

Rhythm of
Wholeness
by Dane Rudhyar

PROLOGUE

When I was born in Paris, France, near the close of the nineteenth century, automobiles, telephones, radios, phonographs, television, central heating, the wide use of electricity, and the power of large corporations were in their infancy or entirely unknown. Nineteenth-century science was still exclusively dominated by the materialism and mechanism of "classical" seventeenth-century science. Freud had not yet opened the gates that have led to the inundation of human consciousness by the torrents of a psychology stressing an exacerbated concern for problem-solving, "personal growth", and the feeling that every human being "matters" as an individual basically equal to all other individuals and entitled to the same rights regardless of functional differences such as sex, race, nationality, and social class.

Since my adolescence I have had to face these historical changes in our society and culture. Especially since my seventeenth year, my mind has tried to interpret my experiences and inward feelings in a manner that challenged the traditions impressed upon my consciousness and behavior by family, school, and social environment. This interpretation has led to radical changes in my relationship to my ancestral religion, natal class, and cultural ideals. It also prompted me to change my place of residence (the United States since 1916) and my language. In the decades since then, I have written many books and engaged in other creative activities which gave form to new concepts of organization in the arts. This book, **Rhythm of Wholeness**, is therefore the harvest of decades of sustained and consistent work. It is also the result of many severe crises of personal transformation.

My purpose in writing this book was to evoke the possibility of organizing knowledge, intuitive realizations, and collective and individual experiences within a new frame of reference that would reveal a new meaning of "being" as experienced by a **human** consciousness. It was **not** to convey new information concerning the universe or to impart a mass of data about the place human beings occupy in it.

Of themselves data have no meaning until they are organized in relation to one another and interpreted by a human mind. To do so, the mind must refer the data to a frame of reference. The character of all such frames of reference inevitably is metaphysical and/or the product of a religious revelation. It is also a product of the historical development of a particular society and culture. In addition to producing such frames of reference — which fundamentally orient and even control the collective assumptions and reactions of a people — a society's historical development also introduces to the people's consciousness ever changing and more or less new experiences and concepts. In our society, this process of change has accelerated enormously since the Industrial revolution began radically to transform human existence and the patterns of interpersonal and sociocultural relationships. Hence the **need** for a new frame of reference within which to interpret new experience and conceptual breakthroughs. In 1930 when I wrote a series of articles entitled "The Philosophy of Operative Wholeness" for the small magazine, **The Glass Hive** (which was edited by Will Levington Comfort, a writer and long forgotten pioneer of "New Age" ideals), the concepts of wholeness and holistic (versus atomistic)

organization were not in general use. Neither was the term **transpersonal** which, I believe, I was the first to use in English in that series of articles. Today these terms are in common usage, but, alas, often with vulgarized meanings. In this book they are given what I consider to be their most significant philosophical meaning.

In order to be understood fully, such meanings require a "new mind" — the "mind of wholeness." Also required is a still generally unfamiliar feeling-response toward interpersonal relationships and sociocultural issues — thus a new **quality** of being as one discovers oneself to operate both as a person living in society and a generically human organism affected by and affecting the biosphere of the planet Earth. My hope is that a careful, consistent, and sequential reading of the pages of this book will generate at least the desire — and perhaps the sustained determination — to develop such a mind of wholeness.

This book introduces a relatively new type of relationship to other men and women, to nature, to our planet as a whole, and to what usually is pictured as God, a divine state of being, or a supreme Reality. Although basic ideas are rarely absolutely new, they must be reformulated and their implications for concrete existential transformation revealed anew culture after culture, century after century, and even generation after generation.

To do so one must use words which have acquired definite, customary, and perhaps tradition-hallowed meanings. Unfortunately, this poses serious problems to a radical attempt to develop a new mind. Many readers assume that philosophical terms always carry the meaning with which they are familiar; they respond to new ideas by taking them out of context and using them to confirm ideas previously encountered. Therefore, it has been necessary for me to define as precisely as possible the different meanings I give to familiar terms for which no adequate and convincing alternatives can be found in our language.

While reading this book, intellectual criticism of detail of formulation tends to be nonproductive, because the purpose of the presentation is not, I repeat, to convey a mass of data claimed to be objectively true. It is rather to introduce a kind of philosophical perspective which, consistently applied, allows the inclusion and understanding of **all** human experiences, both objective and subjective. In this connection, the book's subtitle — **A Total Affirmation of Being** — is most important. The rhythm of dynamic Wholeness always deals with "being"; it dismisses as irrelevant the concept of "non-being." Such a concept has meaning **only** if the term **being** is thought to apply solely to the objective universe. What follows the dissolution of this predominantly objective state of being is a predominantly subjective type of consciousness and activity. However, our existence in the universe is not exclusively objective, nor is what follows our death or that of the cosmos exclusively subjective. Reality, as presented in this book, is the unceasing, dynamic interplay of subjectivity and objectivity, of a principle of Unity and a principle of Multiplicity. It is neither Unity nor Multiplicity, neither spirit nor matter — separately.

In order to understand clearly the implications of this and what it can mean in the practice of living, it is necessary for us to grasp the specific meaning of the ambiguous term **unity**. This will be explained in Chapter 2, where I also analyze the way I use the term **Wholeness** and the meaning of the traditional concept of **the One**. Nevertheless, I

should stress here that Wholeness cannot be analyzed intellectually, nor can it be pictured as a concrete image. Although the cyclic Movement of Wholeness is presented in Chapter 4 in diagrammatic and circular form, it is only for the purpose of establishing a base of understanding which the concrete mind can use to feel "grounded" in a process having definite, symmetrical phases. In a very real sense, every possible relationship between Unity and Multiplicity operates at some level. Every phase is defined by every other phase of the cyclic process of being. Wholeness is not any of these phases. It is "be-ness," not "being." Any whole (or system of organization of a multiplicity of elements) is Wholeness in a dynamically and cyclically evolving form in which all other forms are also implied.

Such a statement is, I believe, in broad agreement with the most recent formulations of "systems philosophy" and the "bootstrap" concept of reality in physics. Although it may sound extremely abstract if not incomprehensible, it does not purport to describe precisely what reality (with or without a capital R) **is**. It is meant only to **evoke** the birthing of a new mind — the mind of wholeness.

Because of this essential purpose, this book might be considered an epic poem conveying to the reader the sense of a complete experience. The poem makes a sequence of events — but not each separate event considered unconnected — translucent to meaning. It is **a revelation of meaning through a sequence of events**.

To make the process of being translucent to meaning — this is Man's supreme archetypal function within the planetary whole in which mankind is evolving toward the state of what I call **Illumined Man**. In that state, the Light of the Logos — the creative Word that "was in the beginning" — is reflected by the transfigured individual **and** transmuted into Meaning.

CHAPTER ONE

Prelude to a New Interpretation of Reality - 1

Any systematic interpretation of correlated facts of existence — be it a primitive, magical interpretation of natural events, a "great religion," a philosophical or cosmological system, or the application of the "scientific method" — is undertaken to fulfill a collective human **need**. I use the term **need** in its broadest sense here, and it includes what is usually considered play: children and animals play to satisfy biological needs. For adult human beings, play satisfies not only physical but, more especially, psychological and sociocultural needs; collective games and sports strengthen the community spirit. The Hindu interpretation of the totality of world events as the Play (**lila**) of Brahma in turn can be interpreted as a theistic symbolization of the cyclic fulfillment of an ever-repeated cosmogenic need. As we shall see throughout this book, the actual appearance and existence of the objective universe also meets a fundamental need which takes a multitude of forms and which can be metaphysically interpreted: the need of Wholeness.

The primary need of any form of existence is survival as a whole, that is, as an integral system of activities. The basic imperative for all biological species is to survive in the harsh, competitive conditions of the biosphere. At the human level, this need can be met only through cooperation — in acts and thinking — thus through social organization and culture. As mankind has evolved from a primitive, unselfconscious, and compulsive state of quasi-animal, instinctual group activity and awareness, and has reached its present condition of highly technological and intellectualized existence in complex social and multi-national systems of organization, a great variety of psychic, emotional, personal, and intellectual needs have taken ever-changing forms. Especially today new ones are emerging, engendered by the extremely rapid transformation of the way of life of most human groups and individuals. This transformation has been occurring under the pressure of the industrial and electronic revolutions, which in turn both resulted from and intensified the development of a historically new kind of consciousness — the personalized and mentalized consciousness of "individuals" intent on asserting a centralized and autonomous type of activity.

A descriptive, personalistic psychology such as Abraham Maslow's speaks of a hierarchy of human needs. This is practical and valuable when dealing with the results of the frustration of these needs. But all psychological systems are based on a philosophical and ontological approach to the total set of human experiences called reality. We may speak here of metaphysics, but this term is unfortunate and today rather meaningless, for it has been used in several ways. The basic question is not how to interpret what is beyond (**meta**) the physical world, but to define the approach one takes to the **fact of being** — thus to **what is**.

What is called knowledge is, at any stage of human evolution and cultural development, a set of images and concepts (or symbols and principles of organization) according to which the collectivity of human beings **interprets** what all its "sane" and mature members accept as "facts." This includes facts of perception and of individual and collective responses to perceptions which come either through the senses or through internal changes of feeling (including what is imprecisely called intuition).

Human knowledge constantly changes. New facts arise which require new interpretations. These, in turn, must be formulated in new symbols, images, artistic forms, and words. Even principles of interpretation gradually evolve, because the fundamental values of the interpreting consciousness and the frame of reference giving the interpretation consistency and meaning periodically alter. Each culture, or rather culture-whole, develops its own set of symbols and bases for interpretation.

The word **culture** has both a subjective and an objective meaning. One speaks of a cultured person, referring to his or her manners, erudition, and interest in the arts; but one also speaks of a culture. By this is meant a complex system of behavior, feeling, and thinking that unites a collectivity of human beings who unquestioningly accept (because they have been trained to do so since birth) a well-defined set of beliefs, values, and laws. I have used the term **culture-whole** to indicate clearly that I am referring to a **particular** culture as an objective, collective social phenomenon.¹

Culture-wholes are collective psychosocial organisms — that is, they are organized systems of collective psychic and social activities. At the core of a culture-whole's psychism is its dominant religion and the set of symbols, images, myths, rites, values, attitudes, and beliefs which constitute its collectively accepted interpretations of reality and approach to existence. As these evolve and change, the culture-whole matures. Eventually, when the integrity and consistency of its psychic core breaks down under the introduction of facts or factors it cannot assimilate, it disintegrates.

Although each culture-whole develops according to its own rhythms, a common pattern underlies the development of all cultures. Three periods of development may be distinguished, even though they usually cannot be precisely separated from one another. Each new development surpasses yet incorporates the preceding ones. The new has to be sustained by the root-energy operating at the primordial level of biology and most often by collective psychism. This is necessary at least until a completely new mode of being takes control, powered by a radically different type of energy.

¹ See my books **Culture, Crisis and Creativity** (The Theosophical Publishing House, 1977) and **Beyond Individualism: The Psychology of Transformation** (The Theosophical Publishing House, 1979).

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Prelude to a New Interpretation of Reality - 3

The individualistic approach: When a member of a primitive tribe fills an "office" — for instance, by participating in a ritual dance, wearing the mask of a vitalistic god, and feeling pervaded by the god's power — this experience does not permanently change the consciousness of the person, who afterwards assumes his or her usual life. But the possibility of wanting to retain the feeling of the experience and to build on it a "special" status is present in human nature. The person may seek to maintain his or her subjective identification with the power of the office, and this desire sets him or her **apart from** all other members of the tribe. Feelings of separateness and superiority develop, especially if the performance brought the performer into contact with a new or deeper level of power which produced unusual or spectacular results. The tribesman then may claim this power as characteristically and permanently "his own." He, as a "subject," possesses a unique power. He may claim this possession publicly, and the claim may be accepted by admiring members of the tribe. He is then "the one" person having such a power. But being still strongly conditioned by biological drives, he is likely to want to extend the scope of the power and to pass it to his progeny. Hereditary claim is laid, not only to the power itself, but to its possession as a social factor.

More generally speaking, the feeling of being a unique individual, set apart from other persons (who are not so distinguished and do not possess the power) gives rise to the dualism of subject and object. The person as subject possesses objective, demonstrable powers; they are "his" and he can use them as he pleases. "This is my pleasure," says the chieftain, who rules "his" people and land. Soon the minds of philosophers or religious leaders feel the need to justify such a situation with the image of a personal God who possesses all imaginable powers and uses them as a "Play" (**lila**) to create the universe, **His** universe. Mind always works two ways: it interprets the results of activity, and these interpretations facilitate the spread of the activity by giving it the "sanction" of a coherent rationale. The mind performs this service by analyzing new situations to "discover" structural or essential factors ("laws"), then by deducing from these factors new ways of maximizing their power (technology).

The moment a human being performs a new kind of action, feels elated by a new sense of power, **and** adds to the feeling of elation the thought, "This is mine, uniquely mine," the **mental** image of "I" arises — "I," a subject possessing a power to alter an objective world; "I," a **subject** owning **objects** that can be used, transformed, and destroyed. This realization is highly intoxicating. It is also the origin of the vast variety of conflicts inherent in most, if not all, of the systems of social organization human beings have devised, from the most capricious tyranny to the most benign democracy. It has led to the glorification of the subjective factor and devaluation of the objective world (nature). This in turn has inspired many systems of metaphysics and monotheistic religions, particularly in medieval India and Europe. These systems **had to** develop because they were needed to provide a foundation and justification for the slow and inherently stressful individualistic transition between the biologically dominated vitalistic type of consciousness and activity and the new (and mostly future) level of evolution which I call the Pleroma state.

In India the philosophical glorification of the subjective state took various forms, some purely metaphysical (as in the Upanishads and the Advaita type of Vedanta evoked by Sri Sankaracharya), others more religious and theistic. The latter emphasizes the ubiquitous and absolute power of a God who periodically manifests in and through an objective universe, yet who also has an unmanifest and purely subjective aspect. According to the Bhagavad Gita, this God remains untouched and undiminished by his creations, but he also can intervene in the evolution of the objective universe. As (or through) an Avatar, he acts to realign the universe with its original archetypal model when centrifugal (overly individualistic) developments destructure it — that is, when the original **dharma** is forgotten and has to be restated and reenergized.

The more strictly metaphysical systems found expression in the grand mystical statement of the Upanishads, **Tat twam asi** (That thou art), which proclaims the identity of the self within man (**atman**) and the universal Self (**Brahman**). But in order to understand the psychological and evolutionary function of this statement, we should consider the historical and philosophical context in which it was made. It was proclaimed by "forest philosophers," men nearing the end of lives that had been totally dominated and ritualized by the rigid imperatives of the Laws of Manu. These laws enjoined these men to prepare for death by giving up all attachments to village and kin and even to their own biological organisms. In that essentially vitalistic era, human beings considered their existence in terms of the quasi-seasonal cycle of birth-death-rebirth. The "last thought in death" (the seed-like condensation of an ending cycle of human experience) logically was believed to be the foundation out of which a future cycle of personal experience would unfold. Because yearly cycles of objective natural living follow one another endlessly, human beings too seemed forever bound to this repetitive pattern of existence. The forest philosophers, however, came to realize that a **subjective** center is present in human consciousness. By concentrating on this center, a person could "disobjectivize" himself and become a pure, free subject, unconditioned by nature (the **gunas**) and cyclic time.

This was liberation (**moksha**) not only from biological desires and the play of the gunas in the world of nature; it also meant, at least potentially, reaching a state of inner freedom from bondage to the outer patterns imposed by Hindu society and its cults. This freedom was possible for anyone sufficiently eager to experience it through the disciplined use of meditation — that is, an inward-directed state of concentrated attention — and in general through yoga. Over the course of centuries yoga took many forms, but it aims at producing a state called **kaivalya**, which often is translated rather inadequately as isolation but which refers to a liberation of the individual self from the collective power of society, religion, and culture. In this sense, yoga is a way of becoming individualized. However, individualization can be achieved by fighting **against** the power of the collective (and of generic human nature and its impulses) or by **transcending** the level of being at which this power has full control of all activities and responses.

This is the great issue which mankind has had to face and which it still faces today in a new and crucial way: the problem of **how** to become an individual free from generic nature and the collective patterns imposed by society and culture upon every newborn human being. But this "how" — the procedures and techniques used — ultimately

depends upon the mental picture one makes (or is taught and impelled to make) of the state to which the process of liberation leads. The person who feels bound at first may struggle against his or her bonds, even though he or she has neither a clear picture of what produced and originally imposed such a bondage nor a positive vision of liberation. Such a struggle remains blind and totally emotional until one realizes (or is made to realize) what it is that binds and what can be **expected** if one wins the struggle and becomes free. To lead one to such a realization and to help the struggler imagine what will be at the end of the struggle: this is the task of the philosopher, mystic, or theologian.

The mystic philosophers of the Upanishad type perhaps were dealing essentially with the universal realization, common to all human beings, of the inevitability of death. Death is not a tragedy when seen by the mind of a person belonging strictly to the vitalistic era. For such a person, birth and death are merely events inherent in all life processes. The person **is** such a process; he does not separate himself from it. He begins to suffer from it only when he experiences himself as a "subject" to which death happens. By proclaiming the identity of atman and Brahman, the formulation of the Upanishads simply **restated** the nonseparateness of a living being from the One Life, from the continuum of being and changes filling all space. Nevertheless, the restatement had to be made in different terms, because the "living being" had become the "individual self" — that is, "I" as the experiencer of the continuum of changes. Brahman, however, was not merely universal "life;" **It** was life **beyond** birth and death, a transcendent Essence.

Prelude to a New Interpretation of Reality - 4

For Gautama Buddha, the tragedy in human existence was not merely death (or the birth-death syndrome, for his realization coincided with the birth of his son); it was the experience of "suffering" — or rather **dukka**. Dukka is not mere suffering but the devastating sense of being isolated as an individualized center of consciousness and of **not belonging** to one's society and culture — today we would say, of being alienated. The Buddha's intent in building his **sangha** was, I believe, to create an ideal community within which there would be no experience of isolation and in principle no suffering. All its members would have totally accepted the doctrine (the dharma) according to which the cycle of birth-suffering-death was caused by "ignorance" and could be transcended by the "knowledge" of the cycle of individual causes-effects-causes.

Here again the key concept is transcendence; and it applied not merely to the sufferings of individual persons, but to social conditions like the caste-system, which produced dukka both for individuals and for entire classes of persons. Gautama was perhaps the first in historical times to think of social transformation not only in terms of the individual but in terms of humanity as a whole. However, this transformation was to be accomplished not by fighting against the social order (for instance, the caste-system) but by transcending it, by laying the foundations for a new type of community prefigured by the sangha. Presumably Jesus had a similar attitude. The **ecclesia** of the early Christians was a kind of sangha, perhaps inspired by Buddhist communities that had been established on the shore of the Dead Sea during the reign of the Buddhist emperor Asoka (273-232 B.C.). But while the essential commandment of Jesus was "Love ye one another as I have loved you," Gautama's doctrine, by explaining in causal terms the operations of change and the origin of dukka, was intended to make possible the overcoming of this suffering. The emphasis was upon the mind, but a mind no longer at the service of the individual self (especially in its aspect as the ego). Rather, mind became an instrumentality for transcending bondage to **particular** conditions of existence which, being particular and limited, engendered the dukka-producing feeling of tragic isolation.

A great many human beings conceive of the events of their lives as if they happened by chance or at least with no significant relation to or within their lives as a whole. In a narrow, superficial sense, one action may be seen to lead to another, but this character of mere succession is fundamentally different from the Buddhist concept of karma — which the scientific term **causality** interprets only inadequately. Karma implies the cyclic nature of existence. Two events are not merely related as cause and effect; this relation acquires its full meaning as karma only when it is perceived and interpreted as affecting the whole of a life, and in a larger sense the whole of mankind. In Buddha's time, such an interpretation implied the development of a new mind — a truly objective mind; a mind not so much detached from existence as able to deal with wholes of existence, with patterns of changes in which every event tends to become its opposite; a mind able to

perceive the entire sequence as a cyclic series assuming the symbolic form of a wheel (**samsara**). The poor and the rich, the weak and the powerful, represented opposite states; but those now poor would be rich at another time in the cycle, the slave would be a king — all according to the one universal principle of polarization and karma.

Such an approach did not negate the mystic vision of the sages of preceding ages. It became necessary because the idealistic feeling of the identity of atman and Brahman becomes a tragic farce and a cause of acute dukka **if an ego takes the place of atman**. When this occurs, the process of individualization goes awry; it is deviated by being placed at the service of the emotions, the biological impulses, and an ego that gives these a particular cohesion. Such a cohesion increases and intensifies the sense of uniqueness and isolation. The vision of old sages preparing for death after a fully lived existence within a rigidly planned community can indeed turn sour when youngsters, filled with ambition and passion, try to experience such a vision through socially "prestigious" yoga exercises and spectacular deprivations.

At the close of the twentieth century, we should be able to understand what happened two thousand five hundred years ago, because we have to deal with the far more complex and dukka-producing results of centuries of uncontrolled and one-pointed individualism combined with a materialistic, aggressive, and acquisitive approach to social togetherness and interpersonal relationships. Most significantly, Buddhism, in its various aspects is now openly accepted by a myriad of young people who in the late 1960s and early 70s either sought to rebel against society by stressing "their own" individual way of doing things, or sought freedom from collective patterns of interpersonal relationships and thinking by using psychedelic drugs. Buddhism offers them a traditional discipline which allows their restless, ego-centered individualism to gain some kind of collective support. Just as important, it offers a sense of security derived from beliefs and practices which have subsisted through social changes, political revolutions, and the pressures imposed by alien cultures and religions.

Whether Gautama Buddha would approve of present-day Buddhism and its many schools, or Jesus of the multiplicity of Christian churches, is another matter. Basic principles retain their validity; but they lose their original impact of transformative newness. The rationalistic, clearly defined, and numbered precepts in Gautama's **sutras** — which were mostly secondhand restatements of remembered words he had uttered many years before — were as important in his psychotherapeutic and ethical approach as was the insistence of his contemporary, Pythagoras, on precise measurements of the lengths of string of his monochord when producing a succession of sounds.³ The sixth century B.C. was the century when the measuring mind - the mind of reason, the analytical mind - began to give clearly defined forms to man's awareness of reality and his creative activities. But this new development was perhaps premature; it backfired into the absolute

³ See my book [The Magic of Tone and the Art of Music](#) (Shambhala Publications), 1982). Now free online at the [Rudhyar Archival Project](#).

subjectivism of Sankaracharya⁴ and the emotional bhakti movement of the Radha-Krishna cults, just as the rationalism of the classical age of Greece led to the irrationalism of and devotionalism of Christianity and the famous pronouncement of Tertullian, **Credo quia absurdum** (I believe because it is absurd).

⁴ In spite of what Orientalists may think, the original Sankaracharya was born some thirty-three years after the death of Gautama. Clear proofs were given in an article by the southern Indian Brahmin, T. Subba Row, which first appeared between 1882 and 1889, and later was published in the book, **A Collection of Esoteric Writings of T. Subba Row** (Bombay, 1917). (A complete edition of this great man's writings and letters is now being compiled.) The Sankaracharya who lived between 788-820 or 850 A.D. revived a long tradition kept in mathas (monasteries): all the men who headed this school successively took the name Sankaracharya, as they still do today — hence the confusion.

Prelude to a New Interpretation of Reality - 5

The European Renaissance revived something of the classical Greece spirit that had flourished two thousand years before. Unfortunately the revival came as a rather passionate reaction against the theological dogmatism of the Catholic Church, which was still very strong and armed with the power of the Inquisition. Because the Church considered the human soul and spiritual experiences as its exclusive domain, the scientific spirit of research and analysis **had to** concentrate upon the objective material world and the multiplicity of physical entities it could reduce to ever simpler elementary units. For nearly four centuries, empiricism (Francis Bacon), intellectual rationalism and mechanism (Descartes, Newton, et al.), and tremendous technological achievements came to dominate the West. Yet the latter derive from an exclusivistic scientific methodology, a materialistic individualism driven by the desire for physical comfort and personal independence at all costs, and an egocentric passion for profit, power, and expansion. Western civilization has spread its individualism all over the globe, and as a result the whole of mankind has reached a critical, potentially disastrous turning point. Individualism itself has to be transformed.

Individualism was given a universalistic and absolute meaning and interpretation by the sages of the Upanishad era and a rationalistic and ethical character by Gautama and the great minds of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, it acquired an empirical, materialistic, and political basis which led to the triumph of an ego-glorifying Western society. Christianity attempted to reinterpret individualism through divine love (**agape**); so did Mahayana Buddhism through the superhuman compassion (**karuna**) of the Bodhisattva ideal. Both attempts have led to many outstanding results, but both have become mired in dogmatism and a rigidly procedural, formula-worshipping mentality, which (at least in the past) has been misused to acquire political power. Now this individualism has once more to be reinterpreted and transfigured. A relatively new philosophical mind must be developed, free from both scientific and religious prejudice. The deification of "the Individual" and the supreme **One**, isolated in His super-rational absoluteness, must go, as well as the irrational randomness of an infinitely extended material universe reducible to infinitely small and incomprehensible **units**. I speak of this new mind as the "mind of Wholeness."

The trend toward the development of such a mind has been noticeable since the last decades of the nineteenth century, and especially since the first world war. Philosophically, this trend is centered around the persistent use of the terms **whole** and **holistic**, terms which keep recurring years after the publication of the now largely forgotten book **Holism and Evolution** (1926) by the South African statesman-philosopher

Jan Smuts.⁵ Since the term **holism** became fashionable in "progressive" circles, however, it has been used so carelessly that it has lost much of its meaning and correct impact. Moreover, Smut's concept of holism was so limited that it led to a typically Western glorification of what he (and C. G. Jung) called **personality** — to him the supreme achievement of evolution.⁶ Therefore, the concept of **whole** has to be broadened and universalized — more so indeed than recent philosopher-scientists interpreting the universe as a hierarchy of wholes (or systems) are able and willing to do. What is needed is to transfer the mind's attention and power of concentration from the image-concept of "the One" to that of "the Whole" and, even more, to **Wholeness**.

Such a transfer implies a fundamental change in metaphysical outlook and in the value given to religious movements and institutions. During the last four millennia, metaphysics has glorified the process of individualization and given it a quasi-absolute, often divine meaning by referring it to "the One." Religions have presented images of an utterly transcendent God, indeed one who is external to a universe He created "out of nothing" for no humanly conceivable reasons — or for such an obviously anthropomorphic purpose as "self-expression." The value of these ideas and formulations is in no way denied in this book; it is, however, seen as relative.

⁵ Smuts was influential in formulating the ideals which President Wilson and a few other visionaries tried to embody in the League of Nations (1920). His total repudiation by the South African nation was as tragic as Wilson's repudiation by the American people.

⁶ By **personality** Smuts and Jung meant something entirely different from the meaning the word has in theosophic and "esoteric" teachings. More recent writers speaking of the full development of the human potential have used the word **personhood** to avoid ambiguity. In medieval theology, God alone had "personality." For Smuts and Jung, no evolutionary stages stood between the fully developed human person (personality) and God.

Prelude to a New Interpretation of Reality - 6

Elsewhere I have spoken at length of the "process of individualization."⁷ It is a necessary phase in human evolution, but human evolution itself should be considered merely a phase in a cosmic and metacosmic process which, as I try to formulate it, is all-inclusive. It is the **cycle of being** as well as the **Movement of Wholeness**. Within this cycle mankind occupies a specific place and fulfills a definable function; but there is no reason why the state of being an **individual** should be considered the end of the process of human evolution. As the great French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupery once wrote: "The individual is but a path: Man only matters who takes that path."⁸ But if the state of being an individual is a means to an end, what then is the end? How can we give that state its true value if we cannot at least imagine what the end is or what it means? Is it only an end in a distant future of the evolution of our planet, or can it be reached by individuals even now?

This book attempts to speak to such questions understandably and consistently. The answers it offers will be based on facts of common human experience rather than on unusual and rarified subjective experiences reached only after arduous practices by persons of apparently special temperaments or through extreme psychological or social pressures. The central answer places in perspective the present-day state of human evolution, which features the realization of "being I" as a separate person independent from birth-conditions, with sovereign rights and an autonomous will jealous of its exclusive characteristics and mostly intent on individual development. This stage represents only a period of transition between two fundamental levels of being — the biological level given characteristically human features through series of local and exclusivistic cultures, and the level of what I call the **Pleroma**. To me, the Pleroma is a state of being whose participants have passed successfully through the condition of individualized and (at least relatively) separate selfhood. They then operate together as a planetary whole in a state of mental interpenetration and spiritual integration, a state which allows the safe actualization of powers and faculties latent in present-day human beings.

As far as the average person is concerned, the Pleroma state is still in the future. Yet it is a possibility inherent in Man considered as an archetype of being, and it can be actualized even now through a process of transmutation of energies and transfiguration of consciousness. An **individualized** person has to be the actualizer; but the result of the

⁷ What I mean by the "process of individualization" is very different from what Jung, especially in his later writings, meant by the "process of individuation," by which he referred to the conscious assimilation of the contents of the collective unconscious. My meaning is expressed in my book **Beyond Individualism: The Psychology of Transformation** (Quest Books, Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, 1979) and will be restated from a different perspective later in this volume.

⁸ **Flight to Arras** (Harcourt Brace, New York, 1969).

actualization transcends the status of individual selfhood. It confers a planetary status. Beings who have reached such a status constitute, as it were, the soul of the planet Earth. In their togetherness they constitute the progressive, far from completed actualization of the archetype Man in interrelated and interpenetrating **fields of consciousness and activity**. They represent humanity in the condition of planetary wholeness.

The one purpose for which this book **The Rhythm of Wholeness** is written is to provide an abstract yet experienceable foundation for the realization that such a state exists, and to show that even now it is affecting human evolution, to the extent that a vanguard of human beings is beginning to respond (at least partially and confusedly) to the call for radical transformation. The book is written because a need for it exists — the need for a fundamental philosophical and cosmological reformulation of universal and abstract principles at a level transcending the pluralistic and atomistic nature of the individualism which has dominated Western civilization and has spread all over the globe.

In Part One of this book I shall present the general concepts of wholeness, cyclic activity, and the place of Man as an archetype of being in the cycle of being. The cycle in its cosmic and human aspects has, of course, an immensity of subcycles and sub-subcycles. Yet the **basic structure** of any cycle — one might say, the concept of **cyclicity** — has permanent features because of the symmetrical and dynamic interplay of two fundamental principles of operation and consciousness, the principle of Unity and the principle of Multiplicity. These principles constantly and symmetrically interact, one waxing as the other wanes, neither ever attaining total control.

In Part Two I shall outline the structure of the total constitution of archetypal Man and Man's function and destiny on this planet. I shall consider Man's entire cycle of objective-physical and subjective-spiritual states of activity and consciousness, and therefore I will also discuss the postmortem state and reincarnation (which through recent popularization has been mostly misunderstood).

