

Family life: Variable depending on emotional and psychological state of the partners. Togetherness expressed by *doing things*—fishing, hunting, cooking, and so on. Protective parents express love through building a secure nest.

The Builder family performs the raw physical labor essential to society's smooth operation. As it evolves, human culture is forever casting off old forms and concocting new ones—and *someone* has to translate this grand evolutionary unfolding into physical reality, one brick at a time. This is the province of the Builders, muscle-bound men (and, less often, women) who find their fulfillment in a hard day's work performed to the satisfaction of themselves and their overseers.

Builders are not usually self-starters, initiators, dreamers and schemers. Their mental life is simple and ordinary, and they look to others for direction and guidance in exercising their willing strength. They rarely pursue higher education. Philosophy and spirituality hold no interest. Their needs and aims are elemental, deeply rooted to home and family. Builders are found in high proportion in rural areas, for the noise, energy, and cultural vitality of cities grate against their elemental nature.

Because Builders are so deeply rooted to material experience and express themselves through raw physicality, their emotional and family life tends to be short on words and romance, and long on simple togetherness. Love and devotion are expressed through joint activities—everyone watches television or plays

games together; fathers take sons hunting, mothers teach daughters to cook and sew.

This raises a crucial point—for all the progress feminism has made in dismantling the patriarchal power structure in business and government, it has left few traces on Builder families. There, the traditional roles of men and women remain clearly defined; and for the most part both sexes find pleasure and fulfillment in performing their sex-defined tasks and do not care to introduce the corrosive disruption of gender-role confusion into their homes. Stability at all costs!

Politically and religiously, Builders are solidly in the mainstream. They prize social stability, loyalty to authority, respect for elders, patriotism, traditional values. They react with visceral revulsion to social disorder, riots and protests, flag burnings, and other threats to cultural equilibrium. While Builders' nature is to abstain from active participation in society, of late they have come out in force among the "radical right" in politics and religion, expressing their fear-based reaction to feeling bowled over by the juggernaut of social change. In fear, in bewildered insecurity, they lash out against any perceived threat to their prized status quo—feminism, multiculturalism, gay rights, abortion, affirmative action, and so on.

Given their druthers, Builders would just as soon leave the messy chaos of social progress to others, for they find their deepest satisfaction and fulfillment in building and tearing down society's constantly evolving infrastructure; in sharing mutual activities with loved ones; in being left in peace in a secure and stable world.

The Cradler Family

Function: Nurturers of children, animals, and the infirm.

Intelligence: The full spectrum.

Occupation: Full-time mothers (or fathers); school teachers; nurses; zoo keepers; foster parents; animal shelter personnel; many volunteers in hospitals, schools, scout troops, shelters.

Family life: Warm and affectionate, though if the Cradler is also an activist/crusader, her frequent absence may spawn feelings of resentment and abandonment.

It is not enough for a human child, or for any of the higher animals, to merely have its physical needs met. Among the higher animals, and especially in the human species, life's deepest meaning is reached through relationship. Establishing this crucial foundation in a young child's life is a parent's highest task: enveloping

the child in a warm cocoon of maternal/paternal affection and tender care, welcoming the child into the world and shepherding its wide-eyed embrace of life through the vulnerable early years.

There are times in adulthood when one reverts to childlike dependence and helplessness—during bouts of illness. At these times, a nurturing caretaker greatly aids the healing process, as the sufferer can relax in the comfort of another's loving succor, reserving all energy for healing and expending none on the mere mechanics of running a life and household.

Because warm, affectionate, loving care is so critical to establishing an infant's healthy bonding and embrace of the world; because sick, wounded, or abandoned animals benefit from human care; and because illness is more easily vanquished under the watchful eye of a concerned caretaker, the Cradler family embraces the earth's young, dependent, and helpless creatures in warm arms of selfless benevolence.

Cradlers are the emotional glue of the species. Just as Builders construct the physical infrastructure, Cradlers weave affectional ties from heart to heart, enhancing the emotional and psychological stability of society. When everyone feels wanted, needed, loved, and appreciated, a culture is stable and harmonious. This lofty ideal may never be fully realized, but it is the heartfelt ambition of the Cradlers to bring their culture that much closer to it.

Unless aroused by intolerably inhumane conditions, Cradlers tend to absent themselves from social involvement, preferring to quietly tend to their children, their animals, their gardens. They tend not to be movers and shakers. Like the Builders, their work is essential but largely invisible. Politically and religiously they tend toward liberalism, for its greater apparent compassion and emphasis on caring for the downtrodden and neglected. Cradlers are tolerant and open-minded but rarely revolutionary.

Just as brick needs mortar to stand against the elements, so does human society need love and affection to forge the cultural cohesion arising when each member feels worthy and valued. The Cradler family focuses its loving energy on its own circles of friends and family first, but takes it upon themselves to see that neglected children, the infirm, and animals are nurtured and fussed over. Cradlers are the emotional mortar of the race, for from loved and valued children grows cultural stability.

The Innovator Family

Function: Fomenters of new ideas in culture and technology.

Intelligence: Average to brilliant.

Occupation: Two main clusters of scientists and artists, though a scattering will be found in government.

Family life: The exuberant energy and indomitable spirits of Innovators are some compensation for their frequent casual neglect of lovers, spouses, and children.

In nature and in human society, life is never a static process of fixed forms standing immutable and unchanging through time. Rather, life is an exuberant unfolding of evolutionary potential, an unceasing flow of innovations in form and consciousness. Human society, founded as it is on *ideas*, expresses its unique role in nature's grander design by continually evolving new ideational frameworks in art and science, the twin pillars of culture. This is the province of the Innovator family.

While lumping art and science together may seem an odd pairing, they reflect the dual basis of human life: you are physical creatures springing from non-physical realms. You are matter and you are spirit. Thus, the Innovator family holds under its umbrella both scientists—technological innovators—and artists—cultural innovators. In both cases, the drive is to transcend conventional wisdom and tradition, and bring forth technological and artistic reflections of evolving consciousness.

This is a crucial point—all innovations in science and art originate in the realm of consciousness. This means that, like the Watcher family, Innovators require a clear channel to the "upper realms," those larger bodies of consciousness standing above earth and human experience. The difference is that the Watcher family offers a one-way flow from earth experience to the upper realms, whereas Innovators draw energy and ideas down from the upper realms toward earth experience.

The danger in allowing human consciousness into an established natural system such as your planet is that it will lose sight of its spiritual nature and

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become so enamored of its technological prowess that it ends up killing off a good portion of the natural world—and possibly itself. As a built-in check on such tendencies, art sounds alarms of warning when technology begins veering into ominous directions, with the hope of alerting the general populace through urgent symbols of impending disaster. In your age, with science rocketing forward in unprecedented technological growth while spirituality remains mired in discredited medieval religion, Innovators of both camps have their work cut out for them—scientists to engineer a brave new world freed from ethical constraints, artists to sound urgent warnings of impending calamity.

Because Innovators' consciousness must be inherently unstable to release them from convention and allow free-floating insight into future potentials, Innovators' emotional and personal lives tend toward the chaotic. The classic "absent-minded professor" who limns the deepest secrets of the universe with ease but always forgets where he leaves his house key is an example.

Artists suffering a lifelong string of stormy romances; who offer indifferent, neglectful, or abusive attention to their spouses and children; whose friends and family must endure a lifetime of irremediably offensive table manners and bathing habits—these are Innovators whose consciousness is so absorbed in wrenching their fulminating inspirations into manifestation that they cannot be bothered with the petty niceties of polite society.

The trade-off in life as an Innovator is a rare and privileged glimpse into future potentials hidden from sight of the vast bulk of humanity, and the irresistible thrill of drawing those glimpses down into symbol or technology; while one's economic, familial, and emotional life tend to churn in perpetual chaos. The Innovator family is quite small as a percentage of population, but from their turbulent and brilliant lives flow currents of art and technology carrying humanity toward ever greater heights of cultural achievement.

The Agitator Family

Function: Rabble-rousing challengers of the status quo.

Intelligence: Average to brilliant.

Occupation: Unlikely to be found in traditional office settings; gravitate toward "alternative" education, medicine, and psychology; many spend their lifetimes in a succession of menial jobs, despite their high intelligence; some drop out of the system entirely and live off the charity of others.

Family life: Tend to reject conventional expectations of marriage and parenthood, but if granted freedom can develop close, committed relationships.

Close observation of natural systems reveals that despite their emphasis on maintaining stasis and balance, they all contain "agitator" elements which continuously disrupt equilibrium. This forces the natural system—whether an organism or an ecosystem—to constantly evaluate its circumstances so that if those external circumstances have changed, a corresponding internal change can be made, resulting in a modified system better adapted to its environment.

As in nature, so in human culture. As humanity rides its unfolding path toward fresh cultural forms and systems, it requires an "agitator" element to chip away at the status quo, to corrode ossified convention and tradition, to facilitate the eternal process of creation and destruction that marks human progress. This is the mission of the Agitator family.

Agitators are born with burrs in their boots, splinters under their nails, hot and cold chills chasing up their spines. They are perpetually ill at ease in the world, incapable of conformity and convention, and channel their inflamed and volatile energy into spreading disruption and anarchy wherever they go. Their greatest delight lies in challenging authority, those whose vested powers denote tradition, stasis, and fossilized values. If Innovators are the farmers of the species, planting seeds of cultural change, Agitators are the rototillers, grinding up the hardpan furrows of tradition into nourishing loam.

Agitators are found in every field, every walk of life—science, government, art, education, medicine, and so on. Most often they fail to achieve high positions of authority and esteem within their fields, for they cannot sit still and swallow the extant dogma long enough to build a career of quiet conformity, at the pinnacle of which they might offer a few tidbits of radicalism. No, the Agitators are too volatile, too explosive, to subjugate their temperaments to career-building blandness; thus they are relegated to the fringes of their fields as the butt of scorn and derision from their less imaginative contemporaries.

It should be noted that Agitators are not all infallible prophets—that is, their criticisms, dire warnings, and proposed alternatives are not always sound. A fair percentage of Agitators are labeled "kooks" for their lifelong fascination with conspiracy theories, "proof" of UFO invasions and cover-ups, and dire warnings of impending Armageddon. None-

theless, even when they veer off the path of reason into the tangled thickets of paranoia and religious dementia, Agitators serve their purpose by unsettling others' inert complacency, forcing them to consider the Agitators' message, if only long enough to dismiss it with a mocking chuckle.

In your day, with your culture caught in a downward spiral brought on by spiritual impoverishment and an inhumane value system, Agitators rise to especial prominence. They must shout loudly indeed to be heard over the din of cultural breakdown, for your culture "adapts" to chaos by establishing a new equilibrium in which insanity and brutal violence are accepted as "normal." To be heard in a culture suffering massive denial, Agitators must force attention through shrill voices and shocking action. Scandalous performance artists, eco-warrior activists, high-seas vigilantes sinking whaling vessels—these are the extremes to which Agitators must go to win attention from a populace anesthetized by endless carnage and suffering.

The Director Family

Function: Maintains the smooth operation of society's governmental, economic, and technological systems.

Intelligence: Low-average to high.

Occupation: Government politicians, bureaucrats and managers; white collar workers and administrators in all fields; economists and architects; engineers and ship captains.

Family life: Tend toward stable relationships, are devoted spouses and parents, except where emotional and/or addiction problems interfere.

The Director family lies midway between Innovators and Builders. Innovators offer sparks of inspiration, opening up new potentials in art and technology, while Builders are content to work under the supervision of their overseers. Those overseers are Directors, a large family running the machinery of complex society, keeping it running smoothly on wheels of tradition while embracing those promising seeds spilling from the fertile minds of Innovators which have passed the test of real-world validation.

As a rule, Directors are more intelligent than Builders, more worldly-wise and sophisticated, almost always pursuing higher education. They are avid consumers of popular culture, and make up the bulk of an audience enjoying a mainstream movie or concert. They are often athletic and express camaraderie and friendly aggression through sports.

Directors take great pleasure in seeing the world run well; in contributing to the smooth efficiency of a dynamic, productive, useful enterprise. They offer loyalty to their employers, often sacrificing time and energy beyond their salaried commitment. Most Directors are gregarious, friendly, considerate, and never forget a birthday or anniversary. In relationship they are attentive and dependable, making stalwart protectors of their nests and doting on their children.

How large a proportion of a society's population springs from the Director family depends on the culture's complexity. In "primitive" societies, where life revolves around elemental needs of food, shelter, and security, there is little room for a Department of Ungulate Affairs churning out glossy brochures on scientifically established methods of spearing gazelles. Everyone must participate directly in satisfying the tribe's needs.

In complex societies such as yours, where the interwoven technological, political, and economic systems required to maintain cultural stability are far too complex for any one person to grasp, specialization arises: pockets of expertise overseeing smooth operation of the system's myriad smaller elements. Here bureaucracy, management, and supervision are essential to maintain a smoothly running complex culture.

Thus, your culture hosts a relatively large proportion of Directors. This helps maintain stability, but it also hinders rapid adaptations when such are called for in response to changing circumstances. As your ecological and social problems mount in number and severity, a culture heavy with Directors is unable to clearly perceive the depth of the crisis and respond with dynamic creativity.

While times of social upheaval call upon the Innovator and Agitator families to vigorously lead the way toward a new social order, ultimately it is the large and sluggish Director family that must be convinced both of the need for change and of the merit in proposed remedies. This often requires proof through "scientific validation"—and how might science validate the depths of a spiritual crisis? The point is that the longer the Director family takes to recognize the severity of a crisis and to accept innovative solutions, the more drawn-out the transition will be.

The Avatar Family

Function: Embodiments of divine wisdom.

Intelligence: Medium-high to off the scale.

Occupation: Rarely work in the traditional sense.

Family life: Among the most exalted, often celibate and unmarried for life; the less evolved make devoted spouses and parents.

You are physical creatures and spiritual creatures. While in flesh, you are enraptured by sensation and your powers of manipulation over the natural world. To be full and complete, your exuberant embrace of physical experience must be tempered by spiritual values, guidelines and proscriptions delimiting the boundaries of acceptable behavior and ensuring cultural harmony. The Avatar family serves as the conscience of the race, shaping eternal truth into culturally specific teachings lifting humanity higher on its unfolding path toward enlightenment.

The Avatar family has two branches. The smaller is a tiny handful of genuine Avatars, fleshly embodiments of All That Is, who deliver a purity of wisdom that takes centuries for a culture to absorb. The larger branch is composed of Teachers who devote their lives to spreading Avatars' wisdom. While genuine Avatars appear no more than once a millennium, every generation hosts a small family of Teachers.

Spiritual progress unfolds in a process similar to the Agitators' disruption of social equilibrium. Every culture is founded on a core cosmology, a worldview binding all members in a cohesive embrace of shared meaning. When a culture stagnates because it clings to an ancient, anachronistic worldview that no longer resonates in the hearts of those who hear it, an Avatar will appear to offer lustrous pearls of wisdom replacing encrusted dogma. This triggers such cultural disequilibrium—as always, a tired spirituality is kept alive by a rich and powerful priesthood—that the Avatar is often put to death and his followers persecuted as heretics.

Nonetheless, the damage has been done, and religion once accepted as irrefutable truth is now regarded more critically, its blemishes and moth-eaten tatters suddenly apparent. Over time, over decades and centuries, society reorganizes itself around the higher truth delivered by the Avatar, until it achieves a new equilibrium, a higher spiritual foundation beneath its cultural life. This process is aided by Teachers, who at the outset must fear persecution and death at the hands of religious authority. Over time, as more people gravitate toward the new teachings, a grudging tolerance replaces persecution, and a new religion is born.

The consciousness of an Avatar is so accelerated above the cultural norm that it perceives and processes experience at a height of clarity and sophistication beyond the imagination of normal minds.

What appear to others as "miracles"—levitation, raising the dead, materialization and transmutation of food and objects—simply reflect a mastery over consciousness and matter literally millennia ahead of an Avatar's contemporaries.

Because genuine Avatars see so clearly the interconnecting strands binding all peoples and creatures, they are indifferent to romantic attachments and family life. They cannot narrow their focus to one spouse and a handful of children, circling affectional wagons around their hearts and repelling those outside the bond of blood. Romantic attachment is a stage in human evolution, a useful one, but it reflects a certain limitation and narrow focus of consciousness. It would be unknown in a truly enlightened culture. Because Avatars are forever bathed in the pure light of spiritual wisdom, their greater awareness bleeds family and tribal affiliation of any attraction.

Teachers, on the other hand, not carrying an Avatar's accelerated consciousness, are more likely to adapt to cultural norms; they often enjoy family life. Their consciousness is slightly accelerated, a notch or two above the mainstream, enough to absorb their Avatar's wisdom at a high level of understanding, and to urge their contemporaries to embrace higher truth. Their knowledge is not complete—they do not share an Avatar's spacious awareness—but they ride above the mainstream perspective and offer higher wisdom to those willing to embrace it.

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Watchers, Builders, Cradlers, Innovators, Agitators, Directors, and Avatars: these are the seven principal families of consciousness from which all human life springs. If you consider them as a group, and observe their interwoven connections, you find that these seven elements are essential to *every* living system, whether an organism, a tribe, or an ecosystem. If you think of the global human family as a single organism, you find that each family plays an essential role in its healthy functioning:

Watchers are the eyes and ears of the species. Builders are the hands, bones, and muscle. Cradlers are the loving heart. Innovators are the creative mind. Agitators maintain adaptive equilibrium. Directors are the brain. Avatars carry the conscience. Each family of consciousness is as essential to the healthy functioning of the greater human family as the symbiotic cooperation of your senses, muscles, heart, creativity, adaptability, brain, and conscience are to your life experience.



INTO THE DREAMTIME

THE SOUL'S NIGHTLY JOURNEY

Modern thought holds that the purpose of sleep is to allow the body time to rest and heal, and that dreaming is a mysterious by-product of this process. Dreams are variously explained as the random static of neurological firings; a means of emotionally "processing" the day's events; or as the surface patina on material rising from the deepest strata of the psyche. Whatever one's views, all agree that the realm of sleep and dreaming remains a dark mystery: an intimate companion shrouded in enigma.