In Part Three I shall broadly consider some of the more practical issues implied in the cosmological concepts and the approach to human existence and personal growth outlined in the preceding Parts. I shall deal with the types of relationships that occur between wholes and parts (or rather subwholes) and also the interactions between different levels of consciousness and activity. I shall stress the difference between a positive approach to such interactions — the substance of **transpersonal** and truly creative living — and the passive attitude which in its most negative form leads to mediumship. Finally I shall discuss a constructive way of meeting periods of transition between levels of personal growth and the importance of "rites of passage."

The reaction of many readers to all I state in this book may well be that, interesting as it is, it is only **my** interpretation. Undoubtedly it **is** an interpretation of the facts of human experience. But whether or not it is "mine" is of no great significance. The only valid

question is whether or not **today's** humanity, or even, a particular section of it whose responses may directly or indirectly influence the course of events, **needs** the approach I am presenting in order to deal more serenely and constructively with the crucial problems we now face. These problems must be faced positively, in a spirit of transformation, if we are to survive in a significant manner, either as individuals or collectively.

Especially in times of transition, every solution to a human need is an interpretation of the contemporary situation. It comes at a particular time to particular people who at first may or may not consider it the solution for which they yearn. All systems of philosophy, all religious "revelations," all forms of social organization are interpretations. Even if, as religious and occult doctrines state, a "divine revelation" is the source of human knowledge, the revelation is still an interpretation by a "divine" Being (or Beings) operating at a level transcending the present human state.⁹ It is an interpretation which at a certain time fills the need of mankind as a functional aspect of the all-inclusive activity and wholeness of the Earth — which is a spiritual and mental as well as physical being.

To be a valid answer (or to form part of a valid answer) to a personal or collective need, an interpretation should take into consideration the direction of human evolution. It also should be consistent and applicable even during the process of transition. It should have value as a significant factor during the rite of passage that mankind, in whole or in part, is experiencing.

Whether this book will fill a significant and transformative need of humanity today and in years to come — the need for a basic reinterpretation of human evolution and all aspects of being — is a question I certainly cannot answer. Neither can anyone else **a priori**. It may only bring more clarity and a more inclusive and dynamic sense of meaning to a relatively few people whose minds resonate to the quality embodied in the writer's mind. Yet no effort is valueless or lost that aims at extending the scope of human consciousness by presenting a wider, more inclusive picture of reality.

⁹ Moreover, the "divine" interpretation must be interpreted by the human beings who believe in its existence. Such "revealed knowledge" (**sruti** in Sanskrit) is more like an integral series of interrelated and abstract formulas establishing **principles of organization** and **structural relationships** which apply to all levels of being. They may take the form of a series of geometrical symbols which can be, and indeed must be, reinterpreted periodically at different levels, according to mankind's capacity to translate them into solutions for its collective needs.

CHAPTER TWO

The Search for Spiritual Security:

The One, the Whole, and Wholeness - 1

The earliest Hindu philosophies probably were formulated as answers to basic questions posed by universal human experiences, the most fundamental of these being the experience of unceasing change. Various, indeed contrasting, answers arose, and in time they were codified into the six great Schools (or **darshanas**) of Indian philosophy. Yet a central psychological motive underlies the different worldviews presented by these schools: the search for what, psychologically speaking, it seems best to call inner security. Security here refers to the implicit belief in "something" that, because it underlies all changes, is changeless. To use a symbolic analogy, this something was felt and thought to be the absolutely solid and permanent "rock" on which the house of consciousness — and indeed the feeling of existence itself — had to rest.

Sri Aurobindo — the greatest mind and seer of modern India — stated the issue simply in his clear and impressive prologue to his translation of the main Upanishads: To the phenomenal world around us stability and singleness seem at first to be utterly alien; nothing but passes and changes, nothing but has its counterparts, contrasts, harmonized and dissident parts; and all are perpetually shifting and rearranging their relative positions and affections. Yet if one thing is certain, it is that the sum of all this change and motion is absolutely stable, fixed and unvarying, that all this heterogeneous multitude of animate and inanimate things are fundamentally homogeneous and one. Otherwise nothing could endure, nor could there be any certainty in existence. And this unity, stability, unvarying fixity which reason demands, and ordinary experience points to is being ascertained slowly but surely by the investigations of Science. We can no longer escape from the growing conviction that however the parts may change and shift and appear to perish, yet the sum and the whole remains unchanged, undiminished and imperishable; however multitudinous mutable and mutually irreconcilable forms and compounds may be, yet the grand substratum is one, simple and enduring.¹⁰ These statements clearly establish the central position of the spiritual aspect of Indian philosophy, but they are remarkable for what they take for granted. The sentence beginning "Yet if one thing is certain" constitutes an assumption which cannot be proven or justified. Especially the statements that "the sum of all this change and motion is absolutely stable, fixed and unvarying," and that "reason demands" this basic unity, stability and unvarying fixity, are anything but evident. To say that without such a unity,

¹⁰ Sri Aurobindo, **The Upanishads** (Pondicherry: 1972), p. 1. Sri Aurobindo began his long life as one of the earliest and most uncompromising advocates of India's independence from the British empire. Jailed for his activities, then freed but still menaced after a famous trial, he left for Pondicherry (then a French colony), where he died in 1950. Profound spiritual experiences while in prison led him to forgo political for spiritual activity. After writing a great many remarkable books, he gathered around him a number of his disciples, and with the help of a French woman, Mother Mira, an ashram was organized. After 1927, Sri Aurobindo became a recluse almost completely, concentrating on "inner work." He also wrote an extraordinary epic poem, **Savitri**, and engaged in much correspondence with students all over the world.

This passage is reprinted with the kind permission of Sri Aurobindo Trust.

stability and unvarying fixity "there could be [no] certainty in existence" begs the question: why should there be "certainty in existence"? The answer is obvious: man needs certainty in order to feel secure.

Sri Aurobindo, however, apparently did not envision such a psychological answer, nor did his predecessors in the Vedanta. Indian metaphysics and philosophy relied instead on the testimonies and discoveries of a long series of great yogis who claimed to have found a method for **experiencing** this absolute unity, stability, and changelessness as the ground of all existence, Brahman, "the One and Absolute... which alone **is**." Sri Aurobindo goes on to state that "if there is no reality but Brahman, the phenomenal Universe, which is obviously a manifestation of **something** permanent and eternal, must be a manifestation of Brahman and of nothing else."¹¹ Brahman manifests in different ways at each of three fundamental levels of being (or Universes). For man, Brahman manifests as the Supreme Self who is identical with the transcendent Self in all human beings, **atman**.

The Upanishads tell us that Brahman is not a blind universal Force working by its very nature mechanically, nor even an unconscious Cause of Force; He is conscious or rather is Himself Consciousness, **cit**, as well as **sat** [Being)...the wider knowledge of the Universe attainable to Yoga actually does reveal such a Universal Intelligence everywhere at work. Brahman, then, is Consciousness, and this once conceded, it follows that He must be in His transcendent reality Absolute Consciousness. His Consciousness is from itself and of itself like His existence, because there is nothing separate and other than Him; not only so but it does not consist in the knowledge of one part of Himself by another, or of His parts by His whole, since His transcendental existence is one and simple, without parts. His consciousness therefore does not proceed by the same laws as our consciousness, does not proceed by differentiating subject from object, knower from known, but simply is, by its own right of pure and unqualified existence, eternally and illimitably, in a way impure and qualified existences cannot conceive.¹²

Such metaphysical conceptions, which Aurobindo develops eloquently and logically, are based, I repeat, on premises believed to be incontrovertible: "reason demands" them; without them there would be no "certainty in existence"; and experiences of the great Yogis (and of Aurobindo himself) prove them absolutely true. But my question is: Can one speak of truth if one does not ask, **for whom**? The Hindu philosopher realizes that there are basic levels of existence and consciousness, that what seems separate at one level may be seen united at another. The Vedanta states that "identity is a fact in the reality of things, the world of phenomena."¹³ Human consciousness, however, is said to be able to evolve from the realm of appearances to that of reality. The problem is: Why should one give to this kind of reality an **absolutely** positive meaning? Must we give to **any** experience a character of absolute validity or accuracy? Moreover, what actually is meant by **Consciousness** and especially **Absolute Consciousness**?

¹¹ **op. cit.**, p. 10.

¹² **op. cit.**, pp. 18f.

¹³ **op. cit.**, p. 11.

I do not question in any way the validity of the great yogis' experiences; any intense and illuminating experience is "true" for the experiencer. But **as the experiencer attempts to formulate it, even to his own mind, the experience must be interpreted.** The most sublime philosophical statement, even before it is organized into a system of concepts, **has** to use images, symbols, and words **provided by a particular culture.** Even if the experiencer can physically or spiritually induce a similar experience in the consciousness of another being, should one speak of an identical experience? For in each transmission something of the original experience seems to undergo a subtle (or crude) transformation.

Interpretation seems to be unavoidable in interhuman relationships. Sri Aurobindo's words tell the story well. Indeed, human beings may need some kind of "certainty," and "reason" may demand the belief in some postulates; but, granted this need is universal, it can be answered in different ways in different epochs, in different regions of the planet, and thus by different cultures. **Any** culture's claim to absolute superiority because it enables its participants to reach what it calls absolute Truth and Reality is a form of collective pride. Whether it be Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, or Euro-American, it is still the same cultural pride. It is also an answer to the same basic human insecurity, the same need for something solid and absolutely reliable because unaffected by change and existential conditions.

**The Search for Spiritual Security:
The One, the Whole, and Wholeness - 2**

The belief in a Supreme One is a religious, psychic, or "spiritual" way of meeting this all-human need. The monotheistic religions of the Near East, and before them in a more philosophical way the Bhagavad Gita, have met this need in a specific manner which today still inspires and often controls the feeling-responses and even the everyday lives of a vast number of human beings. The "one and only" God creates the world of existence for some inscrutable purpose. God is infinite, eternal, all-powerful, all-loving, omnipresent; human beings and all other creatures are finite, mortal, impermanent. At or just before a human birth, God creates a soul that, in some mysterious manner, reflects His Image. The soul is sent to earth to learn lessons and to be tested, and after death it either returns "home" to its Father-in-Heaven or, if unsuccessful, has to experience a temporary purgatory or an everlasting hell. God is concerned with the human soul and intervenes to give it a chance to reach heaven by sending His Son as a redeemer or (in some religions) by revealing something of His divine nature through a succession of prophets or divine manifestations. Nevertheless, the gulf between Creator and creatures, between the Supreme One and the myriad of entities existing in the world, is essentially unbridgeable.

This theistic world-picture offers a degree of inner security, because as the sayings go, "God is in His Heaven, all is well with the world," and "With God all things are possible." The divine, all-loving Father may be expected to help His children if they are in dire trouble, **provided** they have total faith in Him. All modes of existence derive from Him; and while existence is unceasing change and nothing is permanent, human beings can find vicarious strength through unshakeable belief in His changelessness. His omnipotence and omnipresence and incomprehensible but sublime Love. Their personhood, so often racked by conflicts, can find in God's supreme Person an ideal to work toward, and in God's Revelation, a set of principles by which to live. For the true believer, divine Presence is a certainty. Many experience it in a mysterious "dialogue" between their feeble "I" and the sublime "Thou" of a God who is always present and reliable, who never disappoints those who implicitly and totally accept Him. Through this acceptance they can be blessed by Him or (in the cases of great mystics) can even experience a temporary union with Him.

The dualism inherent in the Christian formulation of the relationship between God and man can never be resolved into unity. God is **in** the world, but at no time can He be said to **be** the world, even in its state of unity. The world can be envisioned as "the Whole" because it was created by "the One" God, somewhat as a novel constitutes a whole created by one author. But "the Whole" is not "the One"; the idea of their identity is strongly condemned by Christianity as the pantheistic fallacy; the novel is not the author. God may create other universes and is neither less infinite, powerful, and loving nor diminished by these creations, to which He is essentially external. Similarly, the novelist is external to his or her novel, even if it is autobiographical; more novels may follow, or several may be written during the same period.

In the most traditional Hindu worldview, Brahman has a manifested and a nonmanifested aspect. In the former He encompasses the whole universe, and the Hindu

mind readily accepts the concept of pantheism: the One differentiates into the Many, and in their togetherness the Many constitute a Whole; at the close of the infinitely varied manifestation of the One, the Whole is recondensed into the One. This world-scenario (from the One to the Many and back to the One) may, however, be stated differently. Instead of considering the universe the quasi-infinite self-multiplication of the One, it may be considered a Play (lila) which Ishvara performs, somewhat as a dramatist would conceive a puppet play and perform all its roles after which He returns to his serene state of world-transcending unity — only to start the process again later on. Even if the One seemingly **becomes** the Many in a relatively real universe rather than in a Play, this One does not cease to remain an undisturbable unity which never loses Its changeless identity. The ineffable Reality of an Absolute remains beyond manifestation, neither diminished nor increased by Its periodical manifestations. This Absolute neither "is" or "is not"; It is **both** in a supremely transcendent, timeless state;

Here the human mind is confronted by a paradox, which is inherent in the ambiguous meanings of the words unity and one. Unity is primarily defined in **Webster's New International Dictionary (Second Edition)** as "the state of being one," and also as "the quality or fact of constituting a whole. . . a totality of related parts, a complex systematic whole; a thing that seems complete in itself." It also is said to refer to "a uniting or being united in one body, unification" and the result of this unification. Another of its many meanings is "the absence of diversity," but a current and indeed today fashionable phrase or motto is "unity in diversity." Thus the word **unity** can refer not only to the **state** of being one but also to the **process** of becoming united and the quality required for the fulfillment of the process in a union. Above all, unity is confused with the term whole, which the dictionary defines as "the entire thing without loss of parts, without any impairment of its integrity; a totality; a complete organization of parts or elements." Only at the end of the entry for unity, under the heading **Mathematics**, is the term **unity** defined as "any definite quantity or aggregate of quantity or magnitude taken as one; numeral one."

The basic and original meaning of the word **one** does indeed refer to the first numeral, number one. But number one is not merely the first of an infinite series of numbers; all numbers are produced by the addition of one to itself. Therefore, in an abstract sense, **one** can be considered the principle of numeration. It generates all numbers, which can be considered differentiated aspects of it. But if **one** generates all numbers, such a process is obviously a kind of self-multiplication. The tendency inherent in number one to generate all numbers, seemingly ad infinitum, clearly shows that unity and multiplicity are **both** inherent in number one. Thus we are faced again with a paradox, the realization that **one** is a "whole." Nevertheless, the human mind cannot conceive of absolute "one-ness," because any conception by a mind implies that one already has a second, indeed a multiplicity of potential seconds. Therefore the metaphysician has to infer two levels of oneness — an absolute level at which **one** is not even a principle of numeration, and a level at which, as such a principle, it contains all numbers in potentiality.

The human mind cannot fathom or know such a state, yet a realization of it can be experienced by a human being whose consciousness has become like an absolutely quiescent lake or mirror. Such a quiescence implies a momentary separation of what in the

human being operates as the Many and what (either relatively speaking or in absolute identification) "is" the One, atman. There must be separation, yet also that which is able to perceive **both** separate terms **in relation to each other** and to give form to that relation: this is what I call the "mind of wholeness."

**The Search for Spiritual Security:
The One, the Whole, and Wholeness - 3**

The Mystical Experience Of "The One"

The vision of the mystic — the "mystical experience" of the unitive state and of the way in which it flows into the world of manifestation and multiplicity — has been formulated beautifully and vividly, to the extent to which an interpretation of it is possible, by the neo-Platonist metaphysician, Plotinus, who lived in Alexandria between 205 and 270 A.D. His vision is expressed clearly by Lex Hixon in his book **Coming Home**:

In Plotinus, the One is not an abstraction, nor an empty or static Absolute. The One is that Power, utterly simple yet rich in potentiality, that generates Being and the various planes of Being — not physically or psychically, but more as a mathematical principle generates a series of numbers. Unlike a mathematical formula, however, the One is a living principle and the infinite series of beings It entails are radiantly alive. . . The One is not a philosophical category but a spiritual reality that Plotinus directly realized as the intrinsic nature of all beings and all planes of Being. . . **We can call it "One" if we remember that it is not something that possesses the attribute of unity.** . . it is through the illumined intellect that we touch the One, which is the principle of all wholeness. . . The One overflows spontaneously and eternally as several planes or levels of Being, . . the Realm of Intellectual Vision, the Realm of Soul. . . the Realm of life. . .

The One, although not characterized by substance or by existence, exposes boundless power, not physical or psychic power but the metaphysical fruitfulness of ever-expanding implications or horizons. Writes Plotinus: **The One must be considered infinite not by unlimited extensions of size or number but by the unboundedness of Its power.** The cosmic process through which energy and eventually matter are created is the smallest fiber of the One's generative power. But this power has no object, no direction. As Plotinus explains: **The One, perfect because It seeks nothing, needs nothing, overflows, as it were, and its superabundance makes something, as it were, other than Itself, which is Being.** This overflow of the One is intrinsically nothing but the One. Nor is the One in any way aware of having overflowed and generated what we call Being. Plotinus, however, does not develop the Indian notion of **maya**, the sense that manifest Being is somehow illusory. He may consider that there is illusion involved in the separation of beings in the space-time realm, which is the intersection of Being and nonbeing, but the primal realms of Being, where archetypal structures interpenetrate spacelessly and timelessly, are for Plotinus completely real. These realms are as real as the One, for they **are** the One. These realms of Being, which are the One as It eternally overflows, can never be withdrawn, because the One is superabundance of Power. Although the One thus inevitably emanates as Being, It cannot be defined in terms of Being, nor can It be limited to Being. Nonetheless, beings are not separate from the One, which is their own beinghood. As Plotinus remarks: . . .**it is by the One that all beings are beings.**¹⁴

¹⁴ Lex Hixon, **Coming Home** (Doubleday & Co., New York, 1978) pp. 110ff

I have tried to make a less paradoxical, more concretely imaginable picture of reality according to the philosophy of monism — a monism which **has** to include the plurality of a myriad of beings if it is to make any sense — by thinking of an immense globe of undefinable energy-substance. The core of this globe is absolutely homogeneous and unchanging, yet it is endowed with the mysterious capacity to exteriorize itself without these exteriorizations ever leaving the globe. A center of consciousness going from the core of the globe to its circumference would detect different levels of progressive differentiation of the energy-substance and an increasing multiplicity of activities or operations. It would be aware of unceasing changes. These could be said to manifest in cyclic series. Thus time would be implied. However, the ideal observer could also realize that an activity in one direction is always (instantaneously or in cyclic time) polarized and balanced by another activity in the opposite direction. Thus the **wholeness of the globe** would never be essentially altered. In this sense, change and the activities producing change could be considered illusions. They would be illusory and without real meaning as apprehended by the center of the globe, yet they would be real to any section in the vicinity of the circumference, where indeed tumultuous motion would take place — yet each motion would be exactly balanced by one of opposite polarity. From the point of view of a consciousness operating in a vortex of motion near the circumference, the core of the globe could be imagined as being either absolutely solid or absolutely void; it would make no difference as long as the state of being at the center, whatever it is, never changes. From this central core, power could be imagined to radiate in all directions as a kind of "superabundance" of being, but (as Plotinus said) "this overflow of the One is intrinsically nothing but the One," because the whole globe is of one energy-substance. Nothing can occur that is **extraneous** to this globe — to this one and only Reality.

According to this picture, a human being would be a microcosm of the whole globe but would operate at a level not too distant from the circumference. He or she would operate where the energy-substance of the globe is agitated, thus in a state of change. Yet because any change experienced there would be balanced by another of opposite polarity, nothing would actually happen **in terms of the unchanging wholeness of the globe**. This compensation of every action by its polar opposite would be the metaphysical meaning of karma. Once a human being becomes aware of this, he would theoretically cease to be attached to the results of his or her actions — as Krishna demands of Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita.

Because the level of the globe of Reality at which human beings operate is constantly in motion, a human being cannot avoid moving, that is, being active. But if his or her consciousness is **attuned to** the state of being of the core of the globe, that consciousness "knows" that nothing "really" happens. Astrophysicists now believe that a particle of antimatter corresponds to every particle of matter; if the two meet they annihilate each other, releasing an energy which balances the energy required for their prior existence as separate yet complementary entities. In this context the ideas expressed above should not be startling.

It should be clear, however, that what is usually called the universe refers only to the external layers of the globe of Reality. We cannot **perceive** the globe's core; yet (the mystic says) if through meditation and intense concentration a human consciousness totally withdraws its attention from the objective and external activities of its existence and focuses its energy upon its own center (the essential "I"-subject), this consciousness can resonate to the changelessness and undisturbable peace of the core of Reality. In a sense, the resonance is always there at the center of the individualized consciousness, but the noise of the activities at the surface of human nature makes it impossible to experience the mysterious "silence" of changeless being.

Such a picture or model of Reality is monistic because it does not involve two metaphysical realities in irreducible conflict, one termed good and light, the other termed evil and dark. The one globe of Reality includes all conceivable modes of being. It also includes what **to us** seems to be non-being, since we associate being with activity and therefore with change, time, and conflict. The globe is the Whole, even though we may identify it with its central core and think of it as the One. Nevertheless, a fundamental metaphysical problem remains and plagues **any** monistic philosophy: **Why** is there motion, change, and a multiplicity of beings if in reality all is changelessly "the One?" Why did the one God "desire" to create a world of multiplicity? Why does the One which is (as Plotinus said) "perfect because it seeks nothing, needs nothing, overflow, as it were, and its superabundance make something, as it were, other than Itself?"

The only possible answer is that there are inscrutable, ineffable, and alogical mysteries that the human mind cannot fathom or explain. I believe, however, that as insufficient and (as Nietzsche said) "human, all too human" as any explanation may be, still we can formulate one that **as an interpretation** meets human needs, which today urgently call for a significant, transformative answer. The purpose of this book is to offer such an interpretation. No absolute "truth" is claimed for it, only validity in terms of a kind of mentality which is emerging from both Western and Asian traditions. This new mentality is oriented toward the building of a consistent and all-inclusive foundation for a new civilization, which itself would be all-inclusive, not exclusive as all past cultures have been.

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Wholeness

This book, **Rhythm of Wholeness**, is founded upon the realization that Wholeness is the ultimate idea we can have of the meaning of being. To be is to be a **whole** unfolding its inherent potentialities through cycles of changes (time) and in a state of unceasing relatedness to other wholes (space). **Wholeness** is the being-ness of all wholes. Nothing more can be said of it, except that it **is** and that it is all-inclusive.

A great yogi or mystic in meditation or devotional ecstasy may totally dismiss anything objective from his or her-mind and sever subjective consciousness from everything having an objective character. Such a person may reach a state of extreme subjectivity in which mental processes lose all objective character and all that remains is the realization of "Self" — that is, of "being I" in an unconditioned sense, free from all that is involved in personhood. Nevertheless, reaching such a state does not destroy the world of objective existence to which the yogi or mystic, sooner or later (and in most cases very soon), has to return. He or she may call the experience timeless, but the earth keeps rotating on its axis and revolving around the sun. Motion has not ceased. Even if the yogi's heart stops beating, the atoms of his body still whirl at fantastic speed. A human center of consciousness may reach an utterly disobjectivized experience of Oneness, but while this experience may introduce a new and transformative element or quality into the whole being of the experiencer, **the fact** remains that he or she is a whole on a planet that is a still more inclusive whole. The wholeness of the more inclusive whole encompasses this experience of extreme subjectivity as well as the more "natural" objective experiences referred to a physical body, its sensations, organic feelings, and the fulfillment of its biological, psychic, and sociocultural needs.

Wholeness **includes** the subjective and the objective, the "I" and the "Other" — all others, the entire universe. Wholeness encompasses all forms of objective existence revealed by our senses, measured by our sense organs, and interpreted by our minds; and it also contains the consciousness which is experiencing itself as subjective being.

On the one hand, the human organism registers a multiplicity of impacts, sensations, and feelings produced by and producing ever altering situations; on the other, a human being is conscious of himself as a single, unchanging subject experiencing all these changes. Situations and experiences change, but that which experiences — the subject, "I" — apparently retains a persistent character that is not essentially altered or erased by impacts and experiences. A clear contrast between the **one** permanent experiencer and the **many** entities it experiences would have to be made, were it not that at least some of these many entities also act as and claim to be experiencers in the same way as "I." Thus there

are many experiencing subjects as well as many objects being experienced; every subject is also an object to another subject, and every "one" is part of the category of "many" for other "ones."

In Wholeness, the one and the many are unceasingly, eternally **interrelated**, and they are interrelated in wholes. The wholeness of a human whole includes both the state of "subjecthood" and that of "objecthood." A whole is neither "one" nor "many," it is both; each whole is more or less "one," more or less "many." But various types of wholes differ from one another according to the proportion of "oneness" and "manyness" within their constitutions.

We come therefore to the realization that Wholeness includes the One and the Many, indeed that it **is** their dynamic interrelationship. Philosophically speaking, Wholeness includes and integrates two fundamental principles, the principle of Unity and the principle of Multiplicity. And as change is the primary and most essential fact of human experience, the interrelationship of Unity and Multiplicity is a dynamic relationship that ceaselessly changes. In terms of consciousness, it is the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity. In terms of universal motion and change, the relationship between Unity and Multiplicity is structured and essentially cyclic. The dynamic interrelationship between them is contained within fields of activity, wholes — wholes of time (cycles) and wholes of space (units or cosmoi). The principle of Unity gives to motion a rhythmic or cyclic character. It also provides defining boundaries for the fields of activity, large or small, microcosms or macrocosms, in which the principle of Multiplicity produces ever more differentiation and expansion.

Because of the principle of Multiplicity, the world of existence is experienced in terms of a multitude of entities; because of the principle of Unity, these entities are wholes, integrating parts (or rather subwholes) differentiated by the principle of Multiplicity. At the human level of being, the principle of Unity operates in the organized whole, the person, as a subjective sense of identity, of being "I." But because the principle of Multiplicity can never be totally inoperative — dominant and for an instant all-powerful as the realization of unity may be — there ultimately can be no one-and-only absolute subject, "the One." Similarly, because the principle of Unity can never be totally inoperative, neither can there be absolute multiplicity. If no principle of Unity were in operation, there could be no unity of being, only an undifferentiated, infinite extension of nameless substance. No experiencing subjects would exist, because without defining boundaries there could be no even minimally integrated wholes, no entities, no experiences because no experiencers.

All wholes are and must be finite. The very fact that an entity is a **whole** implies that it has limiting factors or boundaries, as abstract or supersensible as these may be. But **Wholeness** is not finite, because it applies to all wholes and is not limited to any **particular** whole or condition of being. Yet neither is Wholeness infinite, because the concept of infinity (to which human beings usually attach a powerful emotional charge) is only one

pole of an intellectual dualism whose other pole is finitude. For a human mind moved by the uncertainties of existence, it is much easier to postulate infinity — thus to negate finitude — than to understand what is implied in existence as a finite whole and in Wholeness as the undefinable **beingness** of all wholes. For Wholeness is no-thing, and no-one, because it encompasses all things and all ones, be they predominantly objective or predominantly subjective. Yet without Wholeness, nothing or no one could exist.

In this sense, the idea of Wholeness is not essentially different from the true Hindu concept of Brahman. However, a basic difference does arise when the Indian philosopher speaks on the one hand of the manifestation of Brahman as Ishvara, the Lord, He, or **Ish**, and on the other of the non-manifestation of Brahman. In the philosophy of Wholeness I am presenting. Wholeness can never "nonmanifest" — Wholeness can never "not be." There is only being, but being oscillates, as it were, between two poles. Unity and Multiplicity, subjectivity and objectivity. This oscillation is cyclic, and at no time is non-being possible. There are only phases and conditions in which being is predominantly subjective, and others in which it is predominantly objective. The latter constitute what we, who are operating in them, call existence or the world.

When the strictly monistic philosopher or the monotheistic theologian tries to persuade us that the part of our total nature which is under the sway of the principle of Multiplicity is an illusion of no real validity, he actually contributes to a tragically dualistic situation. For all that in human nature is subject to the still powerful trend toward self-multiplication, analysis, reductionism, and materialism inevitably fights back. Unqualified monism thus leads to a state of psychological conflict; it defeats the purpose of integration and forces the One more apart than ever from the Many.

At the present stage of the evolution of human consciousness, we must accept the fact that the principle of Multiplicity is still a dominant factor in human nature. However unified our sense of being — our awareness of being "I" — may be, it still has to deal with and emerge from a multiplicity of organic and cellular voices, each seeking its own satisfaction. The unity of human consciousness is precious; to make it tyrannical is to call for "revolution" — neurosis or even total breakdown. We should try to **imagine** unity's dominance without forcing the issue unnecessarily. In so doing we are wise if we do not claim to understand fully a condition of being in which. Unity is lord and master, for such a condition transcends the "human condition" as it actually is today. Nevertheless, a sufficiently developed abstract mind can **interpret** such a condition in terms of a change in the balance of power between the principle of Unity and the principle of Multiplicity, even though the mind would not be able to experience the "feel" of being in these states.

Unfortunately, these states usually are spoken of in negative terms — nonbeing, nonmanifestation, nonactivity, timeless, unconditioned. Such negations, together with the concept of nothingness, merely reflect the bondage of past and present human consciousness to the state of objective existence and reveal its incapacity of conceiving positively of predominantly subjective being in the same way it considers positive the

various aspects of predominantly objective existence.¹⁵ It indicates only the limit beyond which the human mind encounters its incapacity to imagine alternatives to its inevitably limited experience of reality. This incapacity should be understood rather than glorified under the convenient mask of negative statements.

Thus in contrast to the state of existence, I shall call the state of predominantly subjective being **inistence**. But inistence is not a negation of being. In Wholeness there can be no essential or absolute negation, for in Wholeness all possible states of being — that is, of activity and consciousness — are implied. The philosophy of Wholeness presented in this book is a total affirmation of being: Wholeness **always** is.

Wholeness is in every whole, but it also is in what are inadequately called the "parts" of a whole. The term **part** is confusing because parts are also wholes. The concept of part actually refers only to the **character of the relationship** between a narrower field of Wholeness (a less inclusive or "lesser" whole) and a wider field (a more inclusive or "greater" whole) within which it is contained and functionally operating. Accurately speaking, there are no parts, only wholes — a hierarchy of wholes — that is, of organized fields of activity and consciousness having a limited span of existence. (This span might refer to trillions of years or fractions of a second or to fields encompassing spaces measurable by millions of light years.) A smaller whole is always encompassed by a larger, which contains other lesser wholes, and the lesser whole also encompasses still smaller ones. The hierarchy is one of **containment**, not (as in the military or government) one of rank or **command**.