Let us begin our journey through the realm of sleep with a broad overview of its meaning and purpose, then tread step by step through the stages and levels of the dreamtime world. To begin, we must understand the nature of earthbound, animate life.

The Wall of Illusion

The defining quality of life in a camouflage physical system such as yours is that vibration is never perceived directly, in its full, comprehensive totality; instead, each species' senses perceive a few slender bands of vibration relevant to the species' purpose. Even these few fragmentary strands are not perceived "as they are," but are filtered and interpreted by the brain to construct a cohesive picture of sight, sound, and tactile sensation. The result is that each species weaves its own fragmented, hallucinatory picture of "reality" from the swirling clouds of vibration which envelop the earth.

The purpose of such a system is to emphasize the supremacy of the *individual*, by rendering invisible the cosmic web in which you are embedded; convincing you that "you" end neatly at the skin, separate and distinct from other creatures and the natural world. This illusion is accomplished by blocking from awareness the energy fields emanating from every living being, which engage and communicate with other beings in a constant, dynamic exchange; blindness to this greater reality reduces the dynamically interwoven cosmic sea to a black void enlivened by starkly distinct creatures scurrying about a "dead" landscape.

While your conscious mind naturally clings to its waking perceptions as "real" and struggles to make sense of its dreamtime imagery, the fact is that you must sleep and dream because *maintaining the illusions of physical life places great strain on consciousness, which must be "relieved" by returning to its natural state.* In other words, the realm of sleep and dreams is where your consciousness naturally resides, and operates according to natural principles, whereas the illusion of physical reality is a self-generated hallucination which can be sustained for only so long before consciousness must seek relief from the strain of operating in such an "unnatural" mode.

While you naturally and automatically focus on the externalities of life—your family and friends, career, money, health—there is a far deeper purpose to your being. This purpose was determined by your higher self before incarnation, was sculpted into your personality template at the time of birth, and remains the overarching *raison d'être* of your existence. Chances are you do not know what it is; for it remains veiled from conscious awareness even as it informs every moment of your life.

Every night, when you release the illusion of physicality and return to your "natural state," you converse with your higher self to compare your experience to the life theme and tasks it has established. Progress and backsliding are noted; events are spawned and vitalized which will steer you toward relevant experience; you draw upon the wisdom and experience of probable and reincarnational selves playing out their lives in private cocoons of history. This nightly communion between your waking self and other bodies of consciousness is essential to track daily progress toward fulfillment of your life's highest purpose.

The Wall of the Self

It should be apparent that two "selves" are involved in the dream exchange: the "authentic self" and the

"waking self." The authentic self is the "real" you, a body of consciousness composed of your higher self, your reincarnational and probable selves, and most important, your unique "soul" or individualized spark of consciousness which animates your body and its life adventures. It would be erroneous to picture the relationships among these bodies of consciousness as hierarchical—with the higher self "above" its smaller individualized fragments—instead, each smaller fragment is *embedded* within the higher self, which in turn is cocooned within even greater bodies of consciousness. This is the "real" you, the authentic self.

Your "waking self" is most familiar to you as your ego, the ever-striving, ever-vigilant, ever-searching, ever-needy bundle of desire, motivation, emotion, reason, and contradiction which steers your body along its life path. The ego identifies itself fiercely with your body, considering it "you," and makes the body's safety, comfort and protection its highest priority. When these elemental needs are met, the ego can relax and expand its focus to embrace the fruits of intellect and art, heart and spirit. Nonetheless, life experience is always filtered through the "I" focus, through the jumble of memory, desire, and outlook the ego defines as "me."

For you to function at all effectively in the world of physical illusion, there must be a wall of separation between waking and authentic selves. You could not safely navigate through earth reality while your consciousness was flooded with voices of the cosmos; and the illusion of separation would be lost. This "wall" of separation is in truth nothing more than a difference in the frequencies on which the two realms operate. The ego, holding the body's safety as its primary concern, tightens its focus to the slow, dense frequencies beheld by the senses; while the immensely faster frequencies of "natural consciousness" whirl undetected. The wall is not so much a wall as a gap, a chasm between levels of frequency.

Three factors contribute to how permeable or rigid the boundary between

waking and authentic selves will be: earth vibration; cultural cosmology; and personality. Because the body's vibration is tied to the earth's vibration, the slower the earth's frequencies are the greater the "gap" will be between waking consciousness and natural consciousness. Humanity appears during such a narrow "window" of accelerating vibration that the process is scarcely relevant, but nonetheless it does influence the permeability between waking and authentic selves.

A culture's cosmology, its fundamental beliefs and values, also influences the permeability between dimensions. Cultures feeling a natural communion with all of creation, who hear their ancestors whisper on the wind, who seek out psychotropic plant teachers as portals to higher wisdom, naturally welcome tendrils of wisdom wafting through the boundary between selves. Those cultures strongly focused on material experience, carrying a sharp rational focus and a disdain for mystical insight, naturally close themselves off from easy communion with their authentic selves.

Finally, an individual's private psychology influences the boundary's permeability. Each incarnation is established with a template of personality sculpted into the auric fields, the better to tether perception and experience to the higher self's chosen life theme. Layered atop this congenital makeup will be childhood experiences either embracing or negating the fruits of the authentic self: precognitive dreams, the presence of invisible "friends," past-life recall, perception of auras. Taken together, the earth's vibration, a culture's cosmology, and an individual's personality and childhood experience blend to establish the relative permeability of the boundary between waking and authentic selves.

Breaching the Wall

Let us turn now to a step-by-step exploration of the process through which you fall asleep and enter the dreamtime realm. The first requirement is that you feel safe and secure, for the ego must be convinced to release its protective vigilance over your body's safety, must willingly surrender its processing of the streams of vibration pouring through your senses. Indeed, you deliberately seek out a sanctuary offering little stimulation—a dark, quiet room, neither too cold nor too hot—as the ideal milieu in which your ego can be convinced to relax

its guard. You lie down, laying your head upon or closer to the earth than during waking hours, surrendering to its deep, elemental pull.

With the ego's low, earth-based frequency dissolving, consciousness is liberated to flow upward toward its natural frequencies. The early, light stages of sleep are a period of gradual acceleration of consciousness; the day's experiences are "processed" during this transitional phase, teased apart into their physical/emotional/mental/spiritual components, examined for their relevance or irrelevance to one's life theme, evaluated for their significance to life's deeper purpose. In a sense, this is a period of sifting and sorting through the mementos and souvenirs of each day's earth experience, separating the precious from the petty.

The petty are immediately "discarded," in the sense that they are dismissed from further processing. Those experiences ripe with significance are retained and passed on to higher levels of consciousness for more meticulous examination. This early, light phase of sleep still operates through the boundary between waking and authentic selves, and ensures that only deeply significant events pass through to higher levels of consciousness.

As sleep deepens, the boundary dissolves, as the ego has dissolved, and consciousness is free to soar freely to its natural frequencies. A slender strand of vibration remains anchored to the body, feeding its perceptions directly to the higher realms of consciousness rather than the (now nonexistent) ego. This strand must be maintained, not only to ensure the body's continued security, but to sustain the flow of vitalizing energy from the higher self without which bodily death ensues. (This strand of vibration is often referred to as a "silver cord" in astral travel accounts.)

The Self Meets Itself

By the time a deep sleep state has been reached, the fragmentary remains of the day are carried to the higher-self level of awareness. At this level, the soul is able to communicate directly with its higher self and its probable and reincarnational selves. The soul offers the vital mementos of its day's experience as signposts of progress or setback on its life's journey. These are compared with the higher self's established life theme and tasks, the better to deter-

mine the difficulty or ease with which the soul, encased in its daily ego, moves toward fulfillment of its purpose.

The exchange among soul, higher self, and other "self" fragments is a free, flowing communion of information and evaluation rooted in boundless respect and freedom. There is no sense of "failure" for backsliding from one's goals, for in truth the higher self does not "care" whether any of its incarnational offshoots achieves highest fulfillment; it is more interested in how the blending of soul attributes contributes to the ease or difficulty in conquering life challenges. Some blends of personality and birth-family attributes render "happiness" an elusive mirage; others suffer but the slightest hindrances on their happy-go-lucky stroll toward fulfillment. By blending a unique set of personality attributes into each incarnation's birth situation, the higher self experiments with the elasticity and ingenuity of the soul when cast into the medium of earthly life.

An individual soul communicates more easily with its brethren reincarnational selves than with its higher self. The frequency gap between soul and higher self is still considerable, whereas souls hum at the same approximate vibration. Like hobbyists exchanging tips and tools of their common pastime, souls seek and offer assistance in processing their life experiences. Each incarnation carries one slender strand of intent from their common higher self, while all are bound to the higher self's overarching themes and interests. As a result, brethren reincarnational souls often generate similar life journeys and benefit from exchanging accounts of their experiences.