¹⁵ Henri Bergson pointed out long ago that the concept of nothingness (**le Neant** in French) is a pseudo-idea, a mere word. See his **Creative Evolution** (Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1911), Chapter 4, "The Idea of 'Nothing'."

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The question raised by the concept of a hierarchical series of wholes is: Can one conceive of an end to the series? Is there a **greatest** whole of which there would be no greater? This is an intellectual and abstract problem because **living experience** presents to human consciousness, only **levels** of wholeness — spheres and cycles of being which are either to some degree higher (more inclusive) or lower (less inclusive) than the ones in which human beings function. The degree of magnitude or inclusiveness changes as the human capacity for perceiving and experiencing reality increases. Significantly, the size of a human body stands about midway between the largest and smallest wholes human beings can perceive (metagalaxies and subatomic particles). As these perceptions increase in the direction of the greater almost simultaneously they extend in the same degree in the direction of the smaller. Only the intellectual mind ever has to deal with the abstract possibility of "greatest" or "smallest," neither of which has a realistic meaning.

Reality is where one stands. Inevitably it is finite because human experience is finite. A **superhuman** being no doubt would live in a more inclusive reality; but when human beings experience any organized system of activity and consciousness — that is, any whole of being — the nature and scope of the experienced whole inevitably reflects the particular character and limitations of the **human** state. All wholes project their limitations upon their experience and understanding of the greater whole of which they are component parts. Thus the human capacity for perceiving and experiencing other wholes is not only limited but essentially affected by the **difference of level** between the experiencer and the experienced. Both knowledge and truth are conditioned by the character of the knower and relative to his or her position at the moment.

Metaphysicians and mystics speak of knowledge through "identification" of the knower with the known. Instead of identity, they should speak of resonance. The resonator vibrating when a particular tone sounds does not "know" the nature and principle of organization of the emitter of the tone to which it resonates. Sympathetic resonance deals with **activity** (rhythmic motion), not with consciousness. The consciousness of the resonating whole remains its own when it is set into vibration. If the resonating whole is a human mind, it can make only intellectual deductions concerning the nature of what it resonates to.

Wholeness in any whole can resonate to the wholeness in any other whole. But the **form** (the mental consciousness) this resonance assumes in the resonator's mind is essentially a projection of what is already inherent in that mind — which is always a finite mind, since all wholes are finite if they are to be called wholes. But Wholeness is undefinable. It is "transfinite" in the sense that it can only "be" through wholes — any and all kinds of wholes operating at any and all levels of wholeness. Thus in the philosophy

this book presents, there is no room for absolute truth or for the absolute value of knowledge. Knowledge has value only to the extent that it meets the **need** of the person or society to which it is given and by which it can be assimilated, at least gradually.¹⁶

These problems refer to epistemology; while they cannot be discussed extensively here, neither can they be ignored. They will be discussed again at the close of this book, after Parts Two and Three provide a frame of reference to which the traditional philosophical mentality of the Euro-American intelligentsia is not accustomed — a frame of reference founded upon the dynamic aspect of Wholeness, which I call the "cycle of being." After that, these problems should be seen in a new light.

¹⁶ For a discussion of two basic types of knowledge and the relativity of truth, see my book **The Planetarization of Consciousness** (Aurora Books, New York, 1970), Part Three, Chapter 8. Much that is relevant to these issues also is implied if not directly stated in my book **Culture, Crisis and Creativity** (Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, 1977).

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In the second section of this chapter, I attempted to present a symbolic picture of reality which to some extent would solve the conundrum involved in all monistic metaphysics — the paradox of the concept of a timeless, changeless "One" formulated by human beings for whom change and ever-present motion is **the** basic and primary experience. In this picture, reality has many levels; at the center, all that has existed, is existing, and will exist "is" in a changeless, motionless state of **being**. The more distant any level of reality is from the central core, the more complex the forms taken by the movement of **becoming** — and the greater the confusion and "ignorance" of what is in this process of becoming, that is, of "the Many." The pure monist philosopher and the mystic may accept the concept of the cycle — the "wheel" of existence, samsara — but they apply it only to the levels of becoming; for only there are they willing to accept the reality of change, though this change would appear to be illusion to the changeless consciousness of "the One." Thus the changeless stance of "the One" somehow — ineffably and alogically — is both essentially different from the cyclic movement of universal becoming and mysteriously pervading it. The two are absolutely different and cannot be related in any way, because "the One" is beyond any possibility or need for relation; otherwise It would not be "absolute."

From the point of view of the mind of a truly individualized person, this is really an impossible situation. How can everything be changelessly "now" and yet the individual human being have "free will" — that is, the ability to decide between alternative futures? This makes no sense whatsoever. All any philosopher ever has been able to say is that "somehow" this is what is. Thus it is a situation in which the individual, aware of his or her essential selfhood and the problems it brings, must admit logical defeat: **Credo quia absurdum** (I believe because it is absurd).

Such a picture can bring a sense of spiritual security **only** through an attitude of total denial. It is **not** the kind of denial of which the Bhagavad Gita speaks when Krishna asks of his disciple Arjuna that the latter, while acting, leave to him **the results** of action, thus any concern with them. In his aspect as the Supreme Being, Krishna already has determined the action. There **is** action; all Krishna asks of the human being is not to be concerned with its results, but simply to perform the works required by his fundamental nature — that is, what he is born **for**, his dharma.

In the philosophy presented in this book the essential factor in a human life is the performance of dharma. The picture of being that the philosophy outlines is meant to bring to the performer: (1) a vast, cosmic, totally ordered picture of the **meaning** of the dharma of Man, archetypally considered; and (2) a full grasp of the cyclic interactions of all the constituents of an individual human whole (detailed in Part Three) in relation to humanity-as-a-whole, the planet earth, and by implication the whole cycle of **our** universe as-we are able to perceive it.

This picture does not negate anything. It accepts everything — in its proper place and according to its essential function. It is an unceasing affirmation of being. Even when the concept of the "inevitability of failure" is introduced, it is presented in an ultimately

affirmative and positive way, for it is shown to be the polarizing factor of "divine Compassion" — the essential nature of spirit, which itself is simply an aspect of the omnipresent polarity of being. Because this aspect is focused in a particular way during the phase of the universal cycle of being which witnesses the development of archetypal Man, the crucial but inherently magnificent characteristic of what "being human" means is presented in a dramatic, and, even more important, a ritualistic manner. Such a presentation may not appeal to weak minds as providing the "spiritual security" for which they yearn; but this philosophy of wholeness is not meant to appeal to weakness. A total affirmation of being under any and all conditions needs an epic quality: Man wrestles with change. His glory is that he can be defeated temporarily, for this alone makes victory possible.

Victory, human style, is never achieved unless the full meaning and implications of what one has fought for are understood. The whole situation has to be understood. In that understanding, Wholeness is revealed. From Wholeness there is no escape. All concepts of absolutes are escapes. Immobility is an escape from change. Now — the "eternal Now" of popularized mysticism — is an escape from the performance of dharma, for dharma can be illumined only by the revelation of meaning and purpose. Wholeness is dynamic. It is always in the making and remaking; motion is unceasing. Yet Wholeness is also the **cyclicity** of motion, and the Movement of Wholeness is the cycle of being. The one spiritual injunction, however formulated, is always, "Walk on!"

CHAPTER THREE

The Movement of Wholeness - 1

The Continuum of Change and Time

In the Greece of the fifth century B.C. Heraclitus gave a lasting formulation to what always had been the most common, basic experience of human beings — "The only thing that does not change is change itself." His contemporary thinkers apparently were so disturbed by his glorification of ceaseless change and all-consuming fire that they formulated opposite systems assuming a supersensible, non-existential realm of permanent entities and changeless order opposed to an ever-changing, illusory, existential realm. (The most famous is Plato's concept of a realm of archetypes or Ideas.) Human beings poignantly need the security of believing that order is a basic fact of the universe. But there may be order in unceasing change. In the continuum of changes, the possibility of persistent, quasi-permanent formations (that is, formations which are but relatively and temporarily changeless) is not only conceivable but a matter of common human experience. The truly significant problem of philosophy is to try to understand the facts of this common experience — not to evade it. Man might become fascinated by either the willfully, and tenaciously induced, rarified, and hardly formulatable experiences of yogis and religious mystics. Or he might be drawn to the equally stressful, intensely analytical, and disruptive methods of modern scientists who have forced themselves to ignore all that is not objective, material, measurable by highly complex machines, and expressible through the most involved mathematical symbols. Today attempts are being made to show that these two extreme approaches — that of the mystic yogi and the atomic physicist — lead to somewhat similar pictures (or "models") of the universe.¹⁷ Such pictures are scornfully opposed to the "commonsense" picture of the world held by the immense majority of people in their instinctive demand for a simple, understandable realization of order and permanence.

Scorning and undervaluing this commonsense picture may not, however, be the wisest thing. If this picture is naive and childlike in many ways, it is due to the narrow field of vision of most human beings (which is limited by the possibility of experience of the physical body, its senses and organs of action). Equally confining is the narrow focus of attention of most people and their even narrower ability to establish significant correlations between events and generalizations of sequences of happenings and interpersonal relationships. What is limiting and progress-detering in a commonsense approach to reality is not its **quality** but its **scope**. The most important issue is not how the mind perceives but the way in which the field of perception is limited by the power of biological drives and the emotional responses elicited by the need to satisfy (or the frustration of) these instinctual impulses and psychic overtones. The basic aim of both the

¹⁷ See, for example. **The Tao of Physics** by Fritjof Capra (Shambhala Publications, Boulder, 1976).

yogi and the atomic scientist is actually to transcend the biological level of the mind. The mystic does this by trying to paralyze, as it were, his "lower nature" (that is, his biological impulses and desires, especially for sex, food, sleep, human contacts, and speech); the scientist achieves the same end by distrusting his personal sense impressions and substituting intricate machines (whose objectivity he trusts), the assumed impersonality of statistics, and the abstract logic of mathematics.

If one could retain the quality inherent in the commonsense approach to reality — its livingness and warmth, and yes, its essential insecurity and mystery — while immensely broadening and giving new meanings to the frame of reference within which change is experienced, a significant world-picture would emerge. On its expanded and indeed all-inclusive basis, a new feeling of reality could inspire the creation of a culture far more wholesome and sane than the one whose origins go back to the Greece of the fifth century B.C. What was begun then at once led to such unsatisfactory developments that it had to be compensated for by the mass movement of a devotional and dogmatic Christianity, which in turn gave rise to the violent individualistic reactions of the Renaissance and the scientific empiricism and social materialism of recent centuries.

Such an expansion of the commonsense picture of the world neither can nor should ignore what has been revealed by, at one end of the spectrum of human experience, atomic science and modern astrophysics, and at the other, the intense subjectivism of Indian yoga. Extreme objectivity within a strictly materialistic frame of reference, and extreme subjectivity leading to an absolute or quasi-absolute denial of the reality of all but an inwardly experienced state of changeless Oneness, undoubtedly have engendered significant developments and realizations; but their integration within a much expanded commonsense picture of being transcending the realm of life instincts and personal-emotional impulses requires a new frame of reference. What is introduced here as the "Movement of Wholeness" is meant to be such a frame of reference. Within it, the primary and universal experience of change and the human yearning for order and permanence of structure (or "form") no longer have to be seen as irreducible opposites. There is order in change — cyclicity. Once this is accepted as the foundation of being, every conceivable approach to reality and every method for acquiring knowledge **finds its significant place within the whole cycle of being and in relation to one another.**

The Movement of Wholeness - 2

We begin with change because perpetual, unceasing change is the primary and most irrefutable experience of all human beings — of the writer, who is a human being conveying ideas born of his experiences to other human beings, and of his readers who, if they are intellectually honest, have to admit that nothing is more fundamental, more apparently incontrovertible, than the fact of perpetual, unceasing change. To exist means, first of all, to be part of a continuum of changes. The concept of Wholeness must be based on this fact. Therefore it must be a dynamic concept. Wholeness basically is experienced in terms of **wholes of change** — that is, in terms of **cycles**.

The problem which logically arises is to understand how the consciousness of a nascent human being passes from the experience of an indefinite and undifferentiated continuum of changes to that of a whole of change. This implies the realization of how the cyclic or periodic nature of change develops. This development occurs because an infant's mind soon becomes aware that some particularly striking experiences emerge out of the continuous sequence of impacts upon his senses and internal organic feelings with a distinctness which is remembered, though at first memory is only of an organic and cellular kind. What is more, these distinct experiences are repeated. Repetition and the feeling of repetitiveness is the foundation of what gradually becomes a sense of ordered sequence — a sequence of "events" to which specific characters are given by the infant's mind, which also makes repetitive events into entities and names them. The process of naming definitely increases the feeling that these entities are permanent, at least insofar as they perform the same type of actions and the senses register them as having the same "form." Permanence, form, structural order in the process of change — and an increasing sense that various actions fulfill purposes — objectify and "set" the consciousness of unceasing change. For the developing consciousness, entities which maintain the same form become persons and objects to which the child reacts and relates in particular ways and with which he or she seeks to communicate.

When the continuum of change is realized to be an ordered sequence of particularly distinctive and feeling-transforming events (the change from light to darkness, heat to cold, satisfaction to hunger, from a comfort-giving, pleasurable presence to solitude, and from noises to disquieting silence) the child sooner or later becomes aware that the sequence of events is rhythmic. He or she realizes that "periods" exist which are marked by important changes in the surroundings and in the behavior of people, and this realization gives rise to the sense of **time**. A series of changes occurs within a period beginning and ending with events which become **markers of time**.

Much has been said about time which makes little sense, because the distinction and relationship between time, as human beings experience it, and the continuum of change is so often ignored. However, this distinction must be made if we are to understand the concept of cyclicity, wholes of time, and how time is affected by the structure of a greater whole to which a lesser whole belongs by virtue of its participation in the existence of the greater containing it.

Time is the continuum of change as the consciousness of a particular person — and a collectivity of persons or a whole culture — experiences it in relation to a general or particular schedule of activities having to be performed. By the very fact of belonging to homo sapiens, a human being has a particular life span beginning with birth and ending with death. Therefore birth and death are the most significant markers of time for such a being, but many others also are established by the motions of the earth (days, months, years) and by definite biological, then social, and cultural transformations. Markers of time derive directly from the structure of any system of organization in which a person participates — as a member of the human species, a particular race, nation, social class, religion, family, even business firm or governmental bureau. Each greater whole **imposes** its special markers of time upon the individuals who belong to it because they play particular roles in it by performing regular series of actions. For example, in a family or factory a bell may ring to mark the start of the day, lunchtime, or periods of work; in medieval culture church bells and town criers regulated the activities of every member of towns or villages. These socio-cultural regulations follow the biological, diurnal, and seasonal markers of time which result from the motions of the earth.

In other words, the manner in which a greater whole — cosmic, planetary, biological, or social — is structurally organized, and the number of actions and transformations which are expected of a person fulfilling a particular function in it **between two successive markers of time**, condition and often determine that person's **sense of time**. The person has "not enough time" to perform the actions (or interior transformations) required by the greater whole or by ambition to improve his situation in it — or conversely he or she has "a great deal of time." Thus the person perceives time as a commodity which is scarce or possessed in abundance. This commodity, time, depends **on the relationship** between a structural factor in a greater whole to which one belongs and the number of actions one wants or is expected to perform. Actually, when the greater whole is planetary or biological (and in ancient times when it was socio-cultural), the series of activities to be performed between two successive markers of time — for example, between sunrise and sunset, between one spring equinox and the next, and even more between birth and death — normally do not demand a feverish rush of activities (for which therefore it would be felt there was "so little time"). Thus human beings in the past felt time passing rather slowly. By contrast, in modern society, especially in business (though even in religious or spiritual spheres), where the drive to success, productivity, and profit (including "spiritual" achievements) has become abnormally intense and demanding, the individual never seems to have enough time. Mankind is driven at a feverish speed toward various kinds of successful (and dubious) achievements — and blames the pressure upon time. But the rhythm of planetary motion and the steady flow of the continuum of change has not accelerated. It is mankind which is rushing ahead, impelled by a philosophy of being — a **Weltanschauung** and set of religious beliefs — which is essentially cathartic and out of tune with the rhythm of change. This disharmony exists because Western, Christian civilization has tragically opted for a world-picture featuring a straight-forward "historical progress" from barbarism to an ideal social and individual Utopia. Christianity violently rejected the concept of the cyclicity of change and

of cycles of transformation and recurrence. It placed upon the period between physical birth and death an utterly unbearable burden of bio-psychic self-transformation — the neurosis-producing compulsion of being either saved or damned forever, that is, changelessly, absolutely.

The Movement of Wholeness - 3

The Movement of Wholeness

Tas the all-inclusive cycle of being

Living a rhythmic, unhurried, and steady existence illumined by a realization of meaning and value thus depends on the scope and inclusiveness of the frame of reference accepted by an individual — and even more basically in most cases by the culture to which he or she belongs. For this frame of reference is a determining factor in the relation between a clearly defined, repetitive section of the continuum of change and the number (and level) of the activities he or she has or wants to perform during that period.

For members of the human species living in tune with the rhythms of their natural habitat, the primordial and most fundamental repetitive, section of the continuum is the period defined by the daily rotation of the earth. This section divides itself into two more or less symmetrical periods, the day and the night. At the strictly biological level, each period is related to a specific mode of existence and type of activity and consciousness. There is a predominantly **objective** type based on the multifarious experiencing and working out of relationships (to a variety of objects and living beings as well as persons). Then follows (and precedes) a predominantly **subjective** type manifesting especially as sleep or, more generally, as rest and recovery from the stress and strain of physical (and/or mental) activity during the day-period.

When agriculture and animal husbandry became dominant concerns for stable communities, the cycle of the year, symbolized as well as measured by the calendar, came to control a larger schedule of activities. This cycle (established by the revolution of the earth around the sun) was subdivided naturally by the cyclic changes in the appearance of the moon — changes which were believed to affect deeply the processes of life (and even, later on, of personality unfoldment). Out of the combination of larger and smaller cycles, and of other periodic changes in the nocturnal skies, astrology was born. It served as an interpretation of the meaning of changes which could be referred to yearly biological cycles, and later to longer cycles in which the recurrent conjunctions and oppositions of planets, especially Jupiter and Saturn, acted as markers of time. The one great value of astrology is that it provides an interpretation of cycles of time which does not, of itself, imply that one half of the cycle is positive and the other negative. The repetitive cyclic pattern is produced by the interplay of two forces that are assumed to be equally significant; what changes cyclically is **their relationship**.

The relationship between two forces interacting within a whole of time generates constantly changing situations. The change is **structured** by the cyclic workings of the relationship. How the change manifests in terms of actual, experienced events is **not** revealed by the structure of change. An immense variety of events is possible, but **their sequence and serial character** are relatively permanent factors. They are relative because large and small cycles and sub-cycles always are interrelated, and because the interference of forces or entities operating in tune with higher magnitude (more inclusive) cycles in the occurrences of less inclusive ones is a possibility that should not be ignored (as we shall see in Chapter 12).

Astrology became widely misused because its cyclic foundation was not understood or was conveniently ignored by those who were concerned only with predicting existential events and favorable or unfavorable times to perform definite acts. The situation is actually the reverse; for what the knowledge of cyclic structure may reveal is what a particular phase of a cycle calls for in terms of types of events, rather than whether a brief, passing moment (or more broadly a particular phase) is favorable for a particular action. Astrology essentially deals with the structure of cycles — of wholes of time — not with concrete events. Moreover, it deals with time (as I have defined this term), not with the continuum of change itself, because the astrologer can be aware of this continuum only from the point of view of a human being on the surface of the earth. Moreover, the astrologer's awareness also is conditioned (in most instances) by the culture's particular approach to change and by the approach inherent in his or her temperament and personal character.

The condemnation of astrology by the councils and officialdom of the Christian world logically followed that of any cyclic interpretation of human existence and spiritual destiny. Instead, existence came to be considered a "historical" process starting with the creation of the world and ending in a glorious consummation, which Teilhard de Chardin envisioned as a supreme moment of total incandescence and spiritual oneness with the glorious Christ. At the individual level, existence was thought to begin with birth — a totally new beginning for a newly created soul — and to end in a death leading to a timeless ("eternal") blessedness, or perhaps to total failure in hell. History was conceived, ideally, as a one-directional process of spiritualization. But most historians of today are not concerned with the entire one-way process, leading up or down; they are interested only in gathering a mass of information about existential events which (they assume) reveal the mood of a particular generation, at most of a century, in a particular culture and religion (as James Joyce in **Ulysses** was concerned only with one day in the life of an ordinary man). Arnold Toynbee's attempt to discover a cyclic pattern in the structural development of "civilization" is now considered fanciful and unrealistic.

Nevertheless, the fundamental question is always, what is reality? For the materialist, it is a basically random sequence of events having no meaning in themselves or in relation to one another and leading to an unknown, perhaps unknowable conclusion some billions of years hence. For the mystical philosopher, reality is "Now" — all appearances absorbed into an ineffable, changeless state of unity. For every human being facing the unceasing continuum of change in the spirit of the philosophy of operative Wholeness presented in this book, reality is the Movement of Wholeness; it is the **cycle of being**, the foundation of the complex interplay of elements and ceaseless transformations of which what we call bodily existence is but a phase.

The hours of daytime also are but phases of the total situation caused by the rotation of the earth; and spring and winter, phases of the yearly cycle of seasons. Each noon presents to the consciousness at least slightly different causations, contacts, or feelings; the rose of this spring is not the same rose as that of a year ago. Yet the cyclic appearance of green leaves and rosebuds in the well-kept garden, and the fall of fragrant petals and brown leaves, can be understood on the basis of an annual process of growth and decay —

and **only** on such a basis. What is understood, however, is the **structure** of the process. The knowledge of cycles of change is a structural type of knowledge. It does not reveal the details of existential facts or "actual" events, only the way they are related sequentially to one another and (what is more) related to a much larger cycle of being. In the case of the roses this would be the cycle of vegetation produced by the rotating motion of the earth, which is a planetary (not merely biological) factor.

The cycle of being of which this book speaks is the largest conceivable cycle of activity; not only of activity but also of consciousness. All wholes of activity possess a degree of consciousness. There is no absolute non-consciousness, any more than there is nonbeing or non-motion. Change necessarily implies motion, provided we do not limit the concept of motion to **physical** motion in an objective, measurable space. In this sense change is unceasing. It is, I repeat, a continuum of motion; but the consciousness of every whole reacts to and interprets this continuum according to its own particular nature and capacity to interpret, understand, and attribute meaning. Every whole of being makes of such a continuum a structured series of repetitive changes, a series limited by the beginning and end of the integrated existence of the whole.

When human consciousness is dominated by, because it is an expression of, biological processes, birth and death are the beginning and end of an integrated condition of wholeness at the physical level of earthly existence. The development of socio-cultural and mental activities adds the realization of personhood to that of conscious being as a physical organism. But according to the collective mentality of Western society, the feeling-realization of being a person also begins at physical birth and ends at physical death. For some Western religious minds, this death is followed by a mysterious and essentially incomprehensible state of being which never ends. This state is one of absorption in or total rejection by (in hell, as a state of being) a God whose being is ineffably and incomprehensibly beyond change, even if (irrationally!) He also is believed to be able to act yet remain absolutely unaffected by His actions. From such a point of view, one cannot speak meaningfully of a **cycle** of being, only of a progressive development from a period of formation "out of nothing" (**ex nihilo**) to a state of more or less absolute transcendence of existence as an integral whole.

The Movement of Wholeness - 4

While the philosophy of operative Wholeness is based on the cycle of being (the Movement of Wholeness), it considers the state of objective, measurable, physical existence only **one half** of the whole cycle of being. It is "one half" in an abstract sense, not in terms of a quantitative, physical measurement of time. However, the other half of the cycle should not be considered nonbeing or non-manifestation. Rather, it is a period during which activity and consciousness are predominantly subjective, just as they are predominantly objective during the half-cycle human beings experience as physical existence. Both periods **can** be understood if we accept the dualism of objectivity and subjectivity as a permanent feature of the cycle of being. We can logically do so because a dualism is present in the condition of being experienced by all men and women — and in the whole of nature. This dualism manifests most obviously in the two states human beings experience daily, waking consciousness and sleep — and even in the contrast between activity consciously focused on a physical (or intellectual) task and a state of unfocused consciousness (day-dreaming) or passive openness to the flow of change (a state in which the sense of time becomes equally unfocused, which does not mean that time has vanished).

Popular Hinduism speaks of the Days and Nights of Brahma, the Creative God; philosophers, of periods or states of manifestation and non-manifestation. In terms of their particular type of consciousness, each refers to what I call the cycle of being in which being oscillates between the two poles represented by the principles of Unity and Multiplicity. Thus the cycle of being inevitably divides itself into two hemicycles, each dominated by one of the two principles. During one hemicycle, the trend toward Multiplicity is dominant and the power or influence of the principle of Unity wanes; this is the hemicycle of multiple beings which in their totality constitute the physical universe perceived by the predominantly objective consciousness of human beings. It can be conveniently **symbolized** in terms of human experience as the Day period of activity and consciousness. During the other hemicycle, the symbolic Night period, the principle of Unity and the trend toward oneness dominate. The physical world ceases to exist, but "being" always **is**. It is in a condition of predominant subjectivity which is prefigured in the human condition of sleep or intense meditation. I have called the state of being to which it refers **inistence** — the polar opposite of existence.

Perhaps a more accurate symbolism than Day and Night would relate the interaction of the two principles. Unity and Multiplicity, to the interaction of the Chinese principles Yin and Yang. For Chinese philosophy makes very clear that these two principles operate **within** the circle of wholeness, Tao, and that they are not only constantly interrelated but interpenetrating. The black form of Yin has a white "center," and the white form of Yang, a black one. Moreover, Yin and Yang, like the principles of Unity and Multiplicity, both operate simultaneously, but in ever-changing ratios of proportional intensity. Indeed, the philosophy of operative Wholeness I present is probably closer to the spirit of Chinese philosophy than to the Hindu, although it includes elements from both approaches.

Nevertheless, the more Western symbolism of Day and Night is adequate if we remember that while light and darkness are "eternal" (that is, cyclic) opposites, they coexist.

What human beings call death is simply the transition from the Day state to the Night state. It is merely a marker of time which, for a physically embodied human consciousness, indicates a radical change in the experience of the continuum. This change is drastically important, tragic, and frightening to human beings solely because the human consciousness, having built a powerful image of itself as a subject — the utterly precious and worthwhile "I" — fears seeing the realm over which it autocratically ruled disintegrate into seeming nothingness. The fear persists even though what occurs is that each of the constituents of the realm goes its own way; they are scattered but not annihilated. At least some of them will return and reintegrate under the reign of a new, perhaps more worthy "king" **of the same dynasty** (as we shall see in Chapter II when we study the concept of reincarnation).

A human being is a whole, not a "one," and both principles, Unity and Multiplicity, are active in this whole. A human being in his or her wholeness (a person) is **both** a subject and an object. The statement that a person is both a soul and a body says the same thing within a religious frame of reference. For the religious person, the soul — as a subjective factor in total being and personhood — is the being's most important and valuable component; but (as we shall see) this importance is given because mankind **belongs** to the last portion of the Day period of the cycle of being, when the power of the principle of Unity is waxing and catching up to the intensity of the principle of Multiplicity, which is in retreat. Thus to increasingly experience and aim at achieving a subjective state of unity is the dharma — the essential function — of mankind on this planet and in our universe (for there may be other, different universes). Religion, inasmuch as it seeks to unify human beings — which, however, it actually does only within the narrow limits of particular cultures, institutions, and dogmas, which **exclude** all unbelievers — is in tune with the present trend of the continuum of change. So are meditation processes and all aspirations toward an ideal of unity. But if we want to understand **why** this is so and what occurs if we do not align our wills, minds, and daily behavior with this progressive one-ward trend — and if we allow the still powerful principle of Multiplicity to successfully oppose the natural trend toward Unity during this period of the earth's evolution — we have to develop a focus of mind and intuitive understanding that is more encompassing than that of the religions of particular, exclusivistic cultures.

The Movement of Wholeness - 5

Thus the Movement of Wholeness as the cycle of being is the foundation of a commonsense approach to being — to the very fact of existing — which must be accepted now that the basic issue facing mankind is the global integration of all human beings within a truly planetary sense of community. This requires a structure of organization broad enough to find a place, value, and meaning for **all** manifestations of human consciousness. Mankind needs an all-inclusive frame of reference, a total affirmation of being. For we must think not **only** of the trend toward Unity and thereby negate, violently oppose, and try to exorcise the still powerful principle of Multiplicity. Instead, we have to develop an all-inclusive consciousness that can deal intelligently with all components of personhood — a consciousness of operative Wholeness. This consciousness will be free from the particularity of only a moment of time, a fugitive now, because it has experienced and constantly retains the memory of the Wholeness of the cycle of being. Such an ideal and truly holistic human memory retains the experiences of the Night period as well as those of the Day; it remembers what comes between the small sub-cycles of embodied personal existence, just as during the embodied cycle it is fully aware of the transitions between waking consciousness and sleep.

Through powerful experiences of Wholeness, the person, aware of the totality of the spectrum of its being, actually becomes **Wholeness in operation**. Even though the person is but a brief moment in the cosmic cycle of being, the consciousness identified with Wholeness can accept not only all that came before that moment and all that will follow; it can also accept the Whole in a total affirmation of all-inclusive being. It experiences what "is" in terms of the cyclic wholeness of the Whole, thus **sub specie aeternitatis** — the true meaning of eternity (before it was perverted by the early fathers of the Church) being the Wholeness of a cyclic movement (an Eon). In this realization, even if it is only mental, there can be inner security and peace. Such security is not apart from the changes and tensions implied in the state of existence, but lies in the incontrovertible realization of the dynamic harmony of opposites operating in the Whole. Neither Unity nor Multiplicity is emphasized, neither the subjective "I" nor the objectivity of the complex relationships that fill the state of embodied existence. Peace is poised in their unceasing interplay — established in Wholeness.

An individualized person can, however, resist the unceasing, driving force of the Movement of Wholeness. He or she can cling to the particular form his or her selfhood has taken — because the form is pleasurable and beautiful or because the ego is afraid of being unable to cope with the change. The individual seeks to immortalize moments of fulfillment or even in some cases a familiar pain with which the ego has become identified. All negations arise out of fear. To overcome this fear, to allow the flow of the Movement of Wholeness to move one's entire being, even though the mind can not yet picture the "where to": this is the constant challenge facing the individualized, self-conscious person.

Such a challenge can be met more readily if the mind understands where the individual stands in the vast cycle of being — not only where he or she stands as an individual, but where humanity as a whole and his or her culture stand. Knowing where one stands not only illumines the path just ahead; it also helps one understand how this position has been reached and therefore how the fear of change can be overcome most logically and consistently.