Into the Dreamtime

Before we discuss the major sources of dream material, let us note that what actually transpires during the dream state and what is recalled upon awaking are two sharply distinct processes. Recalled dreams represent your conscious mind's

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"best effort" to make sense of material of a frequency and depth which it is not designed to process. Raw dream material must be "stepped down" many levels of frequency to be processed by the conscious mind, losing fidelity and richness for the abridgement. The seemingly random chaos of dream imagery stems from the brain's inability to coherently synthesize the raw stuff of dreams, which operates on a different logic and order.

Fundamentally, waking consciousness organizes itself according to certain linear principles, especially linear time. When you recall an experience you replay it in from start to finish; when you tell your life's story you begin with early childhood and retrace your steps. Because linear time is a parameter of matter-based systems, it plays no part in the higher dimensions where the higher self resides and whence dream material arises. As a result, when waking consciousness forces nonlinear experience into the structure of linear-time events, not only will coherence be lost, but the *significance* will be lost as well.

The signposts by which your higher self evaluates your life journey are not linear, factual, logical, or rational. They are *emotional*. That is, the material passing through the boundary of the waking self and on to the higher self does not reflect the everyday mechanics and worries of your life—wealth, health, career—but carries the *emotional impact* of your life experience. While your conscious mind navigates the material world through reason and logic, it is your heart that records the true measure of your experience. Whatever your life theme and tasks may be, it is your emotional life that generates the most significant milestones of triumph or calamity on the rocky road toward fulfillment.

Thus, the higher self evaluates the emotional content of each day's events as its primary source material; the physical wrapping on those events is discarded. Did you feel love, jealousy, fear, enmity, anger, guilt, triumph, or pain? Did you feel nothing at all? Is your emotional life a healthy, rollicking flow of freely felt and expressed emotion, or a bottleneck of choked repression? These are the vital indicators of your life's progress.

With that as background, we can briefly explore several sources of dream material. The first is what might be termed Probable Drama School, whose

source material is the ego's choices pulling certain probable futures toward manifestation. In the dream state, these probabilities can be projected, as onto a movie screen, the better to evaluate their potential effects. While a soul can perform this on its own, there is a certain joy and camaraderie in joining with other reincarnational and probable selves to create a mutual drama, richer for the greater insights of all involved.

Generally, at least several and as many as up to a dozen different scenarios will be played out, depending on the apparent strength of crystallizing probabilities. While this process may appear fanciful and inconsequential to your waking experience, in truth *your life is profoundly guided by dreamtime dramas sculpted by your soul and higher self*. In the case of almost every significant life event, your authentic self *has already played it out and knows the outcome* and your later physical experience is but a "confirmation version" of what has already transpired.

This is no way limits your freedom to make life choices, or denigrates the importance of physical experience, but underscores the profoundly important effect your authentic self has on waking experience. For the probable scenarios played out in dreamtime are fed to your waking self—crunched down into remembered dreams—and serve as warnings or blessings on the life choices you contemplate. This *enhances* your freedom and ability to make wise choices, as you already carry in subliminal awareness knowledge of the outcomes of choices you ponder.

We have focused on the individual soul's use of projection, but of course you do not travel life's journey alone, and it is only through joining with others that you generate the emotional experience so central to fulfillment of your life theme. Where two or more are joined in a relationship which carries its own bundle of probable futures, these too will be sorted out and projected in the dream state as mutually created dramas. Each soul can then evaluate its likely experience and feed counsel to its waking self.

On a broader scale, each culture and era plays hosts to certain themes and ideas, and all souls living at a given time are bonded in a communal enterprise, with each waking self allotted a tiny portion. Mass events are

organized, projected, and roles chosen, during communal dreamtime councils. This holds for all mass events, from a two-vehicle car crash to world war. All choose to participate, all choose the scenario to manifest, all choose their roles. Victim and torturer, martyr and bystander, king and peasant, prisoner and liberator—all participate in dreamtime dramas, choose the extent of involvement and their role, and feed their choices to their waking selves.

The Higher Self Report Card

Another major source of dream material is the higher self's evaluation of each day's emotional mementos, judged against a lifetime's theme, tasks, and karma. The higher self liberates its soul fragment at birth and cannot intervene to ensure that germane experience will be gathered, or even to prevent the waking self from digging itself into deeper karmic ruts. The ego, a curiously obtuse and maddeningly blind creature from the higher self's perspective, holds ultimate authority over the waking self's experience. The higher self can only evaluate each day's events for evidence that the life purpose is being at least partially fulfilled.

The challenge from the waking self's standpoint is that life themes are impressed into the personality at a given "default" intensity which requires concerted effort to transcend. A life theme of poverty-wealth, for instance, may be strongly skewed toward the "poverty" pole, meaning that scarcity and lack come far more naturally than abundance. A theme of intimacy-isolation, if weighted toward isolation, naturally results in an adulthood of comfortable but not intimate friendships and the avoidance of romantic intimacy.

From the ego's perspective, it is *more comfortable* to remain at one's default station, even of poverty or isolation, than to do the hard and bruising work of overcoming one's default and sliding along the continuum toward greater happiness. Since the ego naturally seeks comfort and avoids pain, it runs from the bruising traumas stirred up by challenging one's thematic default; thus the ego serves as a *hindrance* on realization of one's highest fulfillment. One cannot ascribe human emotion to higher selves, but there is something akin to bewilderment and exasperation at the insistence of the ego on remaining in a state of unhappiness rather than

making the effort to disrupt stasis and embrace higher happiness.

One tool the higher self has at its disposal is the nightly dreamtime communion with its offshoot soul, the authentic self (blessedly stripped of its daytime guardian ego!). Here, the higher self can play out in rich intensity those grand triumphs awaiting the waking self if it would but make the effort. These enticing potentials are fed from the authentic self to the waking self and are the source of the constant "if only" chattering in your interior monologue—If only I had more money, more time, more love, some children, lived elsewhere, were more spiritual, more creative, more successful, *then I would be happy*. The constant yearning for something more, something different, something else, as the key to happiness is the ego's crude way of making sense of whispers from the authentic self that your life's purpose is not yet fulfilled.

Hands Across Time

A third significant source of dream material is the communion among reincarnational selves. Because all incarnations flow from a single higher self, with its narrowly focused thematic interests, all incarnations are bound, like blood brothers, to a common unity of purpose. However diverse the lifetime scenarios crafted by the higher self, they all ride atop the same fundamental theme. Reincarnational selves are thus of inestimable value to each other as they share news and life wisdom spanning the millennia.

Because they all share an overriding goal—overcoming their challenges and realizing fulfillment—and because they are bound to a common thematic framework, reincarnational selves eagerly share what seems to "work" and what does not in their respective corners of history. Working with the gradual acceleration of earth's vibration, which carries humanity toward a higher spiritual wisdom, reincarnational selves can "plot" which choices and behaviors would be most effective in a given milieu.

For example, if a higher self were especially focused on the theme of slavery, particularly the struggle to overthrow it, it would plant incarnational seeds along the linear time continuum to see how well those objecting to slavery fared throughout the millennia. A slave in ancient Egypt or seventeenth-century America who bitterly and publicly denounced the institution that enslaved him would soon find himself relieved of the burdens of his captive flesh. A historian

railing against the evils of slavery in the twenty-fifth century would draw uncomprehending stares: "Slavery? What was that?"

By "plotting" the cultural reactions and personal experiences of the "protest against slavery" theme in its evolution through time, incarnational selves can determine which cultures and eras best play host to that theme. In ancient Egypt the protest was futile; in the distant future it will be irrelevant. To fully engage the theme, to steep everyday life in its bitter essence, one must live in an era making the transition between unthinking acceptance of slavery and its complete abandonment. By pooling their experiences, incarnational selves round out the higher self's collection of "protest against slavery" experience, and offer suggestions and encouragement to each other as they play out their tiny slices of the broader theme.

Back to the Present

The ideal range for an adult nighttime of sleep is between five and eight hours. Any less and the authentic self is cheated of adequate communion time with its higher self and incarnational selves; any more and the body's vitality flags for want of the ego's crisp directives. Any artificial interruption of the waking process—whether from alarm or screaming child—sabotages the phase most useful to the waking self.

The process of waking up ideally takes at least an hour as the authentic self gradually decelerates from dreamtime frequencies toward the slower, denser vibrations of matter. While no active dreaming occurs at this stage, it is nonetheless highly critical, for this is the time when the information, advice,

and encouragement gathered during dreamtime are gently fed to the waking self. These gentle waves of wisdom wash across the boundary between authentic and waking selves, even as that boundary is fortified in preparation for another day's activity. The hope is that some tendrils of wisdom will be retained in awareness, acknowledged and acted upon by the ego as it seeks, however clumsily, to steer you toward fulfillment.

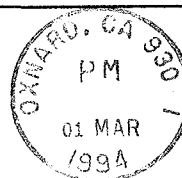


In this small space we can but faintly scratch the surface of the rich vein of dreams and their value. If we can leave you with one "practical" bit of advice, it would be to allow yourself a few moments upon awaking to ask yourself, "What did I learn last night? What new choices are open to me? What guidance did my higher self send me? How can I achieve my highest fulfillment?" Even if no dreamtime specifics jump vividly to mind, simply taking the time to ask the questions and lying in open reverie helps render more permeable the boundary between waking and authentic selves. Over time, this practice should yield bountiful fruit in helping you make wise choices leading toward highest happiness and fulfillment.

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THE CONSCIOUS DREAMER WORKING WITH YOUR DREAMS

In the last issue we offered an overview of the stages you pass through each night in your sleeping and dreaming cycle. In this issue we return to the heart of the process, the dreaming phase, when the barrier between waking and deeper selves loosens to allow rich communion among all levels of the psyche. For this is the critical period, the core dynamic which the larger sleep/dream cycle is designed to support.

Breaching the Barrier

To briefly review, the reason you must sleep for five to eight hours each night and dream for at least an hour during that time is to allow your waking consciousness to release its earth- and ego-based focus, and to return to a natural state of consciousness. As physical reality is at base an illusion, it places a strain on consciousness to operate within that illusory realm, and the strain must be relieved by releasing sensory activity and returning to a natural state of pure consciousness. This is the reason you must sleep and dream.

We spoke of the differences between the waking self and the authentic self. The waking self is the ego-based personality married to a body growing through its maturational cycles, subject to fears and insecurities as it suffers the illusion of separateness from others, from all of creation. The authentic self is the larger self, a loose confederation of your "soul" or individual spark of consciousness; your higher self; and your probable, parallel, and reincarnational selves. While this authentic self stands behind and influences the waking self's experience, such "backstage" manipulations escape the waking self's awareness.

In sleep, with the ego having "evaporated" with the release of waking consciousness, the day's events are "processed" by the authentic self, examined for evidence of progress or backsliding in various realms of activity. The very heart of the process is a deep communion among the soul, higher self, and related

probable and reincarnational selves. To this we now turn our closer attention.

Deep Communion

The phase of deep communion can be envisioned as multiple strands of consciousness, humming at varying frequencies, intermingling and exchanging "cells" of information across permeable boundaries. The energies involved do not meld into a homogenous soup of undifferentiated consciousness, but retain individual identity even as they strive to harmonize their vibrations to allow deepest communion. The waking self's consciousness must "ascend"—accelerating its vibration—while the higher self "descends"—slowing its furious whirl—and they meet on common ground, at a mutually compatible frequency. Other contributors, probable and reincarnational selves, do not "slow" their vibrations as much as they must purify their vibrational tones, shaking off the distinct "accents" of their private worlds.

Since all time is simultaneous, all probable and reincarnational selves live out their lives in the same "place" and "time." What distinguishes one from another is the unique vibrational tone of each probable earth, which "locks" every participating entity into perceiving only activity occurring within that probable reality. Linear time is a track of gradually increasing pulsations; here again, a participating entity chooses to be born at a specific pulsation and rides the gentle acceleration over its lifetime's span; all activity not locked to that sequence of pulsation will be lost to the senses. In very simple terms, this is how probable and reincarnational selves live out their lives in other "times" and "places" even as the higher self perceives them as one simultaneous whirl.

In the dream state, these unique vibrational accents are sloughed off, like actors shedding costumes after a performance, the better to meet one another in a state of pure consciousness. No strand

of consciousness married to form can ever completely release the residue of its earth-based form, and there is something of a "United Nations" atmosphere to communion among probable and reincarnational selves, each bearing the unique accent of its home reality.

Many factors affect the degree to which a given "self" can shed its earth-based identity and vibration, and participate in deep communion with full intensity. A physical body's overall vibration falls somewhere on a scale between "dense" and "ethereal" based on its weight (overweight being a "dense" vibration); its health (illness or chronic pain tilt the scale toward "dense"); whether one ate a rich meal shortly before retiring; whether one impairs the body's smooth function through injurious diet, drink, and smoking; whether one is consumed with anxiety over the morrow's expected events. An overweight smoker worried about losing his job is less able to shed his earth-based energies and participate fully in deep communion than a vegetarian yogi meditating in stress-free reverie.

So the probable and reincarnational selves bring lesser and greater degrees of openness and purity to their exchange during deep communion. The higher self, floating above earth-based activity, carries no residue from its realm and offers its pure, unblemished energy to each offshoot strand. Thus, each offshoot's distinct vibrations determine the clarity of communion each is able to achieve with its higher self. The further the higher self must decelerate and color its vibration to meet an offshoot at its level, the more genuine communion and pure informational exchange will be impaired.

Here is where this seemingly esoteric discussion meets real-world, practical application: your waking experience is profoundly influenced by the nocturnal process of deep communion, yet the purity and fidelity of that exchange is dictated, in large part, by the condition of your body and thoughts. Further, the soul's

ability to translate insights gleaned from deep communion into practical benefit for the waking self is influenced by the condition of body and mind.

In deep communion, the individual strands of consciousness rising from probable and reincarnational selves intertwine with strands flowing from the higher self, and at the point of intersection a rich vibrational dialogue ensues. Powerful daytime events, the body's overall health, the swelling tide of thoughts—all these are carried as vibrational matrixes flowing from each individualized soul to its higher self. The higher self evaluates these strands in light of its intended growth and experience for a lifetime to determine whether the waking self is "on track" or veering off into unanticipated, and possibly detrimental, paths of experience.

Freedom and free will are the very cornerstone of the camouflage system in which you live, and a higher self never directly intervenes in the lives of its offshoots. It sets them up with certain characteristics, tethers them to a specific life theme, selects a birth mother, and then releases its offshoots into form. From there, the waking self takes over, aided by the powerful but undetected influence of the authentic self. Final choices always rest with the waking self; it has every power and right to backslide into dangerous and primitive behaviors despite its higher self's expectation of growth toward enlightenment.

At the nexus between each offshoot and its higher self during deep communion, after the offshoot has offered vibratory fragments of its day's experience, the higher self offers a flow of responsive material. Couched in dispassionate respect, the higher self proffers its comparison of the offshoot's anticipated growth versus its actual experience. The great probable swirl of potential choices is laid before the offshoot, the better for it to understand how it came to actualize one slender strand and what alternate potentials lie ahead. The danger of further entwining karmic ties with others, as opposed to loosening them, is emphasized, for all karmic bonds must be dissolved before earthly life can be released.

Each offshoot also shares, to a greater or lesser extent, information and experience with its brethren offshoots. It may be that some offshoots are set up with strongly similar life challenges, and

a rich dialogue sharing their experiences across the centuries enriches and revitalizes those involved. If two heads are better than one, then a dozen probable selves are even better! In other cases life situations may be so starkly disparate that but an occasional "touching base" is shared. Much of the insight and inspiration you may occasionally feel upon awaking, a sudden zest to face your challenges with fresh vigor and determination, stems from deep communion with your brethren selves offering their wisdom for your benefit.

To sum up: in deep communion each offshoot offers its day's experiences to the higher self, which responds with a flow of guidance and direction designed to encourage the offshoot to stay the steady course of growth toward enlightenment and release of karma. Among probable and reincarnational selves, experiences and wisdom are swapped in a free-flowing exchange which encourages all participants to face their waking challenges with renewed strength and creativity.

Waking Up The Ego

The ego is constructed from "scratch" each morning, sewn from fragments of memory and purpose fed to it by its authentic self. The authentic self follows a standard template of maturation which leads the body through its growth from infancy to old age, and flavors waking consciousness with qualities appropriate for its body's condition. Each day brings body and mind one small 24-hour step forward on its journey, and minute adjustments will be made to reflect that growth. Atop the standard maturational template, the authentic self also carries the fruits of each night's deep communion, which it attempts to impress into the ego's awareness.

Here is where the greatest barrier lies to receiving guidance from one's higher self. The ego, a cacophonous jungle of fears, neuroses, ambitions, vices, needs, and moral quandaries, has its hands full attending to immediately present experience, and has little time or incentive to shift into an altered state of consciousness and receive guidance from the authentic self. Suffering under the illusion of separation, which triggers constant fear for the body's security and a sense of want, the ego tends

to operate from a primitive, survivalist mode. This is not always the case, of course; when you are relaxed, well fed, in the company of loved ones, your ego expands to embrace the fruits of art and culture and communion with others. Nonetheless, the authentic self must struggle to transmit its daily gleanings to the waking self against an onslaught of sensory impressions and wants/needs/fears vexing the ego.

The same factors which inhibit the soul's full participation in deep communion tend to hinder communication between authentic and waking selves as well. A diseased or unhealthy body, a mind clouded with worry and struggle, a hostile or dangerous living environment, all contribute to the ego's furious chatter drowning out the subtle messages from the authentic self. When the ego is in survivalist mode, its focus is exclusively on the sheer mechanics of survival and not an introspective contemplation of life's meaning and direction.

The irony is that those who are most in need of clear, direct guidance from the authentic self are the least likely to hear its gentle counsel or to risk following its urgings into innovative new directions. Perhaps you have known individuals who seem trapped in a downward spiral of multiplying crises—physical, emotional, and familial—where each calamity seems to trigger still another disaster. Most often such snowballing crises are triggered because the ego involved simply will not stop and consider the consequences of its actions, and the authentic self has no choice but to allow the ego to tumble into rock-bottom depression, and the body into illness and immobilization, in the hope of forcing the ego to acknowledge its failings and chart a new course.