To willingly and affirmatively accept one's position in the largest whole to which one can deeply feel one belongs, to allow the power of the Movement of Wholeness to drive one step by step — this is the meaning of spiritual living. No step can be missed, however difficult it may seem. Every step is inherently difficult because it means renouncing a lesser form of stability in order to gain a greater realization of Wholeness. In the process, an experience of instability must be met — with courage as well as faith.

Probably the majority of human beings need to believe in a personal God to sustain such a faith. God is the divine Father or Mother for whoever still functions mainly at the biological level of wholeness and consciousness. For the person whose relative sense of isolation seeks solace, God is the supreme and utterly dependable "Thou" to Whom the distraught "I" may turn for reassurance and inner strength. If a conscious and autonomous individual can respond to the idea of a total affirmation of being throughout the vast cyclic process of the Movement of Wholeness — is able to experience Wholeness as a dynamic Presence in all there is and can ever be — the realization that one belongs to a far-reaching greater Whole in whose field of existence one lives, moves, and has one's being can be a profoundly sustaining as well as enlightening factor in the inner life.

In that greater Whole the individuals who see themselves also as individualized wholes — lesser wholes — can accept their function "in the Name of" Wholeness. The individual is Wholeness operating within a definite, and therefore finite, field of activity and consciousness. The individual is his or her dharma or position and function within the greater whole; but he or she is also Wholeness operating in and through this particular position or stage of the great cycle of being. The individual is not only an efficient performer of a definite (thus finite) role in the field of activity of the greater whole; in and through the individual as performer, Wholeness (or "beingness") is affirming itself in a particular mode.

To the conscious and enlightened performer, the performance is but one fleeting phase in the cyclic Movement of Wholeness. He or she **is** that phase, yet **more** than that phase because the all-inclusive reality of being is the rhythmic Movement — and the performer is aware of this. The performer is **the moving**, and in and through the performance, the performing. To use a musical metaphor, the person is not only a bassoonist playing a C-sharp written in the score of a symphony, but also "Music" being performed in terms of the culture's approach to it. This cultural approach, in turn, represents one of the many ways in which "Music" cyclically makes use of sounds.

In the great Movement of being, every performer is Wholeness in act. The human mind that has passed through the process of individualization and has learned to play its part should experience itself performing in the symphonic wholeness of the most inclusive whole in which it is able to effectively participate. It may progress from a small instrumental group in a college to a large metropolitan orchestra. But whether the orchestra is small and part of a learning situation or a magnificent organization of perfect performers, "Music" can still be experienced and realized in the performing. Each tone may be produced "in the Name of" Music. Every human life likewise can be lived "in the Name of" Wholeness. It can be Wholeness in act, operative Wholeness.¹⁸

To be thus established in Wholeness requires a lucid understanding of the two principles that operate in the Whole — in any whole. It requires an inclusive realization of the forces interacting throughout the cyclic Movement of Wholeness, so that as human beings we can properly evaluate our place within this Movement. Through such an evaluation we can then understand the part in the vast process of being we are called upon to play, according to the time and place of our existence. In such an understanding the individual comes to know and to accept his or her dharma or "truth of being." And in the fulfillment of this dharma, Wholeness reveals itself to itself **through** the individual's whole being. In this revelation there is, indeed, security and peace.

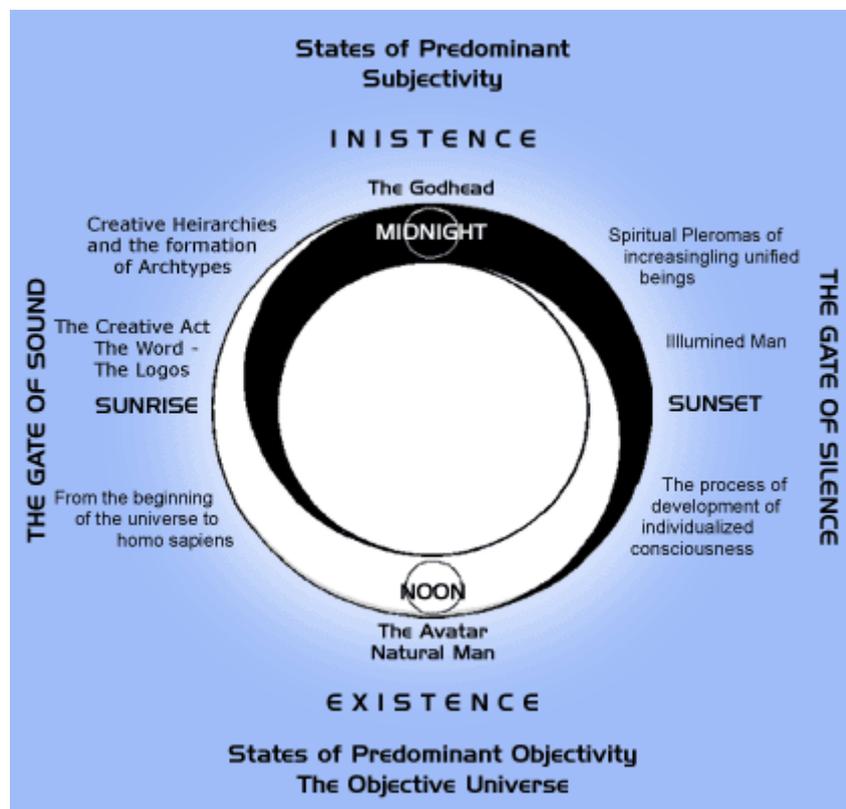
¹⁸ One may relate such an approach to life to the Hindu concept of **karma yoga** in its most inclusive aspect. **Jnana yoga**, on the other hand refers to the attitude promoted by the "contemplative tradition" particularly dominant in Hinayana Buddhism and Zen. This tradition stresses meditation as the one means of reaching an increasingly subjective state of consciousness. In its extreme form, such an approach leads to the "paralyzing" of the bio-psychic and mental instrumentalities of perception, feeling, and cogitating — thus of the means of contact with and response to the world of objectivity and multiplicity. The ideal result is the attainment of **samadhi** or **nirvana**. At the level of universal being, this is a state approaching that of the Godhead. Yet it is not an "absolute" state. A third approach is **bhakti yoga**, the path of devotion to a relatively or absolutely supreme person, a "self-realized" guru or Lord God Himself. The drive toward a state of unity which is as complete as possible takes the form of total identification with an intensely unified **center** of consciousness, or rather, it takes the form of quasi-total absorption into the **circle** (mandala) controlled and integrated by the power and will of this center. These three basic approaches may to some extent be blended, yet one of them normally prevails.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Structure of the Cycle of Being - 1

When the two equal forces of Unity and Multiplicity move cyclically and symmetrically within a finite field of activity, one waxing as the other wanes, four moments mark especially significant turning points. At two points in the cycle, the forces are of equal strength; at two other points, one force reaches the maximum of power it can ever attain while the other is as weak as it will ever be. Thus two points of equilibrium and two points of maximum disequilibrium occur. The two points of equilibrium, however, differ greatly in the quality of being they represent. In one of them, the principle of Multiplicity operates in a condition of dynamic ascendancy and almost explosive expansion, while the principle of Unity is losing control of the movement and becoming internalized as a force of resistance and containment. At the other point of equilibrium, the principle of Unity is a dynamic and irresistible power of condensation and unification, while the influence of the principle of Multiplicity is waning, yet never totally overcome.

Each of these four moments in the cyclic process is the start of a definite phase of the total development of possibilities of being, but the whole cycle is most significantly divided into two hemicycles. During one of them, which can be conveniently symbolized as the Day-side of being, the power of the principle of Multiplicity predominates. During the symbolic Night-side, the principle of Unity controls the Movement of Wholeness. Nevertheless, in such a symbolism the "light" of Day is always to some degree present during the Night period as is the darkness of Night during the Day period.



This diagram is probably the simplest way to try to illustrate what I attempt to describe in this and the next chapter. But like any such diagram, it can be misleading. One can view it horizontally, that is laying the book flat on a table, in which case the diagram has no "top" or "bottom." Or one can see it vertically, with the Godhead on top and Natural Man at the bottom, in which case it would better illustrate the idea of a vertical opposition between heaven and earth, between the sky and the depths of a strictly material realm of existence.

Nevertheless, what the diagram does not reveal is a pulsation from a central core of being, where Unity has an almost totally dominant power, to a circumferential state of maximum Multiplicity. The Movement of Wholeness is therefore at some times centripetal, sometimes centrifugal. The pulsation from center to circumference and back to center is like the heartbeat of being or Wholeness. This pulsation, however, is far more difficult to illustrate in a diagram, because the moments of equilibrium at which the two forces are of equal strength would be "located" halfway between the core and the circumference. The advantage of a diagram that would picture such a pulsation is that it would picture the resemblance between the process and a mandala, which by definition requires something at its center. In another sense, the process would be likened to the spring of a watch; as the spring rhythmically contracts and expands, so does "being" or rather "beingness." These contractions and expansions operate at various levels, at which they may seem to be either immensely slow or extraordinarily rapid. The modern mind refers to them, in terms of the objective measurement of their **speed**, as vibrations Being is vibratory motion. But we should be able to think of subjective motion, which our senses and instruments cannot measure, as well as objective motion — that is, of vibration carried by a material medium or an exchange of particles in which activity can be measured at least indirectly.

The Day period begins at the symbolic Sunrise, the Night at Sunset. Sunrise occurs when the principles of Unity and Multiplicity are of equal strength, with the principle of Multiplicity in dynamic ascent and the principle of Unity in retreat. During the Day all modes of consciousness are predominantly influenced by an objective approach to reality; during the Night, by a subjective approach. At the symbolic Noon of the cycle (Midday), the principle of Multiplicity reaches the maximum power possible for it to attain in the particular cycle under consideration. At Sunset the principles of Unity and Multiplicity are of equal strength, with the trend toward oneness in ascendance and the trend toward Multiplicity in retreat. At Midnight, the principle of Unity reaches the maximum of its possible strength — overpowering yet not absolute. Then the principle of Multiplicity begins once more to exert a dynamic influence, until at Sunrise its waxing strength balances that of the waning trend toward Unity.

The Structure of the Cycle of Being - 2

The symbolic Sunrise refers to the beginning of the universe we perceive because we live and fulfill a function in it. Sunrise is the moment of **Creation**, an immense release of energy that will animate all modes and forms of existence. Energy then passes from the condition of potential energy to that of kinetic energy. The "passage," however, is not an uncontrolled explosion in all directions or dimensions of space; it is controlled by the containing power of the principle of Unity matching that of the principle of Multiplicity. Energy is kineticized, quantum after quantum, in a series of rhythmic pulsations. It is vibratory energy.

Where does this energy come from? It is the energy of the Movement of Wholeness. It is energy generated by the constant tension between the two great forces perpetually operating in the Movement. The concept of being implies a state of tension. The "peace" of perfect being is not the absence of tension, it is the experience of perfect equilibrium. Within the steady and totally stable whole, anabolic and catabolic forces are perfectly balanced. The whole is balanced, but in any part of the whole tension assumes the character of unbalanced being — being in which one force (or principle) predominates. Different results are produced depending on which of the forces is dominant. Thus we speak of kinetic and potential energy. Energy passes from the condition of potentiality to that of kinetic actuality at Sunrise, and a symmetrical polar passage from a kinetic to a potential condition occurs at the symbolic Sunset.

Kinetic energy is energy released in order to perform some objectively measurable work. We can measure the work it performs, not only because our senses and instruments react to it, but also because our minds can detach themselves sufficiently from this work to take an objective attitude toward it. From the point of view of an objective mind, potential energy refers to the possibility of eventual work, provided external acts eventually are performed — for example, if a boulder at the edge of a precipice is given a push and falls. Yet in the state of being where the principle of subjectivity dominates and objectivity is in retreat, energy does not perform objective work; it operates inwardly and centripetally, essentially being "stored up" or "disobjectivized" and condensed into quasi-absolute Oneness.

At the symbolic Midnight, this condition of near (but never absolute) immobility is reached. Being takes the character of an almost static, all-inclusive concentration of consciousness (subjective activity); and such a concentration also represents a state of nearly infinite potentiality. Yet, at the very moment when the principle of Multiplicity is the weakest it can ever be. Wholeness forces it (as it were) to claim its right to existence and to challenge the nearly all-powerful experience of Oneness. Being, almost totally absorbed and condensed into a nearly all-inclusive ecstasy of unity — a nearly timeless **im**perience (rather than **ex**perience) of "beingness" — is compelled by the oscillatory

momentum of the Movement of Wholeness to reverse its polarity. The "center" once more is moved by the idea of a "circle" it would centralize. The incredibly condensed core of subjective being, haunted by the memory of dimensionality, is not allowed by the Movement of Wholeness to reach the condition of a dimensionless mathematical point.

After Midnight, the principle of Multiplicity once more waxes in strength; energy gradually depotentializes itself. It operates in precosmic modes of mental activity. At this stage, "mental activity" refers to the creation of archetypes — that is, to formulas of being, systems (or "models") of organization that will become structural foundations for physical matter. As the waxing principle of Multiplicity reaches a condition of equal strength with the waning principle of Unity, the release of energy takes the form of the Creative Act. The latter, focused through archetypal forms which have become fully defined by then and which in their totality may be called "the Word" (or Logos), gives birth to an increasingly objective, physical universe.

This objective and measurable universe — our universe — represents only one half of the entire cycle of being. It is neither "the Whole" nor the whole of reality. Neither is it an "illusion," nor is the other half of the cycle (the symbolic Night period) Reality with a capital **R**. There can be neither one absolute subject nor an infinite multiplicity of absolute ("subjectivityless") objects spread through forever-extended space. Reality **is** the cyclic interplay of subject and object. It is wholeness being experienced, partially or completely, by conscious entities in which varying degrees of subjectivity interact with what we call a body. In a deeper sense, reality is Wholeness experiencing Itself subjectively as "One" and objectively as "Many" — simultaneously.¹⁹

Because all beings possess a degree of consciousness **within** the Movement of Wholeness, they might be compared to particles of water within a wave. Each particle experiences the wave in its own way, according to its particular position, from its own perspective. Human beings experience the Movement of Wholeness as the natural succession of earthly days and nights and the yearly cycle of seasonal activity. The polarities of the latter cycle manifest in the vegetable kingdom as the fully developed plant (with stem, leaves, and flowers) and the seed. The condition of being a living organism composed of billions of cells is only the objective and existential half of this cycle. But "something" in a human being should be able to experience the **entire** "Cycle of Man" —

¹⁹ This interplay of subjectivity and objectivity within our concrete physical universe eventually manifests on earth (and presumably on any planet presenting the necessary telluric conditions) as the individual person. The root-symbol of self-conscious personhood is the statement "I am," in which the "I" stands for the subjective centralizing principle and "am" refers to the state of objective existence as a living organism. In the Bible, when the "Lord God" (YHVH) declares to Moses that His name is "I AM," he presents himself as the archetype of individualized personhood. In Sanskrit, the "I" is implied in the divine name **Ish** (see the Isha Upanishad, remarkably commented upon by Sri Aurobindo). The complete form of this name is given as **Ishvara**, the Creative Being and "Lord" of the universe — the manifested aspect of Brahman. However, as we shall see in Part Three, this "I" should not be confused with the ego, which is only a mechanism of adaptation of the organism-as-a-whole to the physical, social, and psychic environment, within which a child has to develop his or her conscious mind and to operate as effectively and comfortably as possible.

that is, the cycle of being as it applies to the archetypal potential of homo sapiens — including its predominantly subjective aspect during the postmortem state.

The period from the birth of the body to its death is **not** the complete cycle of being at the human level. The whole cycle is birth to rebirth. If one is not able to envision this entire cycle, at least in its abstract form, no experience or series of experiences one has while "alive" can have full meaning. The experience of human reality, as wholeness of being, is the experience of the full meaning of the whole cycle, not only of the hemicycle of human "existence" — the existence of a particular person bound to a physical body.

Such an experience of Man, within and by an individual person, may occur in its perfection (**purna**, the "perfect experience") at the moment in the cycle of Man when subjectivity and objectivity reach a state of equilibrium at the symbolic Sunset. In the cycle of the year, this corresponds to the fall equinox, when the relative lengths of day and night are equal. In the vegetable kingdom, the power of life abandons the plant and condenses itself into the seed or into the root — to the extent that repetitive cycles are possible on the basis of an enduring organism (for example, a tree). At the level of human evolution, I call this state of equilibrium **Illumined Man**. In that state Wholeness manifests as a sublime "light" that reveals the essential meaning of the whole cycle of being. It is the state of **human** perfection that has been symbolized as the "divine Marriage" — the perfectly equilibrated and interpenetrating union between spirit and matter in an individualized human being. But it is also only the beginning of a subjective, **transhuman** process leading to the condition of increasing "oneness" that culminates at the symbolic Midnight of the cycle of Man.

Here the term "Man" refers to a formation of being occurring on the surface of planets whose material, chemical, and biological development makes its appearance and growth possible at both a collective and an individual level. In this sense, "human history" refers to the period of the cycle between Noon and Sunset. This human period follows the period of the formation of the physical universe (from protogalaxies to planets) and the differentiation of the vast number of life-species on a planet's surface, leading to the appearance of homo sapiens or **Natural Man** at Noon. This human period evidently is not **exclusively** human, as all forms of life continue to develop within a planet's biosphere; but strictly biological life gradually vanishes (or sees its basic function fade away) somewhat in proportion to the development of characteristically "human" states of being and consciousness.

The Structure of the Cycle of Being - 3

These human states eventually lead to the crucial moment of equilibrium between the principles of Unity and Multiplicity — to the symbolic Sunset and Illumined Man. Beyond this stage we have to imagine a state of being in which predominant subjectivity takes the place or function of objective materiality and corporeality. Existence fades out as inistence develops its essential characteristics. The symbolic Night follows Day.

When Western religious philosophers (and St. John quoting Jesus in Revelations 1:8) speak of **alpha** and **omega**, they refer to the beginning and the end of only the half-cycle of existence — that is, of the physical universe. Occult traditions hold that the entire alphabet symbolizes only the unfoldment of this universe.²⁰ This universe is the only reality most human beings, even today, actually are able to consider as a field of activity susceptible of being understood and affected by their thoughts and behavior. For the materialist, this is all there can possibly be. For religious persons who deeply feel that there must be some condition of being beyond "this" world, such a condition is mysterious and for many people frightening. Yet human consciousness has reached a stage of development at which we should no longer have to think of beginning and end, but instead of a cyclic process without beginning or end. We should be able to realize that what we call birth and death — either of a single human organism or an entire universe — are two "Gates" through which the cyclic process of being passes.

Through the "Gate of Sound" at the cosmic level, the energy that creates, "in-forms," and sustains all modes of existence issues forth. It manifests in the life-field of a planet (its biosphere) as vital energy (**prana**) and breath — the first breath of a newborn. At the "Gate of Silence," human beings who are ready experience for a brief, nearly timeless moment according to their individual stage of evolution and understanding, a degree of "Illumination." This illumination reveals the essential meaning of the realities of their life-span, which is then ending. As individual persons, they "die" into a state of increasingly subjective being; their physical-psychic nature gradually undifferentiates. The elements of which this nature had been constituted since conception are returned to the planetary fields from which they were drawn. These elements that had been combined into a whole of existence disintegrate, only to be eventually recombined into new forms of

²⁰ The letter **mu** occurs at the midpoint of the Greek alphabet which starts with **alpha** and ends with **omega**. These three letters and their sounds have a profound symbolic meaning. Zen training often uses the constant repetition of the sound **Mu** (or **moo** — see **Three Pillars of Zen** by Phillip Kapleau). An old tradition tells of an ancient continent called **Lemuria**, of which Australia, New Zealand, and some Pacific Islands are said to be the remains. Life on this continent is supposed to have marked the midpoint of the whole scheme of human evolution, which is said to encompass seven large periods. It was in Lemuria (at the midpoint of the third period) that Man began to appear in his essential character, as a being endowed with "self-consciousness" (the "Promethean gift"). In Sanskrit, the primordial mantram is the sacred word AUM — beginning, end, and middle. But in Latin the word **amo** means "I love" — the human form taken by the principle of Unity

organization, according to the complex, impersonal rhythms of an immense cycle of changes and transformations. (I shall discuss the subjective aspect of the postmortem processes in Chapter II.)

Passage through the Gate of Silence takes on a different aspect, however, when we think of the human state as the embodiment of one of the four phases of the cosmic and metacosmic (Day and Night) cycle of being. This "human" phase leads to a new one, to which the term *inistence* refers. The human phase, however, refers to humanity-as-a-whole, or more generally and archetypally to Man (Anthropos) as a functional part (or level) of the total being of the earth. (In the next chapter I shall outline the sequence of developments marking the slow but progressive evolution of humanity-as-a-whole toward the final condition of Illumined Man and the passage through the Gate of Silence — the ultimate phase of "human history" at the planetary "end of time," "Last Day," or omega state.)

What follows this final condition of Illumined Man — and what **individuals** who even now constitute the far-advanced spearhead of human evolution already are experiencing — should not be considered a negation of being. From the point of view of Wholeness, the two opposite principles of Unity and Multiplicity, symmetrically waxing and waning, are equally significant.²¹ Each principle should be understood as an affirmation of being, be it a subjective, contracting or an objective, expansionistic affirmation; an affirmation of the experience of unity (selfhood) in terms of consciousness or an affirmation of the feeling of space-conquest through the spreading differentiation of energy.

In the cycle of the seasons, these two types of affirmation correspond to the summer and winter solstices. They reach their most characteristic and powerful formulations at the symbolic Midday and Midnight of the entire cycle of Wholeness. Midnight symbolizes the predominance of the principle of Unity. All there is is condensed within what I call the **Godhead** state. Yet this Godhead is not "the Absolute." Neither is it "One without a second," nor does it transcend the Movement of Wholeness. Wholeness, being all-inclusive, has a place for the Godhead as it has for all living beings and for Man — Man considered as an archetype and as a particular phase of the all encompassing cycle of being. The Godhead is the culmination of being in terms of Unity, but it is not a Supreme Being. Natural Man (the symbolic Noon) is the culmination of being in terms of the most extreme differentiation possible during the Day hemicycle of existence. It is thus the triumph of Multiplicity and also of what we call **nature**. The term **Natural Man** therefore refers to a vast number (a multiplicity) of human beings.

When I speak of Godhead, I do not mean what some great mystics like Meister Eckart meant by the term or what Hindu philosophers named **Parabrahman** (the unmanifest aspect of Brahman) — to them the "Supreme Reality." The term refers to supreme condition, but it is a condition of supreme Unity, and Unity is no more absolutely "real"

²¹ Of course metaphysicians can argue as to whether Unity and Multiplicity are two aspects of Wholeness, or if Wholeness is the result of cyclic interaction. It is like arguing about what came first, the chicken or the egg.

than Multiplicity. The only possible "Supreme Reality" is Wholeness, the perpetual and undefinable interplay of both the principle of Unity and the principle of Multiplicity. Reality is the interrelatedness of all conceivable modes of being, be they predominantly subjective or objective.

Thus the basic structure of the cycle of changes engendered by the perpetual interaction between the principles of Unity and Multiplicity. The tension generated by this interaction is the source of all energy. As the degree and character of the tension changes with the interactions of the principles, energy operates in an immense variety of modes. Considered universally and abstractly, the cycle of change is the Cycle of Being. To a particular consciousness able to perceive, experience, or intuit the entire cycle, it is the Movement of Wholeness. Each phase of the cycle — including the consciousness perceiving it — can be interpreted as an aspect of Wholeness. It is Wholeness-in-act — a release of the energy of the Movement through a definite form. The characteristics of the form and the circumstances of and surrounding the action are essentially defined by the character of the relationship between the principles of Unity and Multiplicity in effect at the time and place the particular act occurs.

The Four Crucial Phases of the Cycle of Being - 1

To speak of the beginning of a cycle in which every phase follows another in a continuum of changes with a repetitive structure implies that, though we are sufficiently objective to the cycle to be able to consider it as a whole, we are looking at it from the point of view of our particular position in it. The Movement of Wholeness itself has neither beginning nor end; it is a continuum of change which the human mind interprets as a series of moments in which events occur, every event being related to antecedent events and conditioning subsequent ones. What human beings call the first event of a series, its assumed "beginning," is the one before which no other (normally) can be known, because any antecedent belongs to a category (or level) transcending that of the knower's consciousness. Nevertheless, any "beginning" occurs as a result of impulses and determining factors which occurred at that transcendent level — and these in turn were determined by still previous occurrences. Every **phase** of a cycle whose structure is repetitive is related to every other phase, even though the events through which the phases operate need not be repeated exactly.

Human beings usually interpret the relation between events in terms of cause and effect. Nevertheless the concept of causality is not the most significant (because not the most inclusive) frame of reference within which to define the relatedness of all that occurs within the cycle of being. A more holistic interpretation reveals that the cycle **as a whole** constantly acts upon its components and constituent phases. During the Day hemicycle, it does so by readjusting the centrifugal tendencies inherent in individual forms of existence and in relationships between them. Christianity interprets this readjusting activity of Wholeness as divine Providence. Yet, however we formulate a deeper, more holistic interpretation of the readjustment, it operates **through** individuals, who operate as agents or catalysts for it. In Mahayana Buddhism, the immense compassion of liberated Bodhisattvas is said somehow to absorb (insofar as the overall cycle allows) the centrifugal activities of human beings unable to serenely fulfill their places and functions (dharma) in the planetary process of human evolution. In Hinduism, Avatars like Krishna periodically incarnate to restore the dharma, that is, to restructure the process of evolution.

Karma, if considered the cause-and-effect relation binding together the activities of human beings, is a valid concept where causal sequences can be given an objective meaning. This occurs in the world of measurements — which is also that of **quid pro quo** ("This for that," "An eye for an eye," and so on) — the world dominated by the principle of Multiplicity; and the concept is essentially atomistic. It had to be formulated in such a way to meet the need of a humanity essentially in danger of being deconstructed by a centrifugal, egocentric individualism. This danger is inevitable; it characteristically defines the nature of the human state of being, which in turn refers to the section of the cyclic process witnessing the rise of the principle of Unity.

The waxing of the principle of Multiplicity, which overtakes the power of the principle of Unity following Creation at the symbolic Sunrise, can be interpreted as the increase of randomness in the world of objective existence; but after the symbolic Noon, when the trend toward Unity begins to increase, **order** gradually overcomes disorder. What human

beings call "freewill" reveals the operation of randomness at the level of human existence; the increase of order in the cycle of being is, as it were, appropriated by individualized human beings who compromise with the still powerful drive toward Multiplicity by insisting on following **their own** order. In such a manner, the power of the principle of Multiplicity becomes "introverted," and it does so as it is in retreat, gradually being caught up to by the principle of Unity. Therefore a paradox arises: human beings simultaneously insist on playing the game of Multiplicity as they, themselves, become ever more integrated yet separate "ones." This leads to the dualism of failure and success (as we shall see in the next chapter).

Yet whatever any human being does as a self-isolated individual center of consciousness and will does not affect the overall structure of the cycle of being. The destructuring forces of extreme individualism are balanced and harmonized by divine Providence or Compassion — that is, by the Wholeness of the cycle focusing itself in and through personages who act as agents of the Whole, as transpersonal human beings.

Because of this interplay between destructuring and restructuring (reorganizing) forces — which is also the interplay of Multiplicity and Unity seen from a particular perspective — no cycle **exactly** repeats a preceding one. **Structurally** there is one basic form of cyclic order; **existentially** the actual events of any cycle are unpredictable, occurring in answer to whatever needs arise.

The Four Crucial Phases of the Cycle of Being - 2

The Creative Process

before and after "the beginning"

Human beings today trace the cause of the beginning of a human body to the act of copulation of a man and woman providing the two different kinds of cells needed for the formation of an embryo. Behind and driving this act of copulation, some people idealistically assume, is the human couple's "desire to create." Theologians thinking anthropomorphically extend this concept of desire to God's creation of the universe: a supremely transcendent Godhead "fecundates" His/Its infinite Potency (**Mahashakti**) which, separating itself from the Godhead, becomes the source of the creative process (however this process is formulated). Yet no explanation can be given for the Godhead's (or **Parabrahman's**) "desire to create," which indeed is incomprehensible and "absurd" if God is the changeless One without any attributes or division, and without the evident incompleteness and lack always implied by a desire.

In fact, it goes without saying that the act of sexual impregnation in a human couple frequently has nothing to do with the desire to create a child. From a biological point of view, the copulating man and woman act merely as **carriers** of sperm and ovum; "life" uses them for its own purpose. In homo sapiens, the cycle of "life" operates in this hominal manner, while in vegetable species it works through the seed process. Such a process clearly reveals that the end of one cycle of vegetation **becomes** the beginning of a new cycle; the seed that falls from the dying plant becomes the germinating seed. Thus there is no break in the continuum of the biological vegetable cycle. Neither, actually, is there a break in the continuum of the human biological cycle; the sperm and ova of human beings are living cells (parts or rather subwholes) within the bodies of living human organisms.

There is also no break in the Movement of Wholeness — no break in the cycle of being in which the full development of mankind occurs and Man (archetypally considered) performs a crucial function. What human beings interpret as the "beginning" of the universe — **our** universe — and the start of the process culminating in the state of being human (homo sapiens), can be symbolized by the germination of the seed. It is not a beginning "out of nothing," but a critical turning point in a predominantly subjective process gradually **becoming** more objective. It is not caused by a "causeless Cause" external to the cycle of being, God, but by a series of prior changes during the Night period of the cycle. As the principle of Unity is then stronger than the principle of Multiplicity, the changes leading to the beginning of the new cycle are predominantly subjective.

These changes refer to a process operating at the level of **mind** — of a pre-cosmic type of mind, for the cosmos (the material universe human senses perceive and react to) is not

yet in existence when they "occur." Cosmic existence begins when the principle of Multiplicity reaches a degree of intensity equaling that of the long dominant but waning principle of Unity. This is the case at the symbolic Sunrise, which is the final consummation of the series of subjective (but objectivizing) changes lasting between Midnight and Sunrise.

During this Midnight-to-Sunrise period, an almost total Oneness of being (symbolized by the Godhead state) gradually becomes manifold. Such a manifold of being takes the form of collectivities of beings who are still deeply unified in activity and consciousness and assuredly non-physical as yet. Occult traditions and religious theologies (and theodicies) speak of them as **creative Hierarchies** which become decreasingly unified and increasingly differentiated as the moment of Creation (the symbolic Sunrise) approaches. In their totality and togetherness, these Hierarchies **are** the creative God, Ishvara, the Word (or Logos,) Elohim (a plural noun in Hebrew). One may think of them as a descending series of subjective, pre-cosmic "Hosts" of beings. They have been called **cosmocratores**, "builders of the cosmos"; yet they do not "build" the material universe. Rather, they produce increasingly complex and differentiated archetypes or **formulas of being** — clearly defined sets of potentialities of existence, systems of organization to be used by the many elements of physical matter as structural foundations for concrete existence.