Another determinant influencing the ego's embrace of the authentic self's guidance is cultural conditioning. Where a culture is steeped in a mystical atmosphere of dreams, visions, and animate natural forces, the barrier between waking and real selves is naturally perme-

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able. Where the evidence of the senses is held as the only true reality, and dreams and visions scorned as hallucinatory fragments, the barrier will be rigid and impenetrable. This cultural norm sets the standard for waking self/authentic self communication, atop which each individual ego either tightens or loosens the barrier.

Opening to Your Higher Self

We have established that every night, in the dream state, your soul communes with your higher self and probable/reincarnational brethren, and carries bushels of guidance and advice back from its nocturnal sojourn. When given the choice, most people readily say they would welcome such guidance, yet they struggle to hear but the faintest echoes of wisdom flowing from the higher realms. What tools and processes are available to loosen the barrier between ego and higher self?

First one must recognize a cold truth: what the higher self considers the highest fulfillment of its plan for a lifetime may horrify the ego. The ego's wants are simple and few: food, shelter, sex, love, money, health. There is nothing wrong with desiring any of these; they all contribute to a stable, comfortable life; even when gussied up, in this era of New Age sensibilities, into "tantric sexuality" and "divine prosperity." The basic wants remain the same. And here lies the challenge to even the most evolved spiritual seeker: the higher self may consider fulfillment of these wants an *impediment* to its life plan.

A higher self may determine that for reasons of overall balance, an offshoot should experience a lifetime of poverty. Or spend a lifetime suffering victimhood to balance lifetimes of oppressive and vicious abuse of power. An offshoot of the Agitator family of consciousness is virtually compelled to live outside the mainstream as an object of scorn and derision, with violent death at the hands of the authorities considered (by the higher self) a triumphant finale. A lifetime of chronic ill health offers a rich immersion into the body and its miraculous workings and failings.

Now do you still want to know your higher self's plan for your life?

The point is not that you capitulate to the higher self's plan and surrender to impotent endurance of your life's travails, but that you recognize that the

ego's wants—Perfect Love, Perfect Health, Perfect Wealth—are irrelevant to your life's deeper purpose. Since the ego always has the "upper hand" in conversation with the authentic self—it can concoct an infinite series of diversions to block hearing those subtle messages—it serves as the gatekeeper between waking and deeper selves. To truly breach the barrier, one must convince the ego to release its need-based judgment of wisdom flowing from the higher realms.

One of the most effective ways of doing this is to use the hazy "book-ends" of sleep, as you fall asleep and then awake the next morning. You cannot fall asleep unless your ego is convinced you are safe and secure, thus relieving much of its protective vigilance. Since the ego dissolves as you surrender to sleep, using this time as a conscious conduit to the higher realms is more effective than during the waking hours. You might speak aloud phrases carrying your desires in clear, simple prose: "I open myself to whatever guidance my higher self has to offer"; "I seek guidance on (a particular problem)"; "I wish to consciously know and fulfill my life's purpose." You would not use this time to ask the higher self to fulfill an ego-based need for money, love, or health. You are not telling the higher self to manufacture your life to the ego's specifications, but to open yourself to whatever the higher self wishes to impart.

At the other end of sleep, upon awaking in the morning, again you can take advantage of the ego's inchoate, fragmented state to absorb the guidance gleaned from the night's deep communion. Keeping a journal at the bedside is an excellent tool for training yourself to consciously recall the fruits of deep communion. It is important not to *judge* the material as it flows—for this is allowing the ego to jump into the process—but to simply record whatever impressions and fragments arise. Do not "compare" them yet with the desires stated at the cusp of sleep the prior evening.

Over time, this process of verbally requesting either general or specific information, and recording the results the next morning, provides a powerful impetus to direct communication with the authentic self. Consistency is im-

portant, for the channel between waking and authentic selves broadens with each night's communion. Patterns should emerge in the recorded entries, consistent themes and symbols which reveal the higher self's intended purpose for your life, and whether you are "on track" or "off track." Bursts of sudden inspiration, unbidden urges to make major life shifts, may well result from a consistently followed program.

Waking Dreams

Another powerful tool culled from deep communion is "waking dreams." Here, the normal process of dream creation is reversed: the conscious mind, while fully awake, fashions dream imagery and asks the subconscious mind to interpret it. This process is helpful whenever a life situation resists easy resolution, either due to its severity or its continual recurrence despite best efforts at resolution.

You are familiar with the process of dream interpretation, where fragments of dream imagery are stripped of their symbolic clothing and revealed in naked truth. Here, the process is reversed. Taking a situation which arises in your waking life, you reduce it to symbolic form, lay it at the doorstep of the subconscious mind, and await its interpretation.

The purpose is to resolve a pressing life issue by understanding its meaning, all the while "slipping it past" the ego. If you reduce a life situation to symbol the ego assumes you are fantasizing, which it considers a pleasant diversion. Rather than worrying about a problem in its raw externalities—the abusive spouse, the depleted bank account, the ravages of cancer—the situation is rendered in broadly sketched caricature. While it sounds whimsical, in truth this makes it *easier* for the authentic self to recognize and process the material, for at the higher levels of consciousness physical reality is an illusion. Rather than getting caught up in the minutiae of physical details, a cartoon image expresses its themes in broad strokes, making them more readily accessible to the authentic self.

Using waking dreams also bleeds some of the raw, ego-based emotion out of threatening situations. It is well and good to know that physical life is an illusion and you attract your life's experiences to you, but in the heat of battle—real or figurative—it is difficult to

operate from this lofty awareness. Reducing a situation to cartoon imagery helps relieve some of the immediacy, and thus softens the ego's adrenaline-fired response.

As an example, if you dread going to work each day and facing an angry, demanding, suspicious, domineering boss who holds the threat of dismissal over your head like a Damoclean sword, upon arriving at work and hearing the day's first bellow from his office you would mentally take a step back and paint the scene in broad strokes. Perhaps the office walls become the bars of a cage, the boss is a raging Tyrannosaurus and you a quivering rabbit. Feel the oppression of the cage's bars closing around you; when your boss emerges from his office say softly to yourself, "Here comes T Rex, and I am but a lowly rabbit." The whole time he rages before you, try to suppress your ego's natural response of outrage and defense, instead observing the scene as on a movie screen. When the boss retreats to his office/lair, take a breath, close your eyes and say, "Okay, higher self, what is this all about?"

It sounds fanciful, but the mechanism is valid: the ego's frantic defensive chatter is silenced since, after all, you are only watching a movie. This allows you to feed the event to the higher self in its immediately experienced intensity rather than later asking, in a quiet meditation, for insight. The event's emotional intensity offers a far richer "snapshot" of the event to the higher self since it evaluates its offshoots' experiences primarily in emotional rather than physical terms. Emotions are the signposts of your life's journey.

As another example, if you suffer from cancer you might visualize your body as a river and picture the tumor as a fallen tree or beaver dam: here, energy is blocked, stagnant, madly eddying in circles when it wishes to flow swift and clean. If it is possible to take a step back from yourself during chemotherapy or other treatments, you might picture the scene as wood nymphs and fairies helping to loosen the obstruction; you might say, "My body is a river but its flowing energy is blocked. What meaning does this hold?" The ego would actually welcome a pleasant fantasy of river and wood nymph over the harsh reality of chemotherapy, even as the imagery bypasses the ego-gatekeeper and soars to the higher self.

While a response may not be immediately forthcoming from the higher self, when used with some regularity the waking dream process opens a deep channel of communication among all levels of your being. The ego can relax, as it is entertained by fanciful imagery, while the conscious mind directly asks the higher self for guidance in understanding the deeper meaning of recurring or threatening events. By treating life's events as symbolic projections of deeper streams of consciousness—which, in truth, they are—all levels of the psyche can join in a rich communion which even the ego enjoys and benefits from. The result is conscious awareness of the formerly hidden meaning beneath life's perplexing events.



Our purpose in this essay has been to illuminate the processes occurring

during dreamtime, and to offer suggestions as to how these processes can be consciously used to enhance the flow of communication from the higher self to the waking self. The key obstacle is the ego—which may claim to desire insight into life's deeper meaning but rejects anything hindering its pursuit of health, wealth, and love—and we have offered several techniques which consciously "bypass" the ego's vigilance to access deeper levels of consciousness.

Most important is the recognition that holding awareness of your life's deeper purpose, and the meaning of significant life events, will not *solve* your problems, merely illuminate them. They will no longer be esoteric mysteries, but they still require dedicated effort to resolve and release them. Your higher self stands ever ready and willing to aid you in navigating your life's troughs and crests, and to do so with the clarity and vision your dream life offers you.

Reader Survey

You can help make *The Alexander Journal* more responsive to your interests by taking a few moments to fill out the enclosed reader survey. We are especially interested to know whether you would prefer an expanded *Journal* on a quarterly basis, rather than the current bimonthly schedule. Thanks for your input.