As the process of formation of archetypes reaches its final culmination at the symbolic Sunrise, the potential energy that had been "stored" during the Night period of the cycle is progressively released. It is released with extreme intensity at the symbolic Sunrise, when the principle of Multiplicity not only equals the strength of the principle of Unity but emerges as a dynamic, aggressive factor. For theologians of all religions, this release is the **Act** of Creation. But the Movement of Wholeness reveals it to be a particularly focused phase in the **process** of Creation: the continuum of change, never interrupted during the Night hemicycle but operating mainly subjectively, begins to produce objective, physical manifestations, according to the archetypes that had been formed (subjectively) between the symbolic Midnight and Sunrise. In this sense, Creation evokes the potentiality of time, for inherent in each archetypal form (which will be actualized as the physical universe develops) is a particular way of reacting to and eventually experiencing and interpreting the continuum of change.

As cosmic existence begins at the symbolic Sunrise, energy is being depotentialized. It is kineticized in discrete steps, as cosmic quanta, because the principle of Unity is still relatively powerful and compels the release to occur in **units**, at first according to simple cosmic forms (archetypes), such as whirlpools, which eventually become spiral galaxies. In accordance with these archetypes, powerful forces marking the initial triumph of the principle of objective existence (Multiplicity) over the principle of subjectivity (Unity) move, churn, and whirl what between Midnight and Sunrise had been an immense (but indeed non-measurable) "expanse" of inert, undifferentiated materials or protomatter (the "dark waters of space" referred to in Genesis 1:1). While I shall define the nature of this

protomatter more precisely in the next chapter, let us say for now that it refers to a state of nearly total fragmentation, nonrelatedness, and inertia produced by the failures of the preceding cycle — or, symbolically, that it corresponds to the chemicals and waste-products released in the soil year after year by the decay of leaves and other materials.

After the symbolic Sunrise, what I have spoken of in previous writings as a "two-way evolution" coordinates the involution of spiritual forces animating archetypal forms with the evolution of the protomatter of "chaos" (the "dark waters of space"). At first the archetypally defined forms into which protomatter is whirled are very simple; they become progressively more complex as galaxies, star-systems, planets, and various kinds of atoms and molecules.

Eventually cells develop in which the integrative potency of "life" begins to operate. A biosphere (a life-field) is set in operation the moment molecules evolve into living cells. Life animates the entire planet, not merely the cells themselves. When archetypes belonging to the systems of organization we call "life" begin to interact with the molecules of the matter of the planet, the whole planet becomes **alive**. Living matter is still matter. It is constituted by atoms and molecules, but these are controlled by a more evolved and more differentiated type of structural organization characterized by its capacity to reproduce and multiply itself in a myriad of facsimiles.²²

In this type of organization, the principle of Multiplicity, which has continued to wax after equaling the principle of Unity at the symbolic Sunrise, is nearly over-powering. The principle of Unity can only maintain a power of integration able to some extent to control and contain the process of expansion, self-multiplication, and differentiation. From Sunrise to Noon, the principle of Unity operates at several levels; two of its manifestations are gravitation and the "binding force" holding subatomic particles in a stable state of relatedness. Another of its modes of operation during the symbolic Day-half of the cycle is the life-force (**prana** in Sanskrit, **chi** in Chinese), which keeps the myriad of cells of a living organism functionally active according to specific (archetypal) patterns of behavior. (During the second part of this Day hemicycle, from Noon to Sunset, the principle of Unity, then rising in strength, also operates as the power of **psychism** which maintains tribal and societal integration.)

²² No rational basis exists for the modern scientific mentality's refusal to accept, even as a working hypothesis, the existence of spiritual energies mobilizing archetypal forms and "projecting" them on evolving earth-matter. According to the assumptions and paradigms of Western civilization, we should not have to have recourse to the "unnecessary" belief in archetypal forms **if** we can explain the evolution of inorganic into organic matter (a very big **if** indeed), because the latter explanation would be "simpler." This is a specious idea. It rests on the assumption that nothing is "proven" unless we can discover **how** the process operates **in terms the human intellect and its machines can measure**. Knowledge is thus limited to measurability — a limitation which is as much a "belief" as the belief in God, as the belief that mankind as we know it represents the highest system of organization of activity and consciousness on earth, or the belief that the earth is only a mass of matter.

The evolution of biological species within the earth's biosphere eventually leads to the animal stage of life and to **protohuman** races. As crystals and viruses may be transitions between complex inorganic molecules and living cells, and as intermediary forms of existence have been found between plants and animals, so fossil remains of protohuman primates found in various regions of the globe probably have to be interpreted as evidence of a gradual transition between animals and characteristically **human** beings. All "passages" from one level of organization to the next require periods of transition and the development of intermediary or transitional evolutionary steps. This occurs because the principle of formation develops inertia; all existential forms (including institutions at the social level) resist change. **Existentially**, any new system of biological organization emerges slowly from the preceding one, yet the **archetypes** which both systems actualize are clearly distinct, each archetype giving form to a basically different **quality of being**.

If the scientist believes in gradual material evolution and the occultist or theologian in the creation of distinct species by God, the seemingly contradictory beliefs arise because different types of persons view the same reality from different points of view. The fact of a **continuous** series of physical transformations does not contradict the **periodic** actualization of archetypal principles of formation. "Protohuman" races become increasingly "human" under the pressure of the involutory descent of the archetype Man (Anthropos) when the inertia of animal nature has been at least partially overcome by the power of the new, fully human characteristics. Moreover, the beginning of a truly human stage has to take place in the biosphere of a planet being periodically (and in a sense continually) transformed; thus the appearance of homo sapiens — of human beings endowed with the **potentiality** of self-consciousness and autonomous decision-making — could take place only when conditions became sufficiently hospitable to the new, presumably more sensitive and vulnerable type of human organisms. (According to some occult traditions, this occurred in several regions, not in a single locale.)

The "descent" of the archetype Man into the biosphere (and thus **potentially** into every newborn human) is symbolized and dramatized in the myth of Prometheus. This probably follows the more complex and revealing Hindu story of the great beings called Kumaras, especially one of these beings identified as Sanat Kumara, who came to earth from another realm of being associated with "Venus" (whether or not this refers to the physical planet). The idea that the archetype of Man is "kept" within the thrice holy city of Shambhala in the deserts of central Asia may refer to the superphysical reality alluded to in such myths. In any case, all three myths can be considered highly significant evocations of a definite phase in the evolution of the earth, a phase during which a truly human type of beings appeared in a region particularly adapted **at the time** (perhaps millions of years ago) to its concrete manifestation.

Exactly when such an event occurred in terms of our time measurements is probably not important today, if only because the rate of the flow of time — which simply means the speed of planet-wide changes measured by the revolution of the earth around the sun

— may have been quite different then from what it is now.²³ The importance of discussing such an event is to understand its place and meaning in the entire cyclic scheme in which humanity has a definite place, function, and meaning to fulfill within the earth and the universe as a whole. To realize such a meaning and to fulfill such a place and function in an all-human, global, and all-inclusive sense is the intrinsic purpose of that period of the cycle of being which, at least for human beings, constitutes "human history" — past, present and future: the period of the great cycle between the symbolic Noon and Sunset.

²³ The belief that the earth's motions (axial rotation and revolution around the sun) occur at the same speed throughout the whole period of the cosmos seems incredibly naive. It is tantamount to believing that the growth of a human body occurs at the same rate at age forty as it does at age thirteen. It is an assumption based on the unproved and unprovable belief that the cosmos is "nothing but" a mass of matter totally devoid of any living (and thus cyclic) characteristics. Astronomical theories — which have changed so often during the last one hundred years — reflect an extraordinary human **hubris**: the belief (at times fanatical) that physical sense-data conveyed to the brain-mind (which then interprets these data) provides quasi-absolute knowledge of unchanging and universal cosmic processes.

The Four Crucial Phases of the Cycle of Being - 3

From Noon to Sunset and from Natural Man to Illumined Man

Understanding the meaning of the term **Natural Man** requires the consideration of the workings of the Polarity principle which complements the principles of Unity and Multiplicity by harmonizing these opposite trends of the Movement of Wholeness. Polarity reveals a special connection between opposite phases in the cycle, most significantly between Midnight and Noon, and between Sunrise and Sunset. In a more general way, a polar relationship also exists between the entire quarters of Sunrise-to-Noon and Sunset-to-Midnight, and between the quarters of Midnight-to-Sunrise and Noon-to-Sunset.

At the symbolic Noon of the cycle, the principle of Multiplicity reaches its maximum power to control the energies of the Movement of Wholeness. In Natural Man the energies of earth-nature attain their greatest possible differentiation; the centrifugal power of Multiplicity and differentiation reaches its natural limits — that is, in nature as it operates in our system of planetary organization. But this extreme of differentiation (or of possibility of differentiation in human nature) "challenges" the opposite point in the cycle, the most unified state of Godhead, to act to affirm Wholeness. The possibility of actualizing Wholeness in a release of concretizable energy is greatest when and where the two extremes face each other. In other words, Midnight is "involved" in Noon, because in the Midnight-Noon polarization Wholeness is challenged to become **an actual experience**.

This experience — like any integral experience of wholeness (**purna** in Sanskrit) — must have a form in which to occur, a form **to contain it**. The form is the archetype, Man. In the evolution of the earth, the archetype Man "descends" into the planet's life-field (the biosphere) when the Promethean or Kumaric "event" occurs. This descent must take place **before** the Noon of the cycle, so that the archetypal form, Man, can be completely stabilized on earth when the "bottom" of the cycle (the Noon point) is reached by the vast cosmic-planetary tide of the Movement of Wholeness (which we today call "evolution").

At this Noon point the Godhead "involves" itself, as it were, in the planet earth **through** a human being in whom the archetype Man is focused. In India, such a human being is called a great Avatar; the Christian tradition uses the term "God-man." But the process of involvement (or "intervention") can be interpreted in many ways. For the Christian theologian, it occurred for the first and only time nearly two thousand years ago. But Christian doctrine makes no fundamental distinction between the Godhead and God the Creator of the universe, (though the writings of mystics like Meister Eckart make this distinction); and the supreme event happened relatively recently. It was total and final, even if a Second Coming is still expected today. In India, at least eight great Avatars of the past are mentioned, and others are expected in the future. (Some Indians speak, apparently erroneously, of Gautama Buddha as the ninth Avatar, following Krishna, the eighth, and Rama, the seventh.) Lesser Avatars are also mentioned, and a spiritually illumined human being often is considered the avatar of his or her own divinity.

In a planetary sense (that is, referring to humanity as a whole), the original great Avatar embodies, as it were, the archetype of Man (Anthropos). But he may do so only superphysically, and the term "reflects" or "focuses into the planetary field" may be more appropriate than "embodies." In either case, what the first great Avatar "reflects" is the "vision" or "imagination" that arose in the Godhead state at the symbolic Midnight — the divine image of Man. But at the symbolic Noon, the "image" is as yet imprecise and unlimited by "form"; it is more a Quality (or rather a vast complex of spiritual Qualities) than a form. Religious mystics and poets have tried to express the character of this Midnight "image" in the "mind" of the Godhead by projecting it onto the sky as the "Heavenly Man" whose form was imaginatively and symbolically defined by constellations of stars. This Heavenly Man, however, was a latter-day religious projection of the archetype Man that **already** had "descended" into the earth-field with the coming of the Kumaras or Promethean spirits. Nevertheless, I do not believe that the central figure in the Hindu version of this descent, Sanat Kumara, should be considered the Supreme Avatar. Rather, he brought down the archetype Man to the sphere of the earth, anchoring it in the substance of the globe at the mystic place Buddhist tradition calls Shambhala.

In a somewhat different way, the process of embodiment of the archetype Man into the crude physical organisms of human beings then controlled by biological energies may be represented in Genesis 6 in the story of the "sons of God" (Ben Elohim) who married "the daughters of man" giving rise to a race of "giants." As the Creator-God Elohim refers to a "Host" of beings, so the term Avatar may be understood most significantly as a series of manifestations, emanations, or interventions of the Godhead state (the state of maximum Unity) throughout the whole period of the actualization of the archetype Man. For this reason, when I use the term Avatar here, I mean the **series** of great Avatars. In the past I have used the term "the avataric process" to refer to this **continuing yet periodic process**. This process occurs between the symbolic Noon and Sunset.

The function of the Avatar is to "inject" into the consciousness of successive races and cultures — to graft upon their collective consciousness — one aspect of the archetype after another. The Avatar is able to do so (at least to some degree) because the power of the Godhead is focused into or through the core of his being. He reveals to evolving mankind one "Name" of God (one fundamentally human spiritual Quality) after another. Each avataric "revelation" becomes the basis for the set of great symbols and images (**Urbilder**) that ensouls a culture-whole.

In a different sense, every human being who becomes identified with his or her individual archetype can be called the avatar of this archetypal reality which (as we shall see in Part Three) is itself only the "form" taken by a spiritual Quality — that is, by one of the immensely numerous aspects of the Creative God, one "Letter" of the creative Word (the Logos). Such a human being has reached the condition of Illumined Man; the "divine Marriage" between a spiritual Quality and a perfectly adequate human vehicle for it has been consummated in him or her. The illumined being has reached this condition **as an individual**, ahead of the masses of mankind. At the close of a large planetary cycle of the earth's evolution, all traditions tell us, a more or less large number of such fully individualized persons will have reached this stage. They will constitute a spiritual Race

or Community. This Community — transhuman even more than human (in the present sense of the word) — is gradually forming **even now**. I call it the Pleroma. It is forming through the periodic addition of individuals who consciously become avatars of their individual spiritual Quality.

At the close of a great planetary cycle (the symbolic Last Day), the Pleroma is **the consummation of human history**. In theosophical symbolism it is the "Seed Manu, Savarna." The Pleroma is the polar opposite of Elohim — the Omega answering to the Alpha of the half-cycle during which the principle of Multiplicity is stronger than the principle of Unity. Every human being reaching the state of Illumined Man "reflects" or actualizes one aspect of Elohim, one Letter of the Creative Word. Within this Letter (or spiritual Quality) pulsates, as it were, the immense Compassion of the Godhead, the state of maximum Unity toward which "Pleroma beings" unanimously evolve through the increasingly subjective states between the symbolic Sunset and Midnight.

From one point of view or another in all of my previous writings on philosophy, psychology, culture, and the arts, I have discussed the many-sided developments occurring between Noon and Sunset: the formation and gradual complexification of cultures and religions; the process of individualization; the development of mental faculties and of separative egos; and the transcendence of biological and cultural forces. Human history is the progressive rise of human consciousness through many cyclic ups and downs. Collective human needs for security and well-being have to be answered. Then human consciousness has to become individualized — that is, the collectively determined consciousness of **persons**, products of greatly varied cultures, has to reach a focus in the clearly formed minds of autonomous and responsible **individuals**. Such individuals are able to choose between the constructive and destructive use of the energies generated by the Movement of Wholeness and by the tension between the two great principles of Unity and Multiplicity.

Generally speaking, what occurs between Noon and Sunset polarizes what occurred during the opposite Midnight-to-Sunrise period. During the latter, activity was primarily subjective; it operated within the "**divine** Mind" (as I shall define this term in Chapter 7), through the work of creative Hierarchies gradually more removed from the Godhead state. Their activity manifested through the building of **archetypal forms** through which the purpose of the Godhead eventually could be actualized in a material universe. During the period of strictly human evolution (from Noon to Sunset), what develops is the **human** mind and a series of cultures able to give **conscious meaning** to the immensely varied formations and relationships which in their togetherness constitute "nature" — and eventually to the entire universe accessible to human perceptions and interpretations. Thus conscious meaning polarizes archetypal form.

The activity producing archetypal form, however, is rooted in unity and subjectivity; the bestowal of meaning is conditioned by an immense multiplicity of objective, apparently separate human beings or groups of human beings. According to their states of consciousness these beings may bestow a meaning which reflects either a separative and divisive ("atomistic") or a unifying and integrative ("holistic") approach. Besides these two approaches, a third may gradually emerge **if** the holistic-integrative approach already has

been taken. This is the cyclic or polarity approach I am presenting. It is founded on the realization of Wholeness, the realization that all opposites are inseparably included in Wholeness. They are harmonized in Wholeness, not absolutely unified; for there can be neither absolute Unity nor absolute Multiplicity in Wholeness. Yet because **activity** at any particular time and place cannot be oriented in two opposite directions at the same time, it must be polarized by an opposing trend effective at some other place or time. Consciousness, however, always can be established in Wholeness.

Because human beings operate during the Noon-to-Sunset period in which the principle of Unity rises, to **act** in tune with the Movement of Wholeness necessitates working toward greater integration. But this activity need not ignore, abjure, or abhor the power of the principle of Multiplicity. The realization of Wholeness can permeate the consciousness of the acting individual, who then is liberated from emotional attachment to the goal his or her actions serve. Action can be performed "in the Name of" Wholeness **and** serve the purpose of the particular moment of the performance — a purpose which is defined by the moment's and performance's place in the entire cycle of being.

In other words, because human beings exist during the phase of the entire cycle of being when the rise of the principle of Unity is the fundamental issue — and thus the necessity of its victory over the inertial power of the previously dominant principle of Multiplicity — the essential function of humanity throughout its evolution is to be attuned to and exteriorize in integrative acts the evolutionary trend toward an ever more inclusive manifestation of the principle of Unity. The keynote of human history, therefore, should be cooperation and harmonization. On the other hand, because the principle of Multiplicity is still dominant and (now in a more introverted way) insists on differentiation, a truly human form of cooperation and integration should correlate truly **autonomous** units of consciousness. Such an autonomy requires the development of mind as an individualized principle of formation. The principle of Multiplicity gives power to the development of individuals; but this development of a consciousness of individual selfhood should be bent in a centripetal direction by an increasingly conscious and powerful allegiance to the rising trend toward Unity. Individuals must learn to act at the service of a common purpose and to be inspired by an integrative power.

Individuals nevertheless are "free" **not** to align their centralized and individualized energies — their **wills**. Their wills can resist the mounting trend toward the all-human experience of wholeness that develops through ever more inclusive modes of organization and co-active behavior. Their self-conscious egos and egocentric minds can cling to the experiences they can have as separate persons. If human beings do this, they become partial or total **evolutionary failures**.

In the next chapter I will discuss the problem of evolutionary failure. For now let us say that the possibility for it exists the moment the power of the Godhead polarizes Natural Man at the symbolic Noon. The powerful downpour of energy of quasi-absolute, "supreme" Oneness **objectivized** in the experience of the Avatar state engenders an equally supreme problem. A human being whose entire organism is flooded with that feeling-experience of quasi-absolute Oneness cries out, "I am the One!" This cry is so powerful that most of those around him fall in awe and worship what they can relate to

only distantly and vicariously. Eventually a cult or religion is formed which, more or less instinctively, establishes the fundamental assumptions and paradigms on which a culture develops on an **exclusivistic** basis.

From the point of view of Wholeness, this is the first failure; but it is also, perhaps inevitably, the result of the polarization linking the symbolic Midnight and Noon. Without this polarization, the trend toward ever more differentiated and separate forms of existence would continue, one might say, unchecked. The principle of Unity has to assert itself so powerfully that the total trend of the Movement becomes reoriented. In a symbolic "change of gears," **Wholeness acts** by suddenly reversing the direction of the Movement. The results of this reversal are overwhelming to the living organisms then developing on earth. These changes are outlined briefly in Genesis 6 beginning with the marriage of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men." There may well have been an "original sin" in Eden (whatever Eden exactly means), but the results of the marriage constitute the collective failure of mankind — **a vicarious experience of wholeness through the worship of a personalized and exclusive manifestation of Unity.**

When human consciousness becomes individualized — that is, centralized by an ego dominating a rigid, formalistic mind — this once-collective failure becomes individual. The individualized person feels and experiences himself or herself as a separate whole, as being **exclusively** himself or herself — "I myself," unique, and therefore a god-like One. The alternative to such a negative end of the process of individualization is the radically transformative experience of **belonging** (at least potentially) to the vast Communion of Pleroma beings who experience Wholeness as a Community — or better still, as a "Commonsoul" (in contrast to the materialistic concept of a Commonwealth).

In other words, what essentially counts is **the level** at which the feeling-realization of Wholeness occurs in a human being. Wholeness even now can be experienced **too soon** by a weak, sentimentally personal, and unprepared mind (a form of consciousness). But a strong mind centralized and controlled by a powerful ego may be able to experience Wholeness only in terms of a separative and exclusivistic type of individual selfhood. Separativeness and an extreme, rigid refusal to belong to **any greater whole** leads to a crucial depletion of psychic energies and to an unbearable sense of isolation. Yet this inner emptiness **must** be filled; it is a spiritual hunger. The way to satisfy it leads to the dark path, the end of which is a state of quasi-absolute isolation — the state of a center without any circle, a mathematical point without substance or dimensionality. Such a state is the reverse of the Godhead state in which the spiritual harvest of all conceivable experiences and their meanings are condensed in a consciousness of **nearly** absolute unity and simplicity.

The Four Crucial Phases of the Cycle of Being - 4

From Sunset to Midnight

Evidently it is impossible to say anything objective and concrete about this quarter of the cycle of being, because whatever "is" has a predominantly subjective character. In relation to human beings as we know them today, this section of the total cycle of being refers to the postmortem state, which is a state of increasingly subjective being, yet which also must have some kind of objectivity because the principle of Multiplicity is still relatively strong, though waning. I shall deal with the postmortem state and the concept of reincarnation in Part Three, chapter II.

From a planetary and cosmic perspective, this quarter begins with the Pleroma, the Communion of the more or less large minority of human beings who have reached the state of Illumined Man. The latter is expected at the Gate of Silence — the brief instant of the cycle of being in which the principles of Unity and Multiplicity are in perfect equilibrium — through which these perfected, spirit-radiating individuals pass. This state of illumination polarizes the cycle's other moment of perfect equilibrium between Unity and Multiplicity — the Gate of Sound through which the creative Word was uttered by the Creator-God in whom all the creative Hierarchies operating between the symbolic Midnight and Sunrise were unified.

The image of the Pleroma that forms in my mind is similar to, if not identical with, what the founder of the modern theosophical movement, H. P. Blavatsky, sought to convey by the term "White Lodge."²⁴ But sadly, this appellation has been abused and materialized. A Pleroma is essentially a Communion of individualized yet unanimous beings of "Light." The qualificative "white" applies because such a Communion totally reflects the originating "solar" vibration of the creative Word that was in the beginning, yet which remains pulsating throughout the entire cycle it opened. During the long process of multicultural development, "Lodges" (secret brotherhoods) are formed, each of which can be symbolized by a particular color of the spectrum of light (Blue Lodge, Green Lodge, and so on). The Pleroma is "white" because it is the harmony of all colors and all cultures — of all "Rays," as occultists are fond of saying.

Pleroma beings are still "individuals" in the sense that each is the actualization in concrete form and specific modes of activity of one of the myriad "Letters" of the creative Word (the Logos). They are their fulfilled individual dharmas. But a Pleroma being is fully conscious that an individual dharma constitutes but one note in the immense chord of the planetary Commonsoul. The chord as a whole resonates through each individual who, using his or her past identity as a modality for action among persons who are but human,

²⁴ The term **Lodge** undoubtedly was inspired by the tradition of Freemasonry, which was so important during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

performs "transpersonal" acts not only **for** the whole but **as** the whole. A Pleroma being is humanity acting through an individualized mode of response to a human and planetary need particularized by a definite time and place. Deeper still, he or she is Wholeness-in-act.

The Pleroma is a **planetary** reality. It can be considered the "illuminated Mind" of the earth, while present-day mankind constitutes the planet's concrete mind — a concrete mind born out of the complex relationships human beings live through in the biosphere and to which they give meaning in terms of their various cultures. In this sense, we can assume that some kind of human beings exist on any planet able to give birth to and sustain highly developed forms of life; that these beings are "human" in the sense that they have developed some kind of mind able to give meaning to the activities taking place in the life-field of their planet; and that toward the close of the planet's cycle of objective being, a Pleroma emerges out of such a "humanity." It emerges into an increasingly subjective and inclusive state of consciousness and one-ward activity. In that state, it finds itself related to the Pleromas of other planets, be they in our solar system or in other systems within the Milky Way or any other galaxy.

Astronomers now speak of groups of galaxies and metagalaxies, but the preconceptions and empirical limitations of modern science compel them to deal only with the level of the cosmos to which our senses and instruments can react; these reactions are then interpreted intellectually according to the rationalistic postulates of logic and mathematics. The picture I am presenting is also an interpretation; but it is based on a different kind of consistency and logic. It postulates a relationship between the subjective and spiritual aspects of galaxies, and the possibility of cosmic Pleromas. These cosmic Pleromas represent states of predominantly subjective being close to the condition of nearly absolute unity I have defined as the Godhead state — a state of nearly pure consciousness and utterly simplified and condensed subjective being.

After Sunset the Movement of Wholeness proceeds from the planetary to the interplanetary, galactic, and cosmic Pleroma states of increasing unification, simplification, and concentration. This process polarizes the period during which a series of ever more complex and objective cosmic, stellar, planetary, and biological forms of existence were produced after the symbolic Sunrise. Thus, during these two quarters of the cycle of being (Sunrise-to-Noon and Sunset-to-Midnight), the Movement of Wholeness proceeds in opposite but complementary directions. One of these directions leads to Natural Man (at Noon), the other to the Godhead state (at Midnight).

The Four Crucial Phases of the Cycle of Being - 5

From Midnight to Sunrise:

The activity of the "Builders of Archetypes"

In the Godhead state Wholeness assumes, as totally as possible, the subjective character of all-inclusive oneness. All-inclusiveness, however, implies the inclusion **in consciousness** of the failures of human evolution mentioned above. Many of these failures are almost totally unconscious centers of circles so empty of contents that circumference and center are indistinguishable. They do not "exist," but in some mysterious subjective way they "inist" as the shadows of Wholeness in the "memory" of Pleroma beings who at any level (planetary or cosmic) must include them, for these "failures" are as much a part of the cycle as the "successes." This inclusion in subjective consciousness is what **divine Compassion** means.

Such a compassion is not a "feeling" in the human sense of the term; it is the resonance of a state of subjective being. It is nearly absolute Unity **remembering** Multiplicity, and this remembrance renders **absolute** oneness impossible. It is Wholeness compelling an almost totally subjective One to summon back to objective existence all that has failed, totally or partially, during the whole Day before Midnight; for in the consciousness of this One is condensed the total potency and the entire spiritual harvest of the experiences of the cosmos approaching nearly perfect unity. It is Wholeness compelling the Movement to radically alter its direction, to let the principle of Multiplicity rise to an eventual supremacy once more at Noon. It is Midnight dreaming of this ineluctable Noon, and this dream is a vision of a future universe that will answer the particular **need** of the failures of the cycle-that-was — the need for a "second chance" to experience Wholeness in the plenitude of concrete objective living, as participants in a new humanity on a material planet.

The existence of such a humanity able to choose the meaning it will give to its experience is still immensely remote. It can occur only after a workable form of living has been built. This requires, not only the formation of archetypes and the transmutation of potential into kinetic energy but also the arousal of the partial failures of the past from their long "sleep" in states of unconscious or semiconscious subjectivity. Before this, the inertia of the nearly absolute failures of the past cycle (symbolized in Genesis as "the dark waters of space") must be overcome

During the period that follows the symbolic Midnight (the Godhead state), the energy of the Movement of Wholeness that had been condensed in the state of nearly absolute Unity must be, first, transmuted into active divine Compassion. Then the "dream" of the Godhead must be defined gradually in terms of various levels of archetypes. This process of formation is predominantly subjective because the principle of Unity is still dominant; but the principle of Multiplicity is rising to power, and what is produced in the subjectivity of the "divine Mind" becomes increasingly objective. The process — the formation of archetypes — is hierarchical. Esoteric traditions and many theologies refer to it as the establishment of a graded series of "creative Hierarchies." The more distant these

Hierarchies are from the Midnight state of Godhead, the more their components develop particularized functions.

Western traditions speak of a single Creation, a divine "Let there be light!" But Eastern seers and metaphysicians refer to several Creations, which imply a creative **process**. Yet the character of the process is primarily unified, because the principle of Unity has tremendous inertia, even in retreat. It holds in check and contains the operation of the principle of Multiplicity as long as possible. A critical point, which may be explosive, probably occurs. Yet it need not resemble the Big Bang still envisioned by most astrophysicists. It might have been more significantly evoked to the human consciousness by the vitalistic images of the great "bird of eternity" (**kalahansa**) emerging from the "egg" of space; but this "space" is that of the divine Mind. The definite outlines of a future universe having been formed step after step, creative Hierarchy after creative Hierarchy, in that Mind, the Word or Logos is "uttered" — essentially one, yet already subdivided into many "Rays" or "Letters."

The Word is both kinetic energy and form; it is the vast, multi-level spectrum of cosmic vibrations. And through the fast-spreading energy contained within the magnetic lines of force of a cosmic formative Mind, the immense Compassion of the Godhead radiates. Ancient philosophers and holy men bowed in reverence to it, calling it "the One Life." Nevertheless, it soon breaks into a fantastic multiplicity of "lives," wherever favorable planetary conditions of existence develop. In each of these locales, species of life collectively experience the continuum of changes — changes now taking objective and eventually (when mankind evolves) measurable forms — each life-species reacting to change according to its own structure and temperament.

The continuum of change kept on unfolding during the Night period of the great cycle of being, but change was then far more subjective than objective. It could not be measured by the motions of planets or stars because there were none. We should therefore think of it as **subjective duration**. If objective measures of time are given for the "length" of the Night period, it can only be by establishing corresponding time values based on the assumption of an essential symmetry inherent in the Movement of Wholeness. This assumed symmetry is the manifestation of the balanced dualism of Unity and Multiplicity. It is inherent in the concept of cyclicity, which itself is but a way of understanding the dynamic essence of Wholeness.

Having thus sketched out as many of the most characteristic developments of the cyclic process as I can understand, I shall next attempt to clarify some points I have only touched upon in the preceding.

CHAPTER SIX

The Inevitability of Success and Failure - 1

The world-picture of the Movement of Wholeness is essentially **esthetic**. It is, in the deepest sense of the word, a poem — the Poem of Being. The Movement of Wholeness has form and symmetry, and the relation between the principles of Unity and Multiplicity develops in a cyclic counterpoint; Wholeness is the great Harmony of Being. Harmony, though implying contrast, transcends the realm of conflict — for in situations of conflict human beings too often see themselves as antagonists seeking to destroy one another's right to be. Wholeness requires that opposites be seen as "co-being" in a state of perpetual meaningfulness.

Nevertheless, at any particular phase or moment of the cyclic process, an **ethical** situation can be readily perceived, which at the human level involves a "moral" choice. Every human being to some extent can, and therefore must, choose between flowing with the movement or resisting it. Whether in full consciousness or in a mostly unconscious state, the individual either orients his or her being (or at least the central component of it) in the direction of the next evolutionary phase of the cycle of Man, or stubbornly (even if unconsciously) clings to the values and way of life the present phase of evolution has already left behind.

Evolutionary "success" simply means conscious attunement to the Movement of Wholeness and the deliberate attempt to actualize in one's consciousness and activity the potential realizations and values Inherent in the next evolutionary step. Failure, on the other hand, results from the inability to let go of the past because the mind, the ego-will, and the physical habits refuse to change radically enough, or at least to be used in the service of emergent new ideals and concepts. Nevertheless, a few principles of conduct remain basic throughout the whole period of human evolution. They persist because they are essential characteristics of the direction in which the evolutionary cycle moves **after** the symbolic Noon is reached. At such a time (as we already have seen) the "descent" of the power of the Godhead state occurs by means of a series of Avatars, in and through whom the archetypal Image of Man acquires existential and objective form. The period of the Movement of Wholeness between Noon and Sunset is primarily the period of actualization of the potential inherent in this archetypal human Image. Therefore, the one essential dharma of all human beings is to pass from the condition of Natural Man to that of Illumined Man by allowing the rising power of the principle of Unity to become focused into their total being.

However, although all human beings **potentially** can reach Illumination, they will not all do so. This must be accepted unemotionally and, above all, be understood: there must be failures as well as successes. Once the possibility to move ahead and take the next evolutionary step presents itself to an individual, he or she must respond to this possibility

deliberately. At the same time, resistance inevitably takes form, if not in the whole person at least in some of the components inherent in generic human nature (that is, in the nature shared by all human beings). Motion always develops inertia in whatever has form.

From a slightly different perspective, this also means that whenever a new mode of energy is released, the inertia inherent in the forms given to the old, familiar mode inevitably manifests as the negative or more or less destructive **use** of the energy newly released. Since the Industrial Revolution began to release new forms of power at a tremendously accelerated pace more than a hundred and fifty years ago, and since the more recent release of potentially devastating nuclear energy, mankind has had squarely to face this fact. Even the Bible alludes to the inevitability of failures when the "Lord God" states that in a particular situation he will set apart and test for their ability to survive one third of human beings, while the other two-thirds will perish.²⁵ "God" does not seem to care **which** human beings will be saved but is only intent on having "one third" given the special chance. Whether the ratio is basic or refers only to a particular historical or symbolic situation is not important here. In the Gospel (Matthew 18:7) Jesus is also made to say, "It needs must be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh."

Failures must occur, because if there were none, the universe as a whole would reach perfection and, in the Godhead, **absolute** oneness. Thus there would be no cause for divine. Compassion and no Idea of a new universe. But absolute Unity is impossible, because if the principle of Multiplicity were absolutely defeated, there could be no world of existence. It makes little sense to say that a new universe periodically emerges from an absolute One who desires it. If a "desire for manifestation" is inherent in this absolute One, then obviously He or It is not absolutely One — only relatively so. No "desire" for multiplicity could operate in a state of absolute, timeless unity and omnipotence.

To speak of a sublime mystery in this connection is as meaningless as to say that the world is ruled by chance. An element of chance must operate in the universe, otherwise order, if unchallenged, would lead to absolute repetitiveness, to a Nietzschean Eternal Return. On the other hand, the total absence of a principle of order would render impossible any process with a definite character and goal. Although the same structural principles operate in every cycle of being, events are not repeated exactly, because the factor of relatedness enters at every step of cyclic evolution. As Wholeness is indefinable, so are the possibilities of relationships. Moreover, an element of unpredictability is involved in all existence, because during the half-cycle of existence the principle of Multiplicity dominates the world stage, creating a **sense** of infinity — that is, the **feeling** that anything and everything is possible.

The principle of Multiplicity manifests as the desire for existence as a separate being. Even in the postmortem state of inistence, this desire retains some of its strength. In another sense, the principle of Multiplicity manifests in "ghosts" — many kinds of ghosts

²⁵ Revelation 9:18

at many levels of being. All memories of experiences of relationship are, in the broadest sense of the term, ghosts. There are ghosts — memories of the failures of the past — even in the nearly total oneness of the supreme consciousness of the Godhead. They arouse divine Compassion, which is the realization by oneness that multiplicity cannot be dismissed.

The past cannot be dismissed; it inheres in the present — in **any** present moment. Failure cannot be dismissed; it is a ghostly presence in any success. Not only does the death of any relationship lurk in its birth — however ecstatic this birthing may be — but the failures of relatedness, small or large, are potential in the moment of greatest happiness and experienced oneness. These facts must be accepted, but accepted in the vivid and enduring consciousness of the meaning they can reveal to an open mind — to the **mind of wholeness**. In that mind, failures and successes move eternally in a steady and unemotional counterpoint that constitutes the supreme antiphony of being.

The Inevitability of Success and Failure - 2

The two basic causes of failure

The deepest roots of failure are formed at the two great turning points of the Movement of Wholeness — the symbolic Midnight (when the principle of Unity reaches its climax) and the Noon-hour (when the principle of Multiplicity is nearly all-powerful). At these two points, a reversal of the dynamic character and the duality of the motion must occur. The ever-changing relationship between the principles of Unity and Multiplicity had become either interiorized or exteriorized in and through **forms**. These forms have by then acquired inertia, and inertia inevitably presents an obstacle to the necessary repolarization and redirection of the motion. Whatever expresses or identifies itself with this inertia generates the seeds of failure.

At the level of ethical judgment, failure manifests as the direct or indirect source of "evil." But evil and failure are fundamentally the result of **not** taking the new evolutionary step. The original sins are actually "sins of omission." What is not done when the dharma demands that it should be done inevitably leads, sooner or later, to inherently destructive acts, to "sins of commission." Individuals (or collectivities of individuals) who do not go ahead with the Movement of Wholeness fall behind, to some extent blocking the path for those who come after them; they may even induce a contagious movement of retreat.

Because two great moments of repolarization occur in the Movement, two kinds of resistance are possible: resistance belonging to the Night hemicycle of subjective being and resistance belonging to the Day hemicycle human consciousness interprets as the objective, existential world. Metaphysicians and occultists thus have alluded to two basic kinds of failure and evil; "cosmic evil" and "existential evil."

Cosmic evil is rooted in the subjective resistance of centers of consciousness who refuse, as it were, to accept the crucial change at the symbolic Midnight, when the trend toward what seems to be the possibility of absolute oneness must be reversed by the outflow of Compassion calling for a new world dominated by the principle of Multiplicity. The "resisters" are so powerfully drawn toward what seems to them the goal of absolute oneness that they refuse to identify themselves with the Compassion of the Godhead state. In Mahayana Buddhism these resisters are called Pratyeka Buddhas, Buddhas of spiritual selfishness. The one-pointed, utterly concentrated will of these beings — the will to reach Nirvana (the state of oneness) — makes it impossible for them to "remember" the failures of the world in which they were able to reach a limited kind of Illumination — perhaps even in some cases using human beings who had a tendency to fail as means to reach their own spiritual goal.

Compassion in the Godhead state demands that all the failures, partial or total, of the half-cycle that began with the advent of Natural Man be collectively remembered. Condensed into an all-inclusive "memory," all the negative reactions to evolutionary change that had occurred during the human period of the cycle have to be faced. Out of this confrontation total Compassion emerges. This gives rise to the subjective, supramental Idea of a new universe in which all that partially or totally failed in the old universe is to be given a "second chance" to reach perfect Illumination and the Pleroma condition of

unanimous consciousness. Yet even as the Godhead state is reached and the direction of the Movement of Wholeness is reversed by a new rise of the principle of Multiplicity, some components of the Whole are so entranced by the ideal of absolute oneness that they do not allow Compassion to move them. They resist change in the direction of the new motion.

Thus are the seeds of "cosmic evil" planted. They affect the very foundations of the future universe, because they influence the divine Mind's formulation of the many archetypes that give form to the creative Word, the Logos. Many mythological narratives speak of "wars in Heaven." These symbolize various phases of the subjective process of formulation of archetypes during the period preceding the symbolic Dawn, before the Creation of the objective world. Because of "cosmic evil," the potentiality of failure is inherent in the Creation. It is actualized as human failure and human evil throughout the period of human evolution that follows Noon. It inheres in human nature as a mainly unconscious and compulsive **subjective** factor.

Existential evil, on the other hand, results from the **objective** resistance of biologically controlled human organisms and (later on) of individualized, self-conscious persons against whatever is inspired by and a release for the energy of the increasingly powerful drive toward Unity. The resistance is objective because it is rooted in the inertia of stable structures, be they biological, psychological, or sociocultural. The spiritual origin of existential evil can be traced to a negative reaction to the descent of the power of the Godhead and the concrete actualization of the archetype Man at and after the symbolic Noon, the turning point and "bottom" of the cycle. Man's refusal to accept the reversal and repolarization of the Movement of Wholeness is the refusal to become attuned to the energy of love and union. Similarly, esoteric traditions speak of the refusal of spiritual entities who had attained a relatively high state of consciousness (but **not** the Pleroma state) to incarnate in the animal-like bodies of beings which are protohuman until these spiritual entities incarnate in them.

As every Avatar represents a particular aspect of the archetype Man and is thus an Exemplar to which a particular race or culture (or even mankind as a whole) should become attuned, the resistance of a whole culture and of individual persons to the new essential Quality released by the Avatar is a source of existential evil. This resistance usually is focused by the inertial behavior of a particular social class of people, and it calls forth compensatory and usually violent revolutions. The situation is complex because the process of individualization is ambiguous. This process is a particularly tense and difficult stage of the relation between Unity and Multiplicity. At this stage of human evolution, serious problems are presented by the necessity to pass from cultures based on biological drives or the exclusivism of a religious and socio-political tradition believed to be superior to any other to a state of global civilization including all human beings and operating at the level of all-inclusiveness. This new level requires the integrated activity and (in a transcendent sense) the psychospiritual unification of truly autonomous, self-reliant individuals; but the development of such mature individuals at first involves the development of a separative ego-consciousness in which the principle of Multiplicity, which is waning yet still powerful, wages a relentless battle for supremacy with the

waxing power of Unity. Any individual in whom the battle is lost finds himself or herself sliding into a dark abyss where great pride, anger, and lust gradually disconnect his or her struggling center of consciousness and will from the rest of the tide of all-human evolution and unification. The eventual end is the utter repudiation of the power of love and of any divine manifestation, and after ages of preying upon weak psyches in an attempt to regain ever-waning energies, a state of nearly absolute isolation.

This end — the end of what is traditionally called the "black" path because it is rooted in a negative response to the "light" of the Godhead — constitutes a state of total failure of human evolution. Yet it, too, represents a state of nearly absolute unity — the unity of a center without a circle, thus without substance and consciousness. Such a state is the opposite of the all-inclusive oneness of the Godhead state, which is an utterly condensed condition of nearly total unification of all the substance, power, and consciousness of a vast universal cycle of being. The state of nearly absolute darkness is one of nearly absolute **indifference**, because where there is no longer energy and substance, even hatred or conscious denial can no longer exist. It is the state of nearly absolute materiality, the ultimate of decay. Yet it is only **nearly** absolute, just as the Godhead is only a nearly absolute condition of all-encompassing oneness of being; for **any** absolute, by definition, denies the possibility of any relative state ever existing.

Even in the deepest darkness of "pure" matter and seemingly total indifference to being, an immensely dim longing for substantial existence must be and is present. Without it, there could be no reaction to the release of creative power at the symbolic Sunrise of a new cycle. This creative release has, however, repeatedly to "churn" the almost totally indifferent matter of the space it encompasses, because this matter initially almost totally resists the rhythmic movement of the creative energy of the divine Builders of the nascent cosmos. This need for constantly repetitive, rhythmic activity is reflected in the magic rituals of primitive societies; it also is apparent in the methods of modern commercial and political advertising and even in today's "meditation" or "minimal" music.

The Inevitability of Success and Failure - 3

The manifestation of a great Avatar as the spiritual seed from which a new culture sooner or later germinates is also a repetitive process. As explained, each manifestation has its own quality; each stresses one specific aspect of archetypal Man — or in a religious sense, one of the "Names" of God — which it is the culture's dharma (truth of being) to actualize. Each Avatar "grafts" a spiritual-mental Quality upon evolving human nature, which at first is a strictly biological system of organization. Human nature, however, resists change, and this resistance is the basic cause of existential evil.

In this sense, the refusal to follow "the way, the truth, and the life" exemplified by the Avatar, or more accurately, to accept his power as a driving force in one's outer and inner life, is at the root of human failure, be it an individual failure or the failure of an entire culture. Yet individual and collective failures are not easy to distinguish from one another, because individuals build and develop collective religious and social institutions, which in turn structure and dominate the collective psychism of whole cultures — which in turn condition individuals. Collective psychism is the binding energy integrating the members of a culture, somewhat as life energy (prana or chi) integrates the cells of a biological organism.²⁶ Social and religious institutions structure the collective psychism of a culture; they derive their spiritual power from the energy generated in the culture's collective psychism by the "descent" of the new avataric manifestation. But all too often, social and religious leaders use the energy embodied in the institutions to gain power over people they should (and perhaps at first do) serve. Thus the culture's institutions and the drive toward unity become unduly limited, rigid, and even perverted. Eventually, the culture must break down.

When the time comes for the process of individualization to develop in earnest, religions and cultures sanction it in the name of Avatars who projected into the human world the particular spiritual Quality of autonomous and centralized selfhood, the "I am" which the members of the culture are intended to embody. But the power of the divine release is always used to build collective institutions, while individual human beings react to it by developing ever more blatant and aggressive egos obscuring or even negating their spiritual individuality. In most instances, humanity proceeds from failure to failure (partial though they be) toward only relative success. Perhaps the biblical "two thirds" do so, perhaps more, because in the "remnant" that is tested, many may not pass the test. Nevertheless, human failures must occur as long as the principle of Multiplicity dominates the world-stage before the symbolic Sunset — before the omega of the world of existence.

Atoms, plants, and animals cannot fail. They may, however, reflect the karma of failure of the planet as a whole or — for example in the case of cancerous cells — of

²⁶ The term **psychism** will be defined in more detail in Chapter 8. Also, see my book **Beyond Individualism: The Psychology of Transformation** (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1979)

mankind as a whole. Any human being can fail; and this is Man's greatness as well as his responsibility. The fact of failure must be accepted unemotionally, with the realization that by failing, Man arouses Compassion in the Godhead state. Nevertheless, one must not take one's own failure lightly and dismiss its existential results, which can be drastic and ultimately devastating indeed; nor should one succumb to the attraction of forces in one's nature or in society which glamorize the past, recycle its obsolete features in seemingly new symbols and collective institutions, and thereby incite failure.

Collective institutions presumably will be needed by human beings of average consciousness for many millennia to come; yet, though they condition the behavior of growing human beings and set limits to the forms creativity may take, they need not blind the consciousness of determined and mentally open individuals. One must render unto the collective what belongs to the collective, and to the individual what belongs to the individual. For any human being who is ready and able to become truly an individual, failure occurs only when, under pressures seemingly too heavy to bear, the would-be individual surrenders his or her consciousness and will — the sense of individual power and selfhood — to the collective norm.

The individual must be able to stand alone, even amidst the collectivity in which he or she was born and educated. He or she must find security in a vivid, repeated, and clear realization of individual selfhood rather than "take refuge" in an institution and its collective dharma, however beautiful and calming this dharma may be. Illumined Man must reach Illumination as an individual. Even though transfigured by the Meaning of Wholeness and sustained by the invisible Companions whose sublime Communion he or she is about to join, the individual is essentially alone — and free to fail if traces of pride or longing for the past remain in his or her personality.

In the supreme equinoctial moment in human evolution, when the strength of the principles of Unity and Multiplicity are equal and Alpha polarizes Omega, whether we think of individuals having far outdistanced the masses of mankind or of the spiritualized humanity of the Last Day, Man passes through the Gate of Silence into a world of ever-increasing subjectivity. Passing through this awe-inspiring threshold, the mind becomes the mirror in which God the Creator radiates the Light of the rising Sun of the universal dharma that once aroused Chaos into space-time and motion. In Illumined Man resonates this creative Word, which is Sound and Light; and in this resonance the Wholeness of every whole that is, has been, and ever will be sings the supreme Meaning of all-encompassing being.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Spirit and Mind - 1

The two aspects of spirit

The word **spirit** has been interpreted in many ways, and the adjective **spiritual** has been so misused and abused that it has lost much of its real meaning. Yet these terms are so basic in Euro-American culture that one can hardly avoid using them. Therefore I must explain precisely the meaning I give them in this book by referring to what occurs at the beginning of two hemicycles of the Movement of Wholeness. For the present purpose I will consider the hemicycles beginning at the symbolic Midnight and at the Noon of the cycle. At each of these points, the principle of Unity most characteristically impresses its power upon the Movement of Wholeness. This power is spirit.

During the Midnight phase, when the principle of Unity is most intense, almost overwhelming, spirit is the dynamism of the supreme Compassion of the Godhead state. The release (at a nearly totally subjective level) of this Compassion starts the process of formation which, as the image-making divine Mind in operation, leads to the creation of archetypes and eventually of the Word (or Logos, the totality of these archetypes). At first altogether subjectively, then more and more objectively, this process is "mental." It has been mythologized as the work of different levels of creative Hierarchies, but the driving power at its core is spirit — the Compassion of the Godhead gradually revealing its purpose in answer to the cosmic need which must be met.

At the symbolic cosmic Sunrise, when kinetic energy is let loose in the creation of the physical universe, spirit acts as the power that keeps the rising and aggressive impulses of the principle of Multiplicity from operating as an explosive, random outburst, compelling it to be released in cosmic quanta (or packages) of energy. Thereafter, spirit may be thought to be the still mysterious power manifesting to us as gravitation. Eventually it manifests as "life," the power that integrates material and chemical elements into the existential wholes we call cells and that maintains the integrity of the multiplicity of biological orders, families, genera, and species developing in the earth's biosphere.²⁷ As evolution proceeds, these systems of biological organization actualize the appropriate archetypes that were formulated between the symbolic Midnight and Sunrise.

Eventually an immense variety of classes, orders, families, genera, species, and varieties develops within a biosphere feverish with the differentiation of specialized

²⁷ For the vitalistic consciousness dominating pre-Greek and pre-Buddhist times, and still active in many parts of the world today, the foundation of the universe is the "One Life," also called the "ocean of life." The main characteristic of this One Life is its power to move, to transform itself, and to become gradually less conditioned by matter; less heavy, more light and subtle. The evolution of life-species led from crawling beasts to flying birds.

features. By now the biosphere is teeming with a multitude of lives in the throes of conflicts, catastrophes, and cycles of disease and barrenness necessary to avoid a plethoric crowding of entities feeding on one another. Then the Movement of Wholeness, having allowed the principle of Multiplicity to dominate the earth, reverses its direction. The archetype Man takes a more concrete form, gradually revealing its complex plenitude of being through a series of Avatars.

In and through the series of planetary, racial, and cultural Avatars, and eventually through personages with definite missions and illumined individuals nearing the consummation of humanhood in the "divine Marriage," spirit acts within a human framework. It seeks to integrate archetypal Qualities — Letters of the creative Word — with generic human nature (which it slowly but progressively transforms), and with cultures and social communities.

Also, whenever possible archetypes, are actualized in and through individualized persons eager to experience attunement with their essential beingness, that is, with the particular spiritual Quality it is their dharma to embody in everyday living, through ever-renewed acts of theophany (divine revelation of the spirit within).

Spirit therefore operates in the Movement of Wholeness as an integrative principle. In my book **The Planetarization of Consciousness**, which was concerned mainly with the Day period of the entire cycle of being, I strongly emphasized the concept of ONE as the universal principle of integration — a catalytic agent whose "presence" is effective in drawing together disparate elements at all levels of material, organic, and human organization. I particularly stated that this word did not refer to "the One" or to a Supreme Being, but to an impersonal integrative principle to which no particular form or identity could be given. This integrative principle operates in the whole cycle of being in two basic ways: as the Compassion radiating from the Godhead state at the symbolic Midnight — and after Noon as the power seeking to integrate human organisms (in their successively developed biological, cultural, psychic, intellectual, and individualized aspects) with spiritual Qualities.

The latter gradually take more definite forms, first defining the dharmas of sociocultural collectivities, then the dharmas of individualized human beings. (After the Pleroma state is reached by illumined beings in whom the "divine Marriage" has occurred, spirit acts in a more subjective way, but for the normal embodied consciousness today such an action must remain a mystery. It may have something to do with the repotentialization of energy at subtle levels of materiality and the intensification of what will become divine Compassion in the Godhead state.)

Because spirit is the "power" (**shakti**) in and through which the principle of Unity operates within the Movement of Wholeness, its action is most intense when this principle reaches maximum strength; its intensity decreases when the principle of Multiplicity waxes. Yet the drive toward an ever greater and more differentiated multitude of

relatively separate forms of existence also operates within the Movement of Wholeness. One may think of it as anti-spiritual, but this may be misleading because its operations take a great variety of forms. While it is active in egocentric desire and the will to be different and unique at any cost, to speak of it as "evil" may be confusing. The process of individualization certainly is not evil in itself, although religions often misunderstand its nature. Above all, one should take care not to personalize this power of differentiation, that is, not to give it a "human, all too human" character. It is simply the **trend** toward an expansive multiplication and fragmentation of being, and it opposes the integrative action of spirit.

One may consider it the shadow aspect of being, but **only after** the human stage of evolution has been reached. For only after the power of the principle of Unity rises in and through humanity does the "sun" of Unity begin to shine. Then can the opaque materials of which human beings are made — not only as physical bodies but also as opaque systems of mental beliefs and religious dogmas — cast a "shadow." Shadows begin at the Noon of the planetary cycle because the future state of Illumined Man becomes a potentiality then, as soon as the avataric series begins. A very small vanguard of human beings already has actualized this potentiality (at least partially). But the "sun" of avatarhood casts an inevitable shadow when it strikes those human beings who as yet cannot or deliberately refuse to see its light. As the consciousness and **the will** of human beings becomes increasingly translucent, the shadow becomes less dark.

In human beings operating at the tribal level or in religious or sociopolitical communities still strongly unified by an original avataric revelation, this shadow manifests as the product of a centrifugal force alienating the person from the unanimous whole. But when the process of individualization begins as a definite transition between the still biologically conditioned state of culture and the planetary, Pleroma state, a special situation develops. As the principle of Multiplicity wanes, its power becomes internalized or introverted, giving a sharper, more exclusivistic character to the ego — that is, to the individualized capacity to adjust to increasingly unique family and sociocultural situations.²⁸ As the principle of Unity simultaneously waxes, it strengthens the operation of the true "individualizing principle" or "higher self" (terms which will be defined more precisely in Chapter 9), which seeks the integration of a spiritual Quality and a human being. Thus the nearly unavoidable conflict between Unity and Multiplicity begins to operate more definitely subjectively — that is, in the human consciousness and mind. It is experienced as that between the exclusivistic ego ("I am uniquely what I am and all I possess is strictly mine") and the "higher self." The conflict becomes psychological. What the psychologist usually fails to realize, however, is that what Jung (in a limited sense) called the Shadow is built by the same force that once generated an immense multiplicity

²⁸ I mentioned a special approach to this internalization of the trend toward Multiplicity in an early series of articles (1942-43) now revised and integrated in my book **The Pulse of Life**, which was later retitled **Astrological Signs: The Pulse of Life** by the publisher (Shambhala Publications, Boulder, 1970). This book interprets the cycle of being in terms of the seasonal cycle of the year and the zodiac. See pages 21-25.

The Pulse of Life is now available free online at the **Rudhyar Archival Project**.

of life species out of the one ocean where life is said to have begun. But in human psychology this force operates within the new frame of reference generated by spirit since its power began to rise at the symbolic Noon — that is, within the psychism of human beings operating in cooperative communities.

Though waning, the power of Multiplicity and differentiation is still dominant during the Noon-to-Sunset quarter of the cycle, the period during which "human history" takes place. Most people today are still dominated by its internalized manifestation — a strong, exclusivistically self-concerned and self-limiting ego-will, which casts the darkest kinds of shadows upon what pejoratively has been called "the human condition" by existentialist philosophers shocked by the seeming absurdity of existence on earth. Indeed, the problems human beings face seem insurmountable as the process of individualization rages in an anarchistic human world increasingly featuring mental as well as physical terrorism and torture. Nevertheless, as the principle of Unity waxes spirit is released through Avatars inspiring the formation of religions and cultures, and eventually through individuals who realize and actualize their innermost, divine center (a spiritual Quality, a Letter of the creative Word).

Spirit and Mind - 2

But while spirit is playing an increasingly important, transformative, and illuminating role in the evolution of humanity, the forces that oppose spirit are leading a vast number of people to what can only be qualified as partial failure. Numerous total failures also occur; in them, being is gradually reduced to the state of a quasi-dimensionless point without any contents or meaning whatsoever. But from the point of view of the philosophy of Wholeness, these failures polarize the gradual emergence of spirit-illuminated beings; yet the ratio of failures to successes may be undetermined.

Partial failures have been called the "laggards" of human evolution, in which they probably constitute a majority of human centers of being. Because they cannot overcome the inertia of desire for life in a physical body swayed by the exciting dramas and frustrations of love, of the desire for possessions and their tragic albeit stimulating loss, and above all of the desire for personal existence as a uniquely valuable (even though separate and alienated) "I," these human beings do not reach Illumination at the fateful "Last Day" of planetary evolution. They may lag behind even at the end of a lesser period when a decision for or against spirit has to be made — the symbolic separation of the sheep and the goats. One might say that these "laggards" drop out of the planetary evolutionary movement into a partially subjective state of "sleep." In this state, they are absorbed in "dreams" which mainly repeat or develop memories of past life-periods. Karma will compel them to reawaken in a new universe, where they will have a second chance to reach illumination and the Pleroma state of unanimous being.

The total failures also will be given a second chance, but for them this means more than merely reawakening from "sleep." It necessitates a powerful reenergization and mobilization out of a nearly absolute, negative condition of **indifference** to existence and to relationships of all kinds. It demands a new universe in which they can once more experience the pull of love, relationship, and the light of meaning. This demand is met at the symbolic Midnight by a surge of total, all-remembering compassion — the fountainhead of spirit in its supreme state. It is met by an incomprehensibly all-inclusive "vision" (such an inadequate word) emanating from the Godhead state — the vision of a new cycle of being.

This vision must acquire definite form, indeed an immense multiplicity of forms, each of which potentially will be a particular instrumentality for the regeneration of a particular type of failure, total or partial, of the past universal or planetary cycle. The vision must be defined, differentiated, and formulated in a vast number of spiritual Qualities of being which in their togetherness constitute the creative Word or Logos. While there is only one Word, it has many "Letters"; similarly, in religious symbolism, God the Creator, the One, has many "Names" (for example, Power, Compassion, Love, Beauty, Justice, Intelligence,

Omniscience, Beneficence, Charity, Perfection, Plenitude of Being, Permanence, Destroyer, Redeemer, and so on).²⁹

Each of these spiritual Qualities will seek concrete manifestation during the period of the new universe — or in a more restricted sense (as the universal Whole is a hierarchy of subwholes, sub-subwholes, and soon) during a planetary cycle in which some kind of "humanity" develops and seeks Illumination. After the symbolic Noon of this cycle, the evolution of humanity will be essentially an attempt to establish a permanent link between each of these Qualities and corresponding lines of development of human beings in concrete physical organisms.

At first this link is only generic and collective. Each racial line of human development and each culture — each originally related to a particular continent and region of the biosphere — is linked with a particular spiritual Quality (Ray and sub-Ray). The Quality is "projected upon," or reflected especially clearly by, one or more prototypal beings later worshipped or revered as the "great ancestor" of the race, tribe, or nation, for even modern nations are not without revered "Fathers" and heroes having embodied a highly valued way of life under difficult conditions. Such prototypal personages become at least symbols of a human collectivity's rootedness in a past which is glorified and idealized long after it actually has taken place. At least in terms of the salient features of their characters and deeds, they can be considered Avatars for the collectivity for which they represent a particular quality of being (or a small group of such qualities).

Collective avatarhood can become individualized avatarhood once the process of individualization has been successfully undergone, once a person has freed himself or herself from bondage to the set patterns of family and culture and has achieved a radical independence from the collective power of society and at least a degree of authentic spiritual autonomy. When this happens, a definite linking of a particular spiritual Quality and an individual person occurs. I have referred to this in previous writings as a "one-to-one relationship" between a spiritual entity (or Quality) and a living human being.³⁰ The process of establishing such a one-to-one relationship may have been attempted and partially or temporarily achieved during a succession of human lives — a process which we shall examine in Chapter II when we study the complex and usually misunderstood concept of "reincarnation." For now let us say only that the ultimate goal of such a process

²⁹ In Occult terminology, the creative God often is considered one "Ray" of Light which differentiates into three basic Rays, which in turn differentiate into a multiplicity of colors and shades. Or the creative power might be considered as a mysterious, physically inaudible because mainly subjective Sound (**nada** or **Aum**) which has a quasi-infinite number of overtones, or rather of undertones, as the creative Tone operates in a "descending" mode. The energy of this creative Tone (also called **Fohat**) compels the total failures to break away from the condition of total indifference to relationship and existence. It whirls these utterly separate, static, almost dimensionless points of being into immense whorls of cosmic protomatter — the first stage of existence assumed by the failures that in their nearly total separateness had become the dark roots of matter, pure chaos.

³⁰ See **The Planetarization of Consciousness**, Part Two, Chapter 7, "Soul-Field, Mind, and Reincarnation."

is to effectuate a meeting of spirit and matter in the "divine Marriage" of a single spiritual Quality (or Letter of the creative Word) and a single individualized person.

This meeting and the process bringing it about involve and require the activity of the mind, which is a complex and extremely important factor in the cycle of being. It operates in several ways, depending upon what is needed during particular periods of the cycle. All aspects of "mental" activity can, however, be understood if we realize that mind is the type of activity through which the principle of **relatedness** operates — and this principle is the most essential factor in Wholeness.

Spirit and Mind - 3

Mind as the formative agent inherent in relationship

In its most fundamental aspect, the concept of Wholeness includes that of relatedness, and the essential relationship implied in Wholeness is that of the principles of Unity and Multiplicity. This relationship is dynamic and ever-altering, but it is a structured relationship taking the form of a cyclic process, the Movement of Wholeness. The structuring, form-giving factor is mind. In its primordial and universal aspect, it is the "mind of Wholeness." Less metaphysically, at any level of being, the phrase "mind of wholeness" essentially refers to the mind that realizes in every situation, perceived and experienced as a whole, the interplay of the two great powers active in being. Unity and Multiplicity. Such a mind is able to assess (as it were) their relative intensity, which defines the state of being in which the particular situation operates.