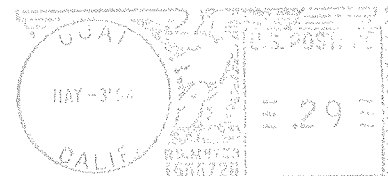
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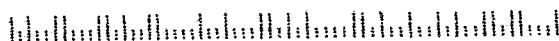
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PLAYING THE HUMAN INSTRUMENT USING MUSIC FOR PLEASURE AND HEALING

While Alexander wrote a chapter on music for Divine Grace, as a musician I have long been interested in a more technical exploration of how music engages and stimulates us on a vibrational level. I trust that even nonmusicians will find Alexander's insights of interest.

Ramón



Of all art forms, music is the "truest." If art's purpose is to bypass rational thought, stimulate your deeper being with pregnant symbols, and remind you of eternal truths often buried beneath everyday bustle, then music fulfills these artistic ends more completely than any other art form. Unlike painting or literature or sculpture, it is intangible; it shimmers in the air and is gone. It resists the rational mind's analysis for it has no substantive form to tease apart in search for the mystery of its magic. It engages your entire body; it can move you to tears, make you dance with joy, march off to war, or forge tribal cohesion.

This last is the reason music so moves and compels you: it literally resonates with your body. Other art forms are drunk in through the senses and rationally processed; music engages every cell, every layer of your energy fields, with its irresistible sway. In this essay we will explore the processes through which music engages and vitalizes the human body.

The Human Instrument

In a sense, you can conceive of music as the process of one instrument engaging another: a musical source broadcasts vibrational patterns which reach and engage another instrument, the human body. Our readers are sophisticated enough to know that the human body is composed of layers of vibration; that each organ and cell "sings" a distinct vibrational song; and that properly trained ears could locate the source of illness by detecting a point of vibrational disharmony within the body. Let us look at a few of the principles governing the human

body's vibrational makeup.

As a general rule, the body's core vibrates with the slowest frequency, while vibrational frequency rises with distance from the core. The skeleton's stiff bones carry the body's slowest frequency; the body's mass resonates at a higher, though still tempered, vibration; and the energy fields expanding beyond the skin sing at escalating frequencies. Layered atop this general construction is a gradual deceleration of frequency from the crown of the head to the pelvis—often depicted in esoteric terms as "chakras" of decelerating vibration.

Each chakra is understood to vitalize a certain aspect of human life: from sexual urges at the root chakra, through emotional vitality at the heart chakra, to spiritual wisdom at the crown chakra. Thus, the human body is a veritable symphony of vibration, miraculously harmonious given the complexity of its vibrational construction and the broad range of frequencies which blends to one mellifluous gestalt.

It should be noted that the upper and lower reaches of the body's vibrational scale far exceed the human ear's perception of sound; that is, the body's slowest vibrations throb beneath your ear's awareness, while the suprasoprano hum of your auric fields escapes the ear as well. This is one reason why music engages you so completely: it can directly stimulate areas of the body which receive no stimulation from the ear-brain processing of sound.

Let us briefly explore this. All senses perceive a certain range of vibration and send signals of stimulation to the brain. The brain, in turn, interprets the incoming vibrations and modifies them into neurological impulses which stimulate areas of the body pulsing at the appropriate frequency. For example, your eyes can drink in a lofty spiritual text, a heart-wrenching romantic novel, or pornography. The brain transforms the raw visual data of the spiritual text into frequencies compatible with the

crown chakra, the spiritual center, which forces concentration to the rarified realm of spiritual truth and leaves the body dormant. The romantic novel is processed as denser, slower frequencies, resonating at the heart and mind, fully engaging you body in tingling empathy with the characters. Pornography is processed as slower still, funneling directly to the root chakra triggering a rush of blood and sexual desire.

Similarly, the ear and brain work in harmony to perceive and process sound vibration streaming from your environs; and to stimulate appropriate areas of the body as a means of "resonating" the body with its environment. If your body is a field of vibration, and it is the nature of vibrational fields to entrain and attempt to harmonize their vibrations, then your body quite literally "becomes" whatever sounds your environment offers up.

A milieu of sharply discordant sounds, such as a loud manufacturing plant, literally shreds the body's innate harmony, inviting disability and early death. A bucolic setting of babbling brook and wind fluttering through trees restore harmony to a damaged or distraught body. A body exposed to overwhelmingly loud sounds, such as airports or rock concerts, ultimately loses its ability to hear sounds within that range, protecting itself again further assault.

If you can perceive of your body as pulsating symphony of vibration, navigating through a cosmos of widely diverse vibrational environments with which you can entrain and, to some extent, "become," you understand why music is the truest art form. It bypasses the cognitive process through which art is beheld by the eyes, stripped of its symbolic coating, and its deeper meaning beheld and interpreted. Music engages you on a pur level, free of intellectual abstraction; it envelops and stimulates you directly, every atom, every cell. You don't "think about music's meaning; you *become* music's meaning.

Musical Wellsprings

Two significant influences determine the nature of a culture's music. The first is the earth's own vibrational frequencies emanating from the core and rising from the crust to meet cosmic radiation, blending to a vibrational soup incorporating earth and cosmic energies. This creates the basic vibrational context for all earth life. It determines the range of intellectual, spiritual and emotional experience available to humanity at a given time. Because the earth's core vibration steadily accelerates, human culture appears to be progressing; this is certainly evident technologically, less so in cultural and spiritual terms, though there is forward movement. As music is humanity's self-created vibrational environment, its nature changes with the march of time and accelerating earth energies.

The other influence on a culture's music is its own condition vis-à-vis its beliefs, values, social mores and taboos, etc. Generally speaking, a stable, harmonious and open culture will devise one basic musical form which resonates with all members and serves as a vibrational nexus ensuring cultural cohesion. A culture fraught with conflict, repression, violence, and animosity tends to fracture into sub-tribes, each with its own signature musical expression. Like other art forms, music may be used to subvert the dominant cultural aesthetic, whether in martial songs stirring radicals to battle, or dirty ditties attacking sexual repression.

Music, then, is the medium through which humanity creates a self-generated vibrational environment which expresses and affirms the condition of its culture. On an individual level, whenever you fashion a musical environment—either by playing recorded music or an instrument—you create a vibrational sea which envelops you and resonates with your body's vibrational state, thus empowering and energizing you, confirming the "rightness" of your being. Your distress at being exposed to music contrary to your taste—street kids forced to listen to Beethoven, or sophisticates assaulted by sidewalk rap—triggers a "fish out of water" sensation: for you are, indeed, in an environment hostile to your body's harmony. You naturally seek environments, musical and otherwise, which harmonize with and validate your body's innate vibrations.

Playing the Human Instrument

We wish to turn now to a more technical discussion of how certain musical tones, chords, and patterns affect the body. This material may be of greater interest to musicians than those who simply enjoy music, but everyone should gain some insight from it.

In the western musical system, the range of audible frequencies is broken down into octaves; each octave spans eight tones, with the high and low notes having the same name (C, G, and so on), recognizing the similarity in how the note "sounds" despite the difference in frequency. A G note's next highest cousin vibrates at precisely twice the frequency of the lower note. The two notes "sound" similar because of their mathematically related frequencies.

Each note resonates with a distinct aspect of the human body. Certain chords and chord patterns are more appropriate for different styles of music, for they most readily link with the body's vibrations in the area related to the music's theme. The key of C is an "all purpose" key for it resonates broadly with the body and its surrounding energy fields; it is the only key that remains entirely on the piano's white keys, avoiding the spicy inflections of the black notes. The key of D hones in on the emotional life, relations with friends, lovers, and family; it particularly stimulates issues of loss, regret, mourning. With its related B minor chord it produces a musical atmosphere to reduce the strongest man to tears.

The related keys of E, A, and B are highly stimulative, with E resonating strongly at the root chakra (and we know what that means), while the higher frequencies of A and B chords stimulate a "get up and go" vitality, an animated vigor. These frequencies link both with the brain's areas governing physical activity and with the cells and muscles sustaining vigorous movement. Feelings of lethargy can well be combatted by soaking in a musical atmosphere of the E chord family.

By the same token, because these chord patterns entrain with the body/mind's physical activity areas, when they are expressed as minor chords, in a slow-moving passage, they can bring the body to a screeching halt, almost to

paralysis. One feels compelled to cease all activity and *listen* while the music sedates the body and soothes the mind. A tip for harried parents.

The key of F, like its cousin the key of C, has a fairly broad range, but it especially stimulates the internal organs, particularly the digestive system. As a major chord it offers a nice balance between stimulation and relaxation. In its minor form it offers a soothing, sedative effect particularly helpful after a large meal. Because it broadly resonates with the internal organs, including the heart, it also has a spillover effect on emotional life.

The key of G most closely approximates the energies of the crown chakra, the spiritual center, the energies swirling about the head which lead skyward to the spiritual realms beyond. Though related to the key of C, it lacks C's "grounding" to earth and physicality; it soars free of earthly and bodily concerns, stimulating lofty thoughts and visions. This is the best key to use during meditation, visualization, or any kind of spiritually based work.