The philosophy of operative Wholeness presented in this book recognizes and fully accepts a dualism of opposite and complementary trends in every manifestation and at every level of being; but it is not a dualistic philosophy because its essential reality is the relationship between any two polarities — or, more abstractly, their relatedness. Wholeness **is** relatedness considered as the supreme, all-inclusive reality of being. As mind is implied in all dualistic relationships as a third factor because of which the relationship has "form," mind can be considered the direct agent of Wholeness. At every moment of the cyclic continuum of change — the foundation of what human consciousness interprets as time — mind gives a theoretically definable form to the relationship between the principles of Unity and Multiplicity. The particular form is made possible by the balance of the two great principles at that moment; a human mind's perception of it also is conditioned by the kind of frame of reference that mind is able to use.

As the ratio between the drives toward Unity and Multiplicity unceasingly changes, and as this changing relationship engenders predominantly subjective and predominantly objective realms and conditions of being, mind operates in ceaselessly differing ways. The activity of mind during the period between the symbolic Midnight and Sunrise does not resemble mind as it develops, culture after culture, throughout the history of mankind on earth; yet there is a polar relationship between these two types of mind — the first "divine," the second "human." Similarly, the operations of mind at work between the symbolic Sunrise and Noon — from the beginning of the physical universe to the appearance of Natural Man and the beginning of the avataric process — evidently are most unlike the activity of mind within the series of planetary and cosmic Pleroma formed after the symbolic Sunset, the point of Illumination. Each period, subperiod, and sub-subperiod of the cycle of being witnesses and requires the operation of a different kind of mind; but at all times **mind gives form to the then effectual relationship between any pair of opposites**. What then is form?

In the most basic sense of the term, form is the more or less complex interweaving of relationships linking more or less numerous elements within the field of activity and/or

consciousness of a whole. The whole may be a concrete, physical organism, a musical sonata composed of many notes arranged in a specific order according to a system of organization (tonality in Western culture), a mathematical theorem, the constitution and legal system of a nation, or any other organization of multiple elements, entities, or concepts. The terms **form** and **shape** often are used carelessly and interchangeably, but the word **shape** should be used only with reference to an entity's external appearance. The shape of an object or a body can be described objectively and in terms of physical sensations; it can also, at least in principle, be measured. But one cannot measure the form of a concept or a metaphysical system. One can claim that form exists in space; but if one means only the space of the physical, material world, one ignores the fact that a system of closely interrelated ideas has form (but one might also say "structure") yet exists only in a mental kind of space. It is "mental" because the system is a complex organization of relations which are not necessarily embodied in material entities, though the creator of the system may use concrete images or physical experiences as symbols to evoke his or her meaning.

Today we are well aware of the principle of inertia, which states that any object at rest or in uniform motion in a particular direction will remain at rest or continue in motion unless acted upon by some external force. Inertia, in the broadest sense of the term, is resistance to change. The speed and direction of a moving object resist change; similarly the basic character of any form is to resist change, that is, to perpetuate the particular set of relationships which made it what it is. All religious, social, and cultural institutions have intense inertia. Once formed and set into operation, usually they can be transformed only with great difficulty. A culture as a whole slowly — or in some instances rapidly — changes; it "evolves" generation after generation insofar as its outer modes of operations, fashions, and even some of its ideals are concerned. Yet its basic assumptions, religious beliefs, and fundamental symbols and characteristics of living are extremely tenacious; violent crises or disasters may be needed before a really new beginning can occur. The same can be said of a person's ego which, in a sense, operates as a private institution with its own routine, long held beliefs, and resistance to transformation.

If mind (at whatever level it operates) is the formative agent that produces form out of sets of relationships, what then **transforms** mental organizations or physical organisms? What is it that overcomes the inertia inherent in formations once they are stabilized? It is the momentum of the Movement of Wholeness manifesting as the continuum of change — the foundation of what we call time. Again we encounter a dualism: continuous change and the tendency in forms (complexes of relations) to persist and perpetuate themselves. Such a dualism is not essentially different from that of Multiplicity and Unity; for just as human beings have sought and still seek inner psychological security in imagining and deifying a Supreme One, beyond and impervious to multiplicity, they have conceived of Him (or It) as changeless — often as the Perfect Form of being.

The acceptance of both constant change and permanent forms of being gives rise to the concept of a divine (or quasi-divine) realm of persistent archetypal forms and the world of ever-changing earthly existence in physical substance. Mind operates at both levels, the archetypal and the existential, but it operates differently at each because the types of forms

it produces at each have different functions in the cycle of being. In both cases the function of mind is to give form to the energy of spirit; yet mind also can act in the service of the forces that work **against** spirit.

Mind indeed is neutral. So is the principle of relatedness, as is Wholeness itself — because forever unconcerned with Unity or Multiplicity **as such**. Wholeness is the perfect though dynamic and ever-changing relatedness of all there is and can ever be. In Wholeness form and movement stand in contrast, but not in conflict. Contrast means form; and form, mind. Mind therefore is inherent in Wholeness; yet it acts in a different, particularized manner in every form or category of forms.

During the period of the Movement of Wholeness between Midnight and Sunrise, mind acts by giving a cosmic outline to the supreme release of divine Compassion — the spirit radiating from the Godhead. This cosmic outline is the "Form" needed to make divine compassion effectual and therefore to meet the need of the many types of failures of the once human past. The "creative Hierarchies" at work between Midnight and Sunrise operate as aspects of the divine Mind. They become increasingly defined and relatively individualized as the principle of Multiplicity waxes. Yet they are held together as a divine "Host" by the power of the still dominant principle of Unity, and the vast number of archetypes they create are forms in (rather than of) the divine Mind.

These archetypal forms retain their power during the immensely long period of evolution from Creation to the coming of what I have called Natural Man. They act, one might say, as "guiding fields" for the development and activities of biological orders, families, genera, and species — thus for the operation of "life," which (as we have seen) is a new manifestation of the integrative activity of spirit acting upon a multitude of material elements. In any particular life species, instinct results from the combination of the energy of life intent upon perpetuating its specific rhythm and the persistent presence of the archetypal form built by the divine Mind for a particular manifestation of life.

During the last part of the period between Sunrise and Noon, protohuman races may be considered extreme manifestations of the dominance of the principle of Multiplicity, because in them the power of archetypal forms is as weak as it can be. In Occult cosmogonies they are called "mindless," not only because the truly human mind has not yet appeared, but because their forms apparently were unsteady, indefinite, and often altered by interracial mixtures.

At this Noon point in the cycle, the power of Unity is at its lowest ebb. It is reenergized by the "descent" (or projection) of the archetype Man through, yet also in, the person of the Avatar or series of Avatars. The Compassion radiating from the Godhead state vibrates wherever beings of a new and truly human type appear on our planet. Because the balance between the principles of Multiplicity and Unity is definitely altered after the symbolic Noon, Wholeness assumes a new form of manifestation; a new mind begins to develop in what has really become "humanity." Out of the operation of this human mind, cultures take form. A culture is a complex form of mind "inspired" by the energy released by the Avatar at his death. (During the Avatar's life this energy was focused and "condensed" in a potential mode in his total person.)

Spirit and Mind - 4

In the first chapter of this book, I dealt briefly and succinctly with the basic stages through which cultures develop; much more has been discussed in my previous works.³¹ This development is a collective manifestation of the growth and complexification of mind during the Noon-to-Sunset period of the great cycle. Ideally, the development of mind in the human mode closely follows the gradual rise to power of the principle of Unity — the energy of the "holy spirit" released through Avatars. Each culture has its particular "creative Word" which is both a vibratory spirit-energy (or "tone") and a set of mind-created forms (prime symbols, religious assumptions, rites, and so on). But because the power of the principle of Multiplicity is still dominant, human beings can respond to this "Word" in many ways. They **interpret** the Word intellectually and react emotionally to the "tone" of the new release of spirit-energy, according to the state of mental and psychological development they have reached. This state depends largely on the condition of the old, disintegrating culture (which was impressed upon their child mentality) at the time the new surge of avataric power occurred.

As already stated, while the human will can be attuned to the rhythm and tone-quality of the Movement of Wholeness, it also may choose, or be inwardly compelled by an overwhelming accumulation of "karmic deposits" (subconscious memories of an ancient past) to oppose a new release of spirit. An individual can resist change and refuse (consciously or subconsciously) to fulfill his or her dharma because he or she is controlled by an ego that is emotionally attached to its form and has developed intense inertia; the more beautiful the form, the more difficult the act of severance may be. While the will of the individualized person is in principle the spiritual determinant, there is both an ego-will and a spiritual will released by the true "individualizing principle" (see Chapter 9). The ego-will is attached to the form built by the mind — the personal self, "I" myself. Peter or Jane — and that form normally is an outgrowth of the equally rigid and taken-for-granted assumptions and forms of behavior of the culture within which the ego was impelled or compelled to develop a particular character.

The mind, consciously controlled or semiconsciously fascinated by a strong and rigid ego-will, "freezes" within a particular form. It may develop its potentialities in greater depth, revealing a more complete and encompassing meaning, but it also may totally stiffen and shrink. The circumference of the mandala of personality, the center of which is the ego-will, may become smaller and smaller as the contents of the circle die of starvation. In the end, circumference and center are reduced to a nearly nondimensional point. For human beings this is total failure, even if not absolute non-being. The emptiness of such a condition polarizes the Godhead state of utterly condensed but all-encompassing

³¹ See **Culture, Crisis and Creativity** (The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, 1977) and **Beyond Individualism: The Psychology of Transformation** (The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, 1979).

plenitude of being. Both states are almost totally subjective, but subjectivity can be either the quintessentialization of objective experiences of relationships fully lived into an all-encompassing wholeness of **meaning**, or a quasi-absolute withdrawal from objectivity and all modes of relatedness — an utterly empty and meaningless state of **isolation**, a mindless caricature of individual selfhood.

As the progressive actualization of all the potentialities of the archetype Man proceeds through a long series of societies and cultures, each of which has the development of one particular aspect of this archetype as its collective dharma, mind becomes an increasingly dominant factor. At first it is the servant of life in an animal-like, instinctual way; but instinct is **bound** by form and by the need to perpetuate the generic morphology and character of the species with only very gradual changes. In human beings, however, while instinct still operates at the strictly biological level, it is superseded by intelligence — that is, by the capacity to adapt oneself (not only the physical body but the psychic being and the whole personality) to the requirements of any situation. The aim of such adaptation is to provide a maximum of well-being and happiness — and a minimum of discomfort, pain, and organic deterioration. Intelligence refers particularly to a person's capacity to adjust to the demands of his or her sociocultural environment, which also means the ability to acquire the kind of knowledge society expects its valuable and important members to have.

Today mind usually is identified with the ability to learn and to accumulate information; but as long as what is learned are systems of interpretation almost totally biased by the culture's basic assumptions and approach to knowledge, the learning mind is the "culture mind." In Euro-American society, which extols analysis, empiricism, a special kind of logic, the proliferation of research projects, and the accumulation of sense data and mechanical information, the culture mind is often called the intellect, even though the word had a far deeper, spiritual meaning in early Greece. Intellectuals now persons of knowledge, well-informed, learned; yet their minds are mainly memory banks, storage depots for undigested and unrelated information. Indeed, information is an unfortunate and confusing term, because unrelated data have no form, and what is called information today is mostly data that are unrelated as yet.

The question is, however, related to **what**? For most people, the taken-for-granted relation is to a culture which always is based on more or less exclusivistic concepts defining what should or should not be accepted as knowledge. The strictly physical, sense-conditioned, reductionist, and statistical methods from which "scientific" knowledge is now solely derived **exclude** whatever cannot be studied and measured objectively. This is the culture mind at work. Yet as human evolution becomes increasingly polarized by the rise of the principle of Unity, subjective factors inevitably will gain ever greater importance and meaning. For the mind of wholeness is the mind able to integrate as fully as possible objective and subjective experiences. It perceives all situations as integral wholes; it sees Wholeness in operation everywhere and at all times. It perceives humanity

as a whole, even though a society based upon the wholeness of mankind today seems more an unattainable Utopia than a possible reality in a relatively near future.

The realization that all individuals and communities of human beings constitute a whole cannot be held significantly by a decisive majority of men and women as long as the various collective egos we glorify as "sovereign nations" hold onto their exclusivity. World unity cannot occur when nations have not surrendered their emotional, cultural, religious, and political exclusivism and their animal-like dependence upon a particular territory which has to be controlled by their "maleness" or which, they believe, was given uniquely to them by God. The basic issue not only involves easily roused mass emotions and economic and business interests; for basic as the latter are today, international corporations have globalized them. The issue refers to the **quality of mind** now in operation on all continents; for mind alone can effectively focus the imprecise and diffuse aspirations of many human beings toward what can only be a dream of unity. Many people assuredly indulge in great subjective dreams of a millennial "New Age," but subjectivity alone cannot engender reality. Reality is the interrelationship of subjectivity and objectivity. Wholeness is reality, and Wholeness, being relatedness, is realized in form. The Movement of Wholeness is form in perpetual motion and re-creation. And this motion at every moment creates in mind the ever-changing yet always harmonic form of the Whole.

This Whole is the cosmos. It is also archetypal Man — and it is also you and I, if we allow the mind of wholeness to structure our total being in the image of Wholeness, so that we, too, become Reality — instead of a dream spasmodically mated with a composite of potential greed, lust, anger, and ambition.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Constitution of Man -

The Physical and Psychic Bodies - 1

While Part Two dealt with the pattern of the cycle of being, the Movement of Wholeness, in terms of essentially abstract principles which can be applied universally. Part Three focuses attention upon the cycle of being of a particular entity experienced as a man or woman. The biologist and the psychologist consider such an entity primarily a physical organism whose life span extends between birth (or conception) and death. But from the perspective of the mental attitude outlined in Parts One and Two, the life span of a man or woman constitutes only one half of a whole cycle of being — its symbolic Day period of predominantly objective activity and consciousness. The person called Peter or Jane refers to this Day hemicycle. A full understanding of such a person requires the consideration of the other half of the cycle — a Night period of predominantly subjective activity and consciousness.

The difficulty encountered when attempting to deal with this Night half-cycle is that it does not refer to the human being known as Peter or Jane, a being whose physicality — one comes to realize — is only the external appearance assumed by a combination of factors which in their, togetherness constitute a **whole of being**. After death, this combination ceases to exist as the Peter or Jane we knew as a living person, yet the component factors in this physically experienced person do not disappear. As I have repeatedly stated, there is no place for non-being in the concept of wholeness of being I am presenting. There is only being — being in a perpetual and rhythmic (or cyclic) state of transformation in which a continual combining and recombining of elements occur. Being implies a multiplicity of elements, because "to be" is to be a whole — one among the seemingly infinite (because indefinable) number of concretizations of Wholeness.

When I speak of Peter or Jane, I have in mind a temporary combination of factors constituting a human being in the state of physical existence. This combination breaks down at death, but the Wholeness of which this being was but one phase retains its identity of being in new conditions. The physically experienceable Peter or Jane is not a **whole of being**. He or she represents — I repeat — only a half-cycle of being. Each of the diverse elements combined to constitute a particular person during this hemicycle follows its own course during the other half of the cycle, the symbolic Night period. A new combination occurs when the entire cycle ends, because the end of one cycle is also the beginning of a new one. The continuum of being has no end; the Movement of Wholeness never stops.

The new is the progeny of the old. In a sense it is the old reborn; but not all the elements of the old combination, Peter or Jane, will be parts of the new combination, John or Barbara. This must be so because the cycle of being of a particular human whole is an **open** cycle. It has to be open because it is actually only a very small sub-subcycle within the cycle of humanity, the planet earth, the solar system, and the galaxy. During the period between the birth of the old combination and the birth of the new combination, the entire universe — particularly the whole planet and human societies and their cultures —

changes, perhaps considerably. Yet the new can be called the progeny of the old because the accomplishments and the failures of the old leave a legacy of karma to the new. Karma compels (or in a relatively few cases. Compassion impels) the formation of a new human being, John, because Peter could not fulfill during his physical life the Wholeness of being of which he was a fleeting manifestation.

So stated, the concept of "reincarnation" is far more complex than its popular formulation. The latter is not only unsound and philosophically unsatisfying, but based on a narrow and inhibiting psychological attitude. It arises from the spiritual materialism of a culture whose exclusivistic scientific empiricism and worship of personal values makes it nearly impossible for a man or woman to envision the wholeness of his or her being. The word "reincarnation" recently has become a catchword — often financial bait — conveniently used to attract people whose lives seem banal, confined, and empty. Evidently it implies that a mysterious entity, the soul, is incarnated in a human organism; that in some manner this soul survives the death of the physical organism and after a period "re-incarnates" in an embryo developing in a woman's womb.

The basic problem is how to identify this soul, define its origin and nature, and outline what can be understood and expected of its future. To solve this problem satisfactorily requires explaining not only the relationship between the soul and the body in which it is said to have incarnated, but also the relationship between the soul and the psychic and mental components of the person as a whole. The solution requires going beyond the particular person to the relationship between the soul, the person, and the culture and society which have formed the person's character and basic approach to life experiences and learned knowledge.

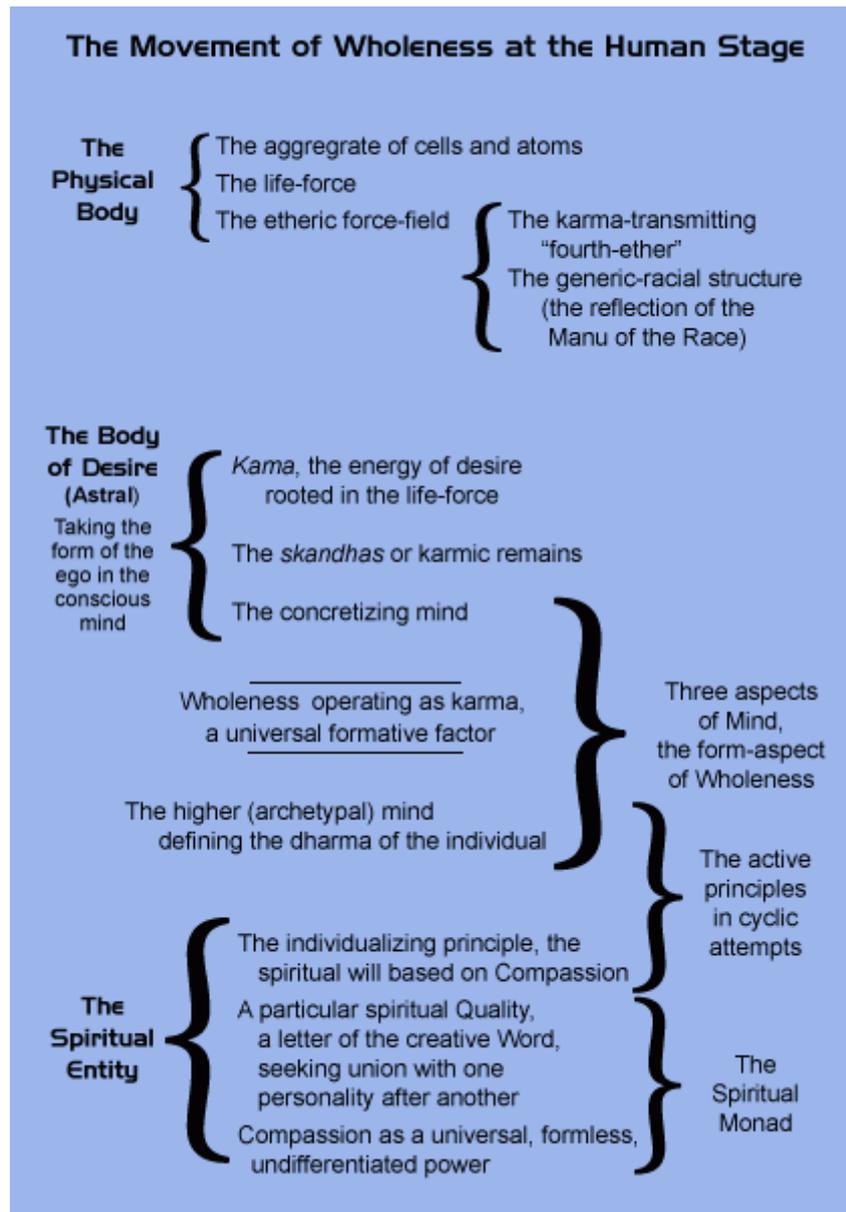
Religious and philosophical traditions of all cultures — and today Western science — provide either general approaches or dogmatic answers to this problem. Neither the traditional Christian-European approach nor that of the new psychology (in its various forms purported to be founded on empirical and "scientific" research) provides truly satisfying and wholesome foundations for today's much advertised "new age" consciousness. What follows here is an alternative approach, not only to the problems involved in the concept of reincarnation, but also to the still more basic one of what constitutes, in the largest sense of the term, Man. In Part Two, the term was given an abstract and universal meaning in terms of the whole cycle of being. Now I shall attempt, first, to outline a picture of the basic factors entering into the total life-situation we call a human beings — body, psyche, mind, spirit — then, to suggest what happens to each of these factors after death, during the symbolic Night period of the entire human cycle, and what is involved in the recombination of these factors into a new being.

Constitution of Man -

The Physical and Psychic Bodies - 2

I shall begin the study of the constitution of Man with the physical body, because whatever we come to consider as Man in our existential world rests upon the foundation of biology. Even if we believe in a divine revelation concerning the nature of Man, such a revelation has to take a form determined by what human beings, as physical organisms, can perceive, understand, and assimilate. Therefore it seems appropriate in the accompanying diagram to place the physical components at the top of the list, for these are the first lines a reader will read. The reverse order, which is nearly always given elsewhere, implies that the whole series of components is seen in one act of perception, thus spatially; above and below are taken as a scale of values. This is not the approach presented in this book, which deals with being as a process unfolding, phase by phase, in the consciousness of a human being.

Though the physical body is the objective foundation of human existence and of all knowledge deriving from the measurement of forms, it possesses, as it were, two "natures." First, it is the product of biological forces active in the earth's biosphere, which reach a high level of complexity and organization in the life-species homo sapiens.



But the body is more than a generic biological organism. Having been subjected to a great variety of stresses and disformations by (1) a particular culture and (2) a particular personality, this product of impersonal, planetary "life" assumes a complex set of characteristics giving it a more or less individual character. Therefore, the natural biological body should be distinguished from what results from the pressures giving it relatively individual characteristics. These pressures are existential manifestations of both the karma of the particular person whose body it is and the collective karma of a particular culture and special community.

In terms of the cyclic pattern of the Movement of Wholeness, "life" represents the general type of structural organization taken by the balance of forces within the Movement during a particular phase of the development of a planet whose material and chemical conditions are conducive to this kind of organization. During the period

preceding the symbolic Noon, life takes a series of forms of increasing complexity. As the Noon point is reached (greatly simplifying the process), the form of the human body stabilizes and reaches a truly human type of biological organization. Being a manifestation of planetary life, this human body is ruled not only by instincts, as is every form of life within the biosphere; it also is intimately related to, because the product of, a particular region of the biosphere. The structure of the human body is, like a musical theme, susceptible of numerous variations. In different regions of the biosphere, life produces bodies of different colors and races, and each type has a special role to perform in the total rhythm of the biosphere.

At first, however, these types of physical bodies do not have cultural, personal, or individual characteristics. These develop gradually as relatively superficial modifications of racial types, which nevertheless retain their basic nature and biodynamic rhythms. What we today see, touch, and think of as "my body" is a biological formation of a certain type that has been partially differentiated — and in some cases distorted — by the super-biological pressures of culture, personal character, and individuality. Such pressures can be defined as the results of past karma; but this karma is **both** collective and individual. The super-biological modifications of a body's basic racial nature are also (and in some instances even more) the inevitable results of strenuous efforts the person may have made to neutralize past karma by performing a difficult dharma.

In the esoteric traditions and popular mythologies of many cultures, the term **physical body** includes, in addition to the dense material body, a concentric series of subtler material formations. Though these are usually given the rather misleading name of, **etheric body**, they rather constitute surrounding as well as pervading sheaths of a subtler kind of matter which has a variety of characteristics and functions. To speak of an etheric "body" is probably inadequate. It operates more as a "field of forces" or guiding field. It can be regarded as the "vehicle" for the life-energy which it focuses as well as distributes among the cells of the physical body. It is, in any case, constituted of matter existing at several levels of tenuity and vibratory energy.³²

As the matter of the dense physical body exists in several states (solid, liquid, and gaseous), the matter of the subtle etheric vehicles is said to exist in four states. The lowest one (the "fourth ether") is, as it were, the lens through which karma is precipitated.³³ The

³² While the null results of the famous Michelson-Moreley experiments of the 1880s caused most scientists to abandon the concept of the ether entirely, recent findings in astrophysics have raised the necessity of reconsidering the early and probably premature assertions which failed to consider all the factors in the experiment. These findings suggest that space is not "empty" after all, but "filled" with "an energy-rich subquantic medium composed of extremely small neutral particles called neutrinos, pervading all space and interpenetrating all matter." See "The Rediscovery of the Ether" by H. C. Dudley in **Future Science**, John White and Stanley Krippner, eds. (Doubleday & Co., New York, 1977) pp. 184-190.

³³ In **The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception**, Max Heindi speaks of the "fourth ether" as the "Chemical Ether" through which "the forces which cause assimilation and excretion work." In other esoteric doctrines, these forces are related to the solar plexus nerve center (or chakra) connected not only with the assimilation of foodstuff sustaining the operations of the physical body, but with a subtler type of psychic assimilation. It is

higher three are essentially impersonal; they give a generically human form to the energy of life that operates in and through the planet's biosphere. The highest state (the seventh) seems to be directly — even if rather mysteriously — related to the most unified condition of subjective being. Avataric manifestations may have their focus at that level of "spiritual" materiality. Each of the main human Races (by which I mean particular stages in the evolutionary process) is a variation on the basic planetary theme, Man. These variations have been mythically personified under the name **Manu**. In one aspect, a Manu is the prototype of the basic type of human beings during a particular Race-period; in another, "he" symbolizes the totality of all the beings constituting a Race, or rather the essential spiritual vibration and role the Race has to play in the building of the earth's noosphere — the planetary Mind.

A physical body is a composite entity in which the planetary life force operates within a collection of trillions of cells, molecules, and atoms organized by its integrative power. When this power ceases to operate, the etheric substances of the body are reabsorbed into the life-field of the earth, just as the elements of the decaying dense physical body return to the solid, liquid, and gaseous layers of the globe.

Being an organized whole of activity, a physical body has a consciousness of its own — what has often been called an "elemental" consciousness. Every cell of the body has consciousness — a consciousness related to and an integrated manifestation of its total activity within the field defined by its form. In most instances this form is determined by karma operating particularly through the etheric field. As human beings exist during the hemicycle characterized by the dominance of the principle of Multiplicity, the nature of human consciousness is predominantly objective. It is thus, at first, mainly determined by the condition of the physical body, which is the most objective aspect of the human type of organization. Yet the principle of Unity rises after the Noon point of the great planetary cycle, and the attractive power of material existence and bodily satisfaction slowly diminishes.

said that "the gods" speak to men through the solar plexus — that is, this center is the gate through which various psychic currents, including the great Images of a people's collective psychism, enter the consciousness of as yet unindividualized persons. Karmic processes work in the physical body largely through the various functions involved in the metabolism of food — stomach, liver, pancreas, intestines. Eating is a mode of relationship with the food (vegetable and animal) one eats. The desire for food and the desire for sexual partnership or possession are two most fundamental aspects of desire. The desire for air to breathe is another even more imperative but also more "spiritual", desire. By breathing air which has entered the lungs and blood-stream of all living bodies in the biosphere — for air circulates rapidly around the globe — the unity of all living beings is prefigured and to some degree substantiated, unconscious though we are of the fact.

Constitution of Man - The Physical and Psychic Bodies - 3

The subjective polarity of being in the human body never is and never has been inoperative. Indeed it is the impersonal and generic power of "life" itself — life as a power which integrates the multiple elements constituting the entire body. This power is primarily focused at the etheric levels of the physical body, because these constitute the field in which structural factors mainly work. These factors — and through them the formless energy of life (as an agent of the principle of Unity) — need periodic strengthening. They regularly have to recuperate from the demands made on them by the principle of Multiplicity during daily activity, when energy is scattered and the human structure is subject to forces of at least relative "disformation." This recuperation occurs during sleep.

In sleep, objective consciousness ceases except for the mostly, yet not entirely, subjective activity we call dreams. In sleep and the dream state, the ratio between the objective power of the principle of Multiplicity and the subjective power of the principle of Unity shifts away from the ratio manifesting as the state of waking consciousness. The new ratio varies during sleep; hence Hindu psychologist-philosophers distinguish the state of dreaming from that of dreamless sleep. From a practical psychological standpoint, however, what the awakening consciousness retains as dreams usually are representations of activities incited by happenings in the sleeping body, of confused remembrances of events of the preceding days, or symbolic dramatizations (often distorted) of real activities having occurred at the more "spiritual" levels of a mind controlled by the principle of Unity.

A dream is the reflection upon the mind of a periodic and only temporary condition of increased subjectivity that belongs to the realm of objective existence. The death of the physical body, on the other hand, refers to an alteration of the balance between Unity and Multiplicity which, though similar to the dream state, is seemingly irreversible. We say that a person in deep sleep is "dead to the world." But this person awakens, because the principle of Multiplicity predominates in the world of existence to which the person belongs as an embodied system of biological organization. When the strength of the principle of Unity exceeds that of the principle of Multiplicity, the physical body of a human being not only passes into the state of sleep — it dies. The principle of Unity becomes too strong to make life in the biosphere possible. Objective existence is "killed" by too much subjectivity.

The balance between subjectivity and objectivity in a living person is very delicate; it can differ only slightly from the norm of mankind's evolution at the time the person lives. Similarly, the temperature of the human body can deviate from the norm of 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit (or nearly 37 degrees Centigrade) only plus or minus a very few degrees without death ensuing. Thus a human being can neither sleep too deeply nor be awake too objectively. He or she cannot operate too far away from the prevailing normal balance of subjectivity and objectivity and remain alive in a physical body. The question is, however, whether during physical life a human being may not have **another** "body" in which

normally the factor of subjectivity would be stronger (in relation to that of objectivity) than it is in a physical body. In such a body, the balance between Unity and Multiplicity would differ from that prevailing in the world of physical organisms (that is, in the biosphere).