We have briefly mentioned how changing a major chord to a minor chord—just bringing one note of a three-note chord down a half tone—dramatically alters its effect. A bright, cheerful major chord becomes a solemn, lugubrious minor chord. Without going into great detail, a major chord's three notes latch onto and stimulate the body and its auric fields in a full, complete way; resonating with body, mind and spirit in equal intensity. A minor chord impairs this harmonious unity as certain frequencies "drop out" and the body is bathed in an atmosphere suffused with the sense that "something is missing." Life's full richness has been lost; one almost mourns the loss of innocent wholeness.

Whatever the key, a minor chord stimulates the heart with sensations of grief and loss, for the atmosphere bathing the body echoes with bereavement over lost wholeness.

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Beyond major and minor chords, each chord structure carries a unique effect on the body. Adding a 7th to a major chord, for instance, adds a fourth note to the pattern and increases the chord's complexity; this cannot help but stimulate the body in a richer, denser way. Musicians recognize that adding a 7th "spices up" a chord, opening a new level of engagement with the music. A 7th is the jalapeño of musical cuisine.

Of course most music is not experienced as discrete chords, but as a flowing pattern of musical vibration. A well-crafted melody, one fully engaging and compelling its listeners, creates a flowing vibrational sea whose waves peak in rhythmic cadence atop a harmonious chord pattern. Most important is that the changing chords stimulate sympathetic areas of the body, flowing smoothly from one area to another, without jarring shifts.

Remember that organ systems, the brain and auric fields are stimulated by distinct keys and chords, and the most pleasing music offers a pattern of stimulation-rest-stimulation-rest, alternately engaging and subtly releasing the area of greatest resonance. Abrupt key changes, discordant chords crashing together, or a 13-year-old imitating Jimi Hendrix on his first guitar, drive the listener to distraction because so many different areas of the bodily and auric fields are suddenly assaulted with stimulation, then abandoned, in a chaotic jumble of noise.

Each young generation's music often feels like musical molestation to parents and elders, for the driving sexual rhythms and turbulent discordance precisely reflect the energies of youth, not of staid middle age. By the same token, store owners have discovered that playing music of the Fifties scatters youthful congregations as from the gates of Auschwitz.

Just as different keys and chord patterns stimulate different areas of the body and aura, so does rhythm carry an effect on various elements of the body. As a general rule, the faster the beat, the "lower" or more "grounded" the area stimulated will be; while slower pacing stimulates the cognitive and spiritual aspects of being. This may seem a curious paradox, since vibration accelerates from root chakra to crown, but the explanation lies in the lower body's attraction

to strong stimulation of any nature, be it a musical beat, a warm bath, or sex. The more insistent and driving a stimulation is, the more completely the lower body entrains to it, blocking out the higher aspects. Again, the music of youth most often rides a rapid, insistent rhythm which stimulates and reinforces youth's thirst for adventure, conquest, and sexual license.

The musical choice of cultural sophisticates is the classical symphony, born of earth energies and cultural structures centuries old. Riding atop a more languid pacing, and a complex musical structure stimulating the mind and spirit, the symphony is a natural choice for those living the life of the mind, and those whose youthful energies have mellowed into middle age.

Quite literally, listening to a symphony two centuries old transports the body to the earth energies extant at the time of its creation, creating a sense of bedrock stability and security in its listeners. A symphony provides a temporary reprieve from the chaotic, volatile energies of modern life, weaving a soothing vibrational cocoon harkening back to a less turbulent era.

Musical Medicine

We have seen that music holds tremendous power to affect the body's energetic fields, and that particular keys and chords directly stimulate discrete areas of those fields. Let us gaze into our crystal ball and offer some hints of how music might be incorporated into the "gentle medicine" of the future.

First, the human body can be vibrationally "mapped." Each organ, each muscle, each blood cell, offers a distinct vibrational pattern when healthy. We envision a chamber lined with sensors, in which a patient lies, while the sensors detect the body's vibrational patterns. The sensors' combined data would provide a complete map of the body's vibrational condition, which would serve to readily pinpoint any areas of disharmony. Particularly noticeable would be tumors or other growths emitting discordant turbulence.

Indeed, since a tumor is always "invited" to a given locale by preexisting discordance, the presence of such a discordant field would offer warning of

incipient tumors even before they manifest. Application of musical tones entraining with the affected portion of the body could heal the nascent tumor before it develops. Of course, as with any disability, a true holistic approach would also look at other aspects of the patient's life to determine the deeper source of imbalance manifesting as a tumor.

Musical medicine would be especially helpful in healing wounded areas after injury. The healing process of a deep flesh wound, for instance, could be accelerated by weaving a pattern of sound which first stimulates the skin, then the muscles involved, the blood and veins, and so on. Damage to the internal organs could be ameliorated not only by enveloping the body in the organs' healthy vibrational patterns, but by tones stimulating blood coagulation, thus slowing internal bleeding. A bone fracture would heal more quickly when bathed in a vibrational atmosphere of sturdy bedrock vibration.

Needless to say, the field of musical medicine would require a cadre of skilled healers not only familiar with traditional medicine's insights into the body's anatomy and physiology, but who also possess a finely developed musical sense. Most healing sessions would not involve the simple application of a single tone, but a complex flowing pattern of vibration sculpted with great care. The patient's age, mental and physical condition, and injuries would all affect the nature of the musical medicine to be applied.

Once a course of treatment was determined, a personalized symphony would be composed. It would open with a gentle passage entraining with and soothing the patient's entire body. Layered atop this basic theme, a more precisely focused theme would entrain the area of injury and stimulate it with the vibrational patterns of its healthy, vital counterpart. This theme would flow through the pattern of stimulation-rest, first fully engaging the affected area, then releasing it. The intent is that the injured area begins to generate the pattern on its own during the periods of rest.

Finally, to close the session, the healing theme diminishes as a broader "body massage" theme of mild stimulation entrains all bodily systems, encouraging them to work harmoniously in accelerating healing; followed by a quiet,

gentle release fading to silence.

One of the challenges in devising such symphonic healing is that many of the tones involved lie above or below the threshold of audible sound. This is not an insurmountable obstacle, since the healing symphony would be programmed through computers previously programmed with the appropriate tones. As musical medicine advances, computers will take over more and more of the "work" necessary to create an appropriate healing symphony, taking into account mitigating factors and the primary injury involved. The technician would study a printout of the computer-generated healing symphony and make any necessary adjustments before applying it to the patient.

As an aside, in some ancient cultures which achieved healing systems of great sophistication but never harnessed electricity and computers, musical healing was performed through groups of a dozen or so healers who would seat themselves around a patient and weave a complex tapestry of sound with their voices. It was understood that the human voice entrained with the human body more fully than a musical instrument could. The limitation of this practice was that the tones above and below audible sound were not recognized, and therefore could not be included in a healing regimen.

Healing with Music Today

You need not wait for some distant future to begin deliberately incorporating music into your life as one element of a healthy lifestyle. With the brief principles outlined in this essay, you have many options available now. If you have

trouble concentrating, want to boost mental power, then classical music, with its centuries-old patterns stimulating mental stability, would be appropriate. Spirituality can be enhanced with even loftier, less "grounded" music, such as much rhythm-less New Age music produced today. Problems in the internal organs or with sexuality might be treated with regular doses of rock and roll, which entrains with and stimulates the body's lower, denser systems.

Remember that certain keys are more effective than others at stimulating parts of the body. Problems with motivation, procrastination, or low energy levels would benefit from music in the keys of E, A, and B. The key of C offers a generalized "body massage." The key of D engages the heart and relationship issues (though watch out for too many minor chords!). The key of G enhances spiritual growth.

Finally, you need not look outside yourself at all for musical healing. The human body is a miraculously self-healing mechanism which is born with the power to heal itself through sound. One of the most powerful healing sounds is "ommmmm" which, like the key of C, envelops the body in a cocoon of invigorating sound. The simple act of singing not only requires the body and brain to work together in creating beauty, but surrounds the body with a cocoon of vitalizing sensation. Even clapping a steady beat strongly entrains the body and urges it toward unison and wholeness.

Perhaps you can now see why, of all art forms, music is universally present in all cultures and serves as the foundation of culture. It isn't just a symbolic abstraction beheld by the eyes;

it is a vibrational atmosphere which envelops the body, entrains with it, and stimulates it toward harmony (or disharmony). It is both an art form and a powerful healing tool. Everyone is born a musician, for everyone has voice and hands. We encourage you to pay closer attention to the musical atmospheres in which you immerse yourself, to use music not only for pleasure but for healing and growth.

Call For Questions

The September issue will feature Alexander's answers to readers' questions. If you have questions of general interest you would like to have considered, please send them to us by August 1.

Earthly Cycles Update

While many of our readers took advantage of our prepublication offer and have been enjoying *Earthly Cycles* for several months, the book is just now available through regular distribution channels (so to speak), and bookstores are ordering through our distributors.

What You Can Do

To help create a groundswell of demand for *EC*, call your local bookstore (New Age especially) and ask them if they carry it. If they don't, ask them to. Encourage your friends to order copies from their favorite bookstores as well. No amount of advertising is as powerful as word-of-mouth enthusiasm!

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To help potential readers in your area become aware of *Earthly Cycles*, drop us a postcard with the name and address of local metaphysical publications which publish book reviews and we will send them a review copy. If a local radio program features New Age topics/authors, let us know and we will contact them.

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