In a biological organism, the dynamism inherent in the Movement of Wholeness assumes the character and modes of operation of the life force because the ratio between the strengths of the two principles falls within certain limits. As a result a variety of electrical and chemical phenomena occur. If the ratio is altered too greatly, these phenomena cease and we say that life has ended. But the **dynamism** of the Movement of Wholeness is not altered; it simply operates in another mode. It is a mode of operation which, while still having a well defined objective foundation, is more subjective than the life force operating in the biosphere. I already have spoken of this foundation as the **psychism** that develops out of the constant interrelatedness human beings experience in the state of culture — that is, as a result of having been born into and conditioned by a culture to which they have become attached.

Psychism is a binding, integrative force that represents a new aspect or mode of operation of the energy of the Movement of Wholeness. While the principle of Unity wanes between the symbolic Midnight and Midday, Noon represents a turning point at which the direction of motion reverses; the principle of Unity begins to rise and to challenge the principle of Multiplicity. A polarization occurs between the Midnight and Noon states. The power of the Godhead (divine Compassion) "projects" itself into the realm of life, and Avatars, in and through whom this "Ray" of compassionate power operates, embody successive "revelations." Through the process of human evolution (presumably over millions of years) each revelation becomes the spiritual foundation of a particular culture-whole and its religion. Each culture-whole provides archetypal forms on which interpersonal and sociocultural relationships are based. Psychism is the collective energy built up by these relationships through centuries.

While the subjective principle is relatively ineffectual in atomic or biological fields of integration, in psychism it is in dynamic ascendance, though still weak. The power of psychism may not be as strong as the binding force in atoms or the power of life in a living organism, but it assumes increasing importance in human evolution and in these terms is as significant as life. The power of psychism integrates **persons** just as the life force integrates the **cells** of the body; but psychic integration is more subjective and more subtle. It is, nevertheless, just as binding at its own level of operation; exile from the primitive family circle and tribal community is tantamount to psychic death.

Constitution of Man - The Physical and Psychic Bodies - 4

With the assistance of what I presently shall call the concretizing mind, psychism "precipitates" as a psychic structure. The latter is a field of forces rather than a "body," yet it operates somewhat as a body. It can be called a **body of desires**.

The term **desire** should be understood in its basic sense. All desires are **desires for relationship with other entities**, be they persons, objects or the kind of power that makes possible the possession of persons or objects (for example, money, fame, authority, and so on). In Sanskrit, desire is **kama**, a word with many meanings; but the English word **desire** also has many meanings, some positive, some negative. It can refer to love or hatred, possessiveness or repudiation. Desire also can apply to devotion and faith. In its most sublime aspect, desire is the Compassion emanating from the Godhead state; and religious cosmologies speak of the motive for the creation of the universe as God's "desire" for manifestation. The psychism experienced by the members of a tribe (and even by members of a more complex, less homogenous culture-whole) results from a powerful desire for interpersonal relatedness. This yearning is **kama** at work — just as the mating urge that compels male and female to embrace is life at work. Mating unites biological structures; psychic love unites the psychic "bodies" of persons.

The psychic or desire body also has been called the "astral body" — a rather confusing term. Its original meaning may be understood by thinking of the sky as ancient Chinese philosophers did. The basic aim of Chinese culture was to make society ("the State") a reflection of the majestic order- revealed by the sky. Chinese familial, social, and cultural life was highly ritualized; every relationship was part of a ritual that was meant to reflect the celestial order of the stars and planets as they moved across the sky. The sky was thus the "astral body" of the Chinese state, and the emperor and his astrologers tried to make sure that the complex interplay of family and social relationships would reflect celestial order. They used "music, rites, and chastisements" to accomplish this end. Similar means traditionally have been used in the West: the deliberate arousal of religious faith, observances of various kinds, and moral or sociocultural sanctions, including excommunication and (under the Inquisition) torture — all of which were intended for the sake of the soul.

What was meant by "soul" in this case was none other than the astral body or psychic self — the body of desires. Culture and religion were meant to transmute the desires of the person — the sociocultural unit — from selfish and biologically impelled desires to the desire for salvation through faith, altruism, and neighborly love. The purpose of devotion to Christ or to the Church, in India to a guru, was the transformation of the many desires for possessive and satisfying relationships into one single stream with a spiritual object. At the lower level of psychic desire, the soul was called the "animal soul" or less pejoratively, the "living soul"; its highest level was termed the "divine soul." In most human beings the soul was torn by a crucial conflict between the animal and the divine; the results of such a conflict during a person's life span determined, after a symbolic "Judgment," what the

state of being after death would be. In Christian tradition, three possibilities were dramatized as heaven, purgatory, and hell.

Yet neither philosophers nor theologians have made clear that the whole realm of desire inevitably develops out of the human state of sociocultural living. While this state is rooted in biology, it nevertheless transcends "life." While a physical body is an organism of cells, a strongly integrated society and culture is an organization of persons. As a result the basic energies at work differ at each level of organization. Relationships operating at the biological level differ **qualitatively** from the relationships of the sociocultural level of psychism. As long as a human being operates as a physical body, his or her psychic energy is deeply related to and dependent upon life energy; but when the physical body disintegrates, the psychic body of desire operates alone.

A psychic body is the product of interpersonal, sociocultural relationships. If a human being were born alone and could live without any relationships with other human beings, he or she would have no psychic body. He or she would be a protohuman animal, not a human being. Protohuman manifestations of life become at least potentially human at the Noon of the cycle, when they are gathered together in tribal groups, by the descent of the power of the Godhead through the primordial Avatar. Avatars periodically appearing among men-in-the-making give them potent Images which become the foundation of sociocultural living and **therefore** of development at the level of psychism, which at that phase of the cycle refers to the collective soul of the tribe.

Human beings have **desires** insofar as they are "human," insofar as they are "persons," that is, members of a society and culture. Animals have **instincts**. Men and women acting as biological organisms also can act compulsively in an instinctual way, but such actions are animal rather than human. To the extent a human being is a person, personalized desires operate, and these desires are conditioned, and often totally predetermined, by the sociocultural patterns of the person's tribe, social class, and particular religion. Even today, the drive for wealth and personal comfort experienced by human beings born and trained in the United States is a collective desire characterizing the national psychism. Each person gives this collective psychic drive a more or less particularized coloring or form according to his or her temperament and circumstances of birth and education. Today, however, these collective desires can become individualized, because the process of individualization has begun to operate at the planetary level, making at least some impression on the collective psychism of all peoples.

This process has begun because at the planetary level of mankind-as-a-whole the Movement of Wholeness has reached a phase at which the principle of Unity is gaining greater power — yet not sufficient power to balance the principle of Multiplicity. Symbolically speaking, mankind may have reached a point just past the midpoint between Noon and Sunset. The process of individualization implies the increasing possibility for human beings to develop what might be called a "body of individuality," as distinct from the psychic body of desire as the latter is distinct from the living physical body.

What then is this "body of individuality?" Essentially it is a "mental" structure, using the term **mental** in the complex sense in which mind was defined in the preceding chapter. As a formative agent, mind can operate either as the servant of a spiritual Quality

(one of the many Letters of the creative Word) endeavoring to establish a one-to-one relationship with an individual person — or as the servant of the "desire nature" dominated by vitalistic drives and the imperatives of a particular culture and collective tradition.

CHAPTER NINE

Constitution of Man -

The Spiritual Entity and the Higher Mind - 1

Between the symbolic Noon and Sunset of the cycle of being the fundamental goal of evolution is the consummation of the "divine Marriage" of spirit and matter within a human being. In this union of opposites, the all-encompassing meaning of Wholeness is revealed in a moment of Illumination, in a moment of dynamic equilibrium in which the principles of Unity and Multiplicity are of equal strength. The union must be contained within a form that can resist the union's intense "heat" and not be shattered by it.³⁴ This form is the **mind of wholeness** — a mind totally filled with the harvest of a long series of life experiences that were spirit oriented yet rooted in the substance of earthly existence.

When this mind reaches a perfected state of development, karma is fulfilled; the distortions brought to the harmonic and serene Movement of Wholeness by a series of human personalities during their life spans — their "sins" of commission and omission — have been harmonized.³⁵ In the ultimate moment of Illumination and within the integrated formations filling this mind of wholeness. Wholeness is Meaning. The full meaning of the Image of Man conceived in the previous Godhead state is understood. It is one vast, all-inclusive meaning; or as occult and mystical traditions say, Man is **potentially** not only the microcosm of the objective manifested universe, but also the alchemical vessel within which all the powers of the symbolic Day and Night of being can find themselves harmonized in their essential nature, which is both spiritual and material. Man is potentially the complete manifestation of Wholeness. To be such a manifestation is Man's dharma, and the field for such a manifestation has to be given form by the mind of wholeness — the mind illumined by spirit, thus by the Compassion that radiates from the Godhead state in which the principle of Unity reaches the apex of its power (in Sanskrit, **manas tajjasi**, the illumined mind).

While the forms built by this mind are such that in them the principles of Unity and Multiplicity can reach their harmonized expression, the energy animating these forms is the power of Compassion. Spirit is the active factor in them; for at whatever level it operates, spirit is rooted in Compassion and the will to inclusiveness. Compassion provides the **incentive** to build a new dharma to balance and harmonize any ancient karma — dharma and karma being two complementary aspects of Wholeness. Mind builds the archetypal forms of dharma. Each archetype structures an invisible "field of

³⁴ A good symbol for such a need is provided by the attempts of atomic physicists to use the energy of atomic fusion for practical purposes. A tremendous heat has to be generated which would vaporize every known material substance within which the process could take place. So far, the only solution has been to create a tremendously powerful magnetic field as a containing factor.

³⁵ What is implied in a series of human personalities will be discussed in Chapter II.

forces" within which spirit seeks to establish a definite and steady relationship with a particular human organism, produced according to the laws of nature operating in the earth's biosphere.

In my book **The Planetarization of Consciousness**, I called such a field of forces the "ideity field".³⁶ This field acts on the great variety of cells and organic functions in a human being, functions which seek to hold the attention and draw to themselves the power of the central self. In this field, spirit as Compassion and the drive toward unity seek to affect this aggregation of desires inherent in the state of biological and psychic existence.

This state of existence is what the popular mind understands as life, but this is because Western mentality has refused to see in life a universal power that is only for a period focused upon and pervading a fecundated ovum (or vegetable seed). Sri Aurobindo referred to that condition of biological existence and its multifarious desires as "the vital." In some manner, integrative spirit and the too often discordant voices of the vital have to meet and come to terms with one another. Mind, in its individualized aspect, builds the ideity field to provide a meeting ground. But at first mind must deal with the basic biological drives of the organism whose existence must be assured and perpetuated. This biologically dominated mind becomes at the human level of existence the "lower mind," for which a better term is the **concretizing mind**. Another type of mind, however, operates at an existence-transcending level. It usually is called the "higher mind," the builder of archetypes. It gives a definite form to the dharma of the individual person.

The "body of individuality" I mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter is, in principle, the manifestation of this archetype; but it is such a manifestation only when the individual performs his or her dharma. In the early stages of the process of individualization, the ego often usurps the power essentially belonging to the true self; when this occurs the "body of individuality" (or mental body) is "fed" mainly by the concretizing mind intent on sorting, generalizing, assimilating, and conceptualizing the experiences of personal and sociocultural living. These experiences are conditioned by the desire (**kama**) for a multitude of relationships with objects and other persons — relationships which are mostly acquisitive and possessive.

In its archetypal aspect, the "body of individuality" is presumably what is known in Hindu philosophy as **karana sharira** and among Theosophists as the **causal body**. The term **body**, however, is confusing because it gives the impression of a well-organized system of activities endowed with some consciousness of its own; in most human beings today, the "body of individuality" is barely organized. Even the "body of desires" (or astral body) usually is not a field of activities sufficiently well organized for a centralized consciousness to operate objectively in it — as objectively as the ego can operate in a physical body. An effective type of organization requires a strong, active, form-building, and organizational mind.

³⁶ See Part Two, Chapter 7, "Soul-Field, Mind, and Reincarnation

At the level of the desires for existential relationships — with their ups and downs and their inherently dramatic as well as aggressive character — the organizing factor is the concretizing (or "lower") mind. It is the intellect (in the modern sense of the term), which both systematizes and conceptualizes the experiences of the body and the psychic level of the personality and gives them meaning. It does so by referring these experiences either to the collective tradition and life style of the community or to the established character of the personal ego. The ego in turn is rooted in the biological temperament of the person and its particular balance of functional activities and needs.

For a "higher mind" to develop effectively, the spiritual entity to whose purpose this mind would be consecrated has to have reached a point in its unfoldment at which it can focus its energy — the energy of Compassion — in the direction of a particular human organism. But the achievement of a one-to-one relationship between a particular human being and spiritual Quality also requires that mankind as a whole (the biological species homo sapiens) has reached a certain stage in its physical and (through a series of culture-wholes) psychic evolution. The attainment of this stage makes possible the birth and development of human beings sufficiently sensitive to respond to the "call" of a spiritual Quality — a call that must be formulated by the higher mind.

In other words, the process is twofold and involves a "descent" (or the involution) of spirit into a well-defined organization of mind and the "ascent" (or evolution) of living forms toward not only a fully human but a definitely individualized state. These opposite currents meet at the level of mind; but because mind has a basically neutral (that is, nondirectional) character, a human mind finds itself divided by a twofold task: it must contribute well-defined structures to both the descent of spirit and the ascent of biological systems spawned by the earth's biosphere. The usual result is that a human being is divided into two systems of activity and consciousness. These systems are popularly called the "higher Self" and the "lower self," and Christian tradition has long featured the concept of human nature as a precarious union of angel and beast.

These two aspects interrelate and often confusingly blend at the level of mind. Actually, mind represents a third factor in addition to the duality of spirit and matter (which has been overly emphasized). Because of mind, the opposites can be harmonized and eventually united, after a long process of preparation and many repeated attempts. Thus Man's organization is actually triune, and each of the three components itself has a threefold character. Nevertheless, for practical purposes today, the dual nature of human beings may be more apparent. The most fruitful approach combines the two concepts: while it gives to mind a pivotal, all-important character, it also deals squarely with the realities of human existence and the often hidden cause of many deep-seated inner conflicts.

Constitution of Man - The Spiritual Entity and the Higher Mind - 2

In the following I shall attempt to enumerate and briefly describe the main components of a total human being, beginning with the triune spiritual entity, the permanent factor in a series of personalities — the factor that is related to the principle of Unity. In addition I shall refer the reader to the **diagram** shown in the previous chapter.

The spiritual entity in Man is a combination of (1) a **universal** factor, the power of divine Compassion that is the foundation for all modes of existence; (2) a **particular** spiritual Quality of being; and (3) a **principle of individualization**, the function of which is to exteriorize, define, and focus the particular spiritual Quality so it may enter into a one-to-one relationship with a human organism produced in the earth's biosphere.

The first factor can be considered simply the reflected light or power of the Godhead state. In this state the principle of Unity reaches the greatest power it can attain **in the particular cycle under consideration**. But because there are cycles within cycles — a hierarchy of cycles — the degree of inclusiveness and the quality of the Compassion radiating from the Godhead state of **any** cycle of being is relative to the level the particular cycle occupies in the hierarchy. As there can be no state of absolute Unity, so the character of all-inclusiveness and universality of which we can speak when dealing with the total being of a particular individual is only relative; it is relative to what is possible in the cycle of this individual being who operates within the larger cycle of humanity-as-a-whole, the planet earth, our solar system, and so on.

The second factor in the spiritual entity is related to the creative Word of which the spiritual Quality is one single Letter. In another symbolism, this second aspect of the spiritual entity is one "Ray" of the spiritual "Sun" — one of the many Rays or colors of the spectrum of divine Light. Occult traditions speak of primary and secondary Rays, just as other traditions distinguish between Mother-Letters and other Letters in the cosmic Alphabet of being.

The third component in the spiritual trinity is related to the Promethean gift bestowed upon Natural Man. It is the principle of individualization, the power of exteriorization required to bring the spiritual Quality to a clearly **focalized** state. It is closely associated with the "higher mind" needed to **formulate** — to give an archetypal form — to the spiritual Quality. To focus a spiritual Quality so that it can enter into a one-to-one relationship with a human organism is to "individualize" it. This individualization of the spiritual Quality polarizes the required individualization of the human person, that is, the latter's emergence from the collective psychism of his or her culture. The individualization of spirit requires the operation of the **spiritual will**, which is the true will; but what most people today call will is the concentrated energy of desire (**kama**). Spiritual will is "light" rooted in Compassion; the ego-will is "heat" generated by the spasmodic nature of desire.

The higher mind gives a steady form to the light of will; the lower mind gives unsteady and often changing forms to the heat of desire. The process of human evolution consists of the transmutation of the fire of desire into the light of Compassion, and of the confused

multiplicity of the lower mind's thought processes into the unified revelation — the "seeing whole" — of the illumined mind, the mind of wholeness.

The lower mind nevertheless performs an important function during the first phases of the development of **human** consciousness, when this consciousness emerges from the state of **biological** (vegetable and animal) consciousness — a state in which it is structured and controlled by instincts. When Natural Man enters the stage of biospheric existence, he is "overshadowed," as it were, by the power of the Godhead released through the primordial Avatar in whom the archetypal Image of Man manifests as a spiritual entity. Both the power of the Godhead and the archetype that gives it a form are almost totally beyond the consciousness of human beings just emerging from the biological state. These emergent human beings are still so close to the animal condition that their minds can operate only as the lower or concretizing mind.

The function of this mind is to give concrete form to what makes protohuman organisms human. At that time, "giving concrete form" means expressing the inexpressible and incomprehensible in **symbols** based on unusual or particularly intense experiences of life in the biological world. The concretizing lower mind thus **reflects** the realities of the realm of archetypes — the realm of the higher mind — which is then utterly transcendent and ineffable. This, indeed, is what the lower mind always should do. Its function is to **translate spiritual realities** into life terms, thus into symbols, images, and ritual gestures which become the foundation of cultures uniting and "ensouling" increasingly large groups of human beings.

However, the consciousness of primitive human beings is still bound to life energies and instincts operating as rigidly set mechanisms seeking release in fulfilling activities. Therefore, the symbolic forms and magical rites of the culture inevitably are misused and made to serve life desires. Sooner or later, human beings whose biological energies are particularly powerful use the concretizing mind to bring these energies to a sharper, more effective focus. The lower mind then performs two functions: it rigidly maintains the culture's traditional structures and form, and it gives strength to the developing psychism of the community, which usually is dominated by one or more powerful human beings.

When the process of individualization begins and culture-wholes are formed whose dharma is to pay particularly focused attention to the archetypal ideal of autonomous and responsible individual selfhood, the concretizing mind gives sociopolitical form to such an ideal. The concepts of democracy, of the "worth and dignity of the individual," of the primacy of the individual over the collective, and of universal reason over particular feelings gradually become official tenets of a new social order. These ideals acquire some kind of religious sanction and eventually are formulated into political laws; but the majority of the people repeatedly and most often successfully circumvent sanctions and laws, often with the tacit approval of priests, prosecutors, and judges. The desires that fill and energize the psychic-astral realm use the lower mind, which has become the servant of the ego.

The ego is a psychic structure organized by the concretizing mind, but it is also to some degree a reflection of the principle of individualization within the triune spiritual entity described above. Ideally, the ego reflects this spiritual principle of individualization as the

moon reflects the sun. Thus the ego and the other components of the personality over which the ego rules have been called the **lunar** self, while the triune spiritual entity in archetypal Man has been called the **solar** Self (or sometimes the Solar Angel).

This solar Self and its servant, the higher mind, constitute a fourfold spiritual soul at least potentially active in every human being. It might be related to the Pythagorean **Tetraktys** (1+2+3+4). **The solar Self persists during the entire cycle of Man**; it retains its identity, not only through the symbolic Day period of the cycle of being, but also through the Night period. However, when the immense majority of human beings today proclaim, "I am Peter" or "I am Jane," they are **not** referring to this solar Self. They are at best but vaguely conscious of its existence in the symbolic form given to it by their particular religion or metaphysical group. Rather, when they say "I," they are referring to their personal or lunar self or (psychologically speaking) to their ego.

Therefore the next chapter will give a more detailed account of the combination of factors which together constitute the lunar or "lower" self (the personality). Also it will examine the origins of these factors and whither they go when death disassociates them. This picture of what precedes the formation of a personality and will follow its disintegration will pave the way for a discussion of the process popularly known as, reincarnation. The reader may already have surmised that such a process is far more complex than is popularly believed and that the term **reincarnation** may be misleading.

CHAPTER TEN

The Structure and Transformation of the Total Person - 1

The words *person* and *personality* are confusing because they have acquired several meanings. Another term, **personhood**, recently has been brought forward to describe the state of being a person — a state to which a highly positive value is attributed.

The word **person** derives from the Latin **persona**, which refers to the mask worn by Greek actors performing in large, open-air amphitheaters. The features of these masks indicated the basic emotional character of a role, and they hid a small device that amplified and projected the voice. Masks are used in many tribal rituals, often to represent the countenance of a god. The essence and value of many of these sacred rituals is that they allow a human being who is only one member of the tribal whole to act symbolically and temporarily as the mouthpiece of the god who represents the wholeness (the soul) of the tribe. A part of the whole for a moment is made to experience the wholeness of the whole by ritualistically identifying with its archetypal form. In the Catholic ritual of the Mass, the priest does not wear a mask, but he acts ritualistically as Christ; and when the Pope performs the rite he more specifically identifies himself with the God-man. The experience of such a sacred and symbolic identification in acts and words, even if brief, can be far more important for the celebrant than what he or she does and says as a merely human being performing everyday work or even banal acts of love.

When I use the word **person** here (and in other recent books), I mean the state of existence of a human being within a culture-whole. A person performs many actions and thinks or voices many thoughts that are more or less prescribed, or at least inspired, by the culture and its traditions. He or she may instill these acts, thoughts, and words with feelings having a particular, relatively unique character. To the extent they have such a character, the "person" acts or thinks as an "individual." He or she has become, to some degree and in specific circumstances, an "individualized" person. An ordinary person usually merely mirrors and projects the collective images, meanings, and values the culture and its language have impressed upon his or her developing mind since birth.

In rare and specific situations, such a collectively determined person may become for a time a particular embodiment of the essential character of his or her society and culture — a "representative" man or woman. This occurs in varying degrees when the person is selected to perform a sociopolitical office in which the power of the whole community is focused upon and released through him or her while performing the duties of the office. It occurs in a limited sense when a police officer or a judge acts "in the name of" the law; much more so if the person happens to be the president of the country and makes crucial decisions affecting all the people. When a person consistently acts as a representative and mouthpiece of a culture-whole or nation — or of a particular religious community or institution — he or she can be called a "personage." This person then embodies a definite role in the culture's development and, still more generally, in human evolution.

These definitions of terms — person, individual, personage — are most important if one is to understand clearly what is generally called a human being's personality, in contrast to his or her spiritual aspect or soul. The personality is a composite entity and not

(as the materialist believes) simply the development of a physical body into a feeling and thinking person able to use energy and will to carry out self-chosen decisions. A person must be a physical body, but while the psychic and emotional parts of the personality interact and are intimately associated with the physical body, their origin is basically independent of it. They are rooted, not only in the collective culture in which the person operates, but also in an individual past.

The Structure and Transformation of the Total Person - 2

To clarify the situation, I refer the reader to the **diagram** from Chapter Eight — "The Physical and the Psychic Bodies". But I must stress that any kind of listing is analytical and far too separative. All the factors listed interact and interpenetrate to some extent. Separating them is like dissecting a corpse and describing the different tissues one finds: the livingness of the body when alive inevitably escapes the analyst. Because he concentrates on parts, the wholeness of the whole eludes the searcher. Nevertheless, analytical procedures are necessary if experience and knowledge (or intuition) are to be communicated.

The physical body of a human being can be considered a trinity of factors. (1) In its dense material aspect it is the aggregation of an immense number of cells, which in turn are made up of a myriad of molecules and atoms. (2) A planetary life force (**prana** or **chi**) animates this body. (3) The operations of the life force are structured by two factors: a generic-racial web of lines of force exteriorizing the archetype of Man as a biological species and subspecies, and a composite set of karmic factors. Some of the latter refer to the collective karma of a series of ancestors and the particular culture or cultures to which they belonged; others refer to what I have called an at least relatively individual past.

At the level of psychism and the "astral body" or "body of desires," three factors also are operative. (1) The energy factor here is the power of desire, **kama**, which like prana (the life force) to which it is related also has a nonindividual, planetary character. The energy of desire is given a more or less definite and concrete form by (2) the "lower mind." The operations of this concretizing mind are directed by (3) a set of karmic factors to which the **skandhas** of Buddhist doctrine presumably refer. They are factors which constitute the remains of a previous personality (or a previous series of personalities).

The basic problem is how to define and interpret the interaction between the concretizing mind and these karmic factors. According to the prevailing popular interpretation, behind these karmic factors stands a definite psychospiritual entity, a "reincarnating soul." The generally accepted Buddhist teaching, on the other hand, is that what reappears in a new human being is only the "karmic deposits" once generated by a previous human being. This doctrine is called the **anatma** doctrine, the term literally meaning "no atma," atma or atman in the tradition of India referring to the highest aspect of the spiritual entity in Man. While in one sense this universal principle, atman, pervades everything, it also is said to be nowhere in particular. Thus to speak of atman "reincarnating" makes no real sense.

For the modern theosophist following the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky, the "reincarnating principle" is not atman but an aspect of the "higher mind." "Something" within yet beyond this higher mind **involves itself in a new attempt at uniting a spiritual Quality with a new personality.** This "something" is what I call the principle of individualization (the spiritual will). It seeks to exteriorize the spiritual Quality in answer to the pressure of the power of Compassion.

This periodic attempt of the principle of individualization may of course be **interpreted** as "reincarnation," yet nothing actually "in-carnates," that is, becomes flesh. If one can speak of incarnation, one should refer to the karmic deposits of a past personality that give a particular form to physical matter. But "giving form to" material operations does not mean "becoming" matter (or flesh).

We have seen that karma operates in and through the lower level of the so-called "etheric body" of a human being (the "fourth ether") and from there precipitates into physical existence in various ways. At the level of psychism, it operates through the concretizing mind by **giving a personal form to desire**. While desire always means a desire for relationship, it also can have a negative character. The avoidance or active refusal of relationship (especially if fear or hatred is involved) is as much a mode of relationship as love or devotion. The desire for relationship takes forms that are controlled (1) partly by the culture and religion of the community and (2) partly by personal karma. The formative agent is the concretizing mind. In part, the ego is a formation of the power of desire: "I" am what I desire and the manner in which these particular, desires for relationship are objectivized into thoughts and acts by "my" will — the ego-will.

The feeling of "being I" is the realization that desires presuppose a being that desires, the subject that wants an objective result. This subject is endowed with a degree of permanence by the concretizing mind, even though it changes and develops through the years and is affected by biological, sociocultural, intellectual, and spiritual factors. Among these are health and eating habits, fashion, schooling, personal and emotional crises, and the attempts which the spiritual trinity makes to contact, impress, inspire and transform the total being.

Eventually the desire-nature, centralized into an ego, at least partially frees itself from biological compulsions and an innate longing for material possessions, social professional success, and power over other beings. The concretizing mind also eventually ceases to be bound to its culture and tradition. Then this ego-mind is able to reflect the archetypal form of the higher mind. It fills the consciousness with new images and new (perhaps exotic) words. Simultaneously (or sometimes later) the spiritual will of the individualizing principle within the spiritual entity should begin to affect the ego-will directly. This is accomplished by "transposing," as it were, the ego's vibratory energy to a higher key. This is a spiritual "modulation" or mutation.

Then, as the lower concretizing mind increasingly reflects or mirrors the archetypal mind and, through the performance of dharma, the karma of the past is neutralized, a permanent and spirit-infused "body of individuality" gradually is built. It is developed by the mind functioning as an undivided whole; it is powered by the spiritual will (the individualizing principle), and it becomes a consecrated place — a shrine or Holy Place — within and from which the spiritual Quality can release its compassionate power through dharma-manifesting, creative and/or transformative acts.

What is transformed is not merely one person; more significantly, but only potentially, it is the culture and society to which the person belongs, and eventually even the matter of the physical body. The material transformation should operate through the third and second levels of the etheric force-field; these refer to higher forms of planetary life. The

first and highest level represents (and when activated reflects in its fullness) the Image of planetary Man in this present cycle of being.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Cyclic Process of Spiritual Embodiment - 1

According to concepts formulated mythically in the Hindu **Puranas** and restated in H. P. Blavatsky's **Secret Doctrine**, humanity in the present period of the earth's evolution was formed by two classes of "progenitors": the **Barhishad Pitris** or "lunar ancestors" who gave human beings their "astral forms" (or **chayahs**), around which the physical body concretized; and the **Manasaputras** or "solar ancestors." The latter also are called "Flames," "Givers of Mind," and **Kumaras**, or in terms related to Greek mythology, Promethean spirits. Under a great variety of names, the **Manasaputras** (in Sanskrit **manas** broadly signifies mind) are said to have brought to protohuman beings the "fire" of self-consciousness and spiritual will, thus the ability to make self-motivated choices and be responsible for them.

In the outline of the Movement of Wholeness I have presented, the final "descent" of these "Givers of Mind" to the biosphere was crowned by the polarization between the Godhead and Natural Man at the symbolic Noon of the planetary cycle. Before this turning point in planetary evolution — the point at which the overpowering principle of Multiplicity is dynamically challenged by the henceforth rising principle of Unity — beings existed with a human form yet without the principle of individualization. This principle — which is the root of the true spiritual will — can be considered a "gift" from the all-inclusive Compassion of the Godhead state.

This divine Compassion calls for a new universe because the old one ended with a large number of failures, some total, most others at least partial. **All** failures, as well as successes, must be included in the Unity-dominated consciousness of the Godhead. The need of these failures — their very presence as a mostly subjective "memory" — calls for a new opportunity to reach the perfect state of Illumined Man. The **Barhisad Pitris** (lunar progenitors) are the partial failures of a past planetary or cosmic cycle. At least they are mythic personifications of the karma (collective and individual) left by the old cycle.

If the principles of this picture of the genesis of mankind are applied to an individual human being now living, we have to deduce that this now-living person has a previous person as his or her own lunar progenitor. The present person also is likely to be the lunar progenitor of a future human being. This does not mean that the present person **is** the previous person or that the future person will **be** the present person reborn; a child is not its parent and the mythological scenario does **not** say that the lunar progenitor **is** the new human being. The Hindu story says that the **astral** form of human beings was transmitted to them by lunar beings who had lived in previous cycles; what was transmitted was **their karma**.

We — living human beings — are "charged" (as it were) by the Compassion of the Godhead state — the highest principle in our total being — to neutralize the ancient failure of our lunar ancestors, the **Barhishad Pitris**, by performing (we might say sacramentally) the dharma that will neutralize these failures. These failures are now **our** karma. Our astral or psychic nature (body of desire) is filled with this karma, structured

by it. This nature is our lunar (lower) self, our personality. Yet this personality is not merely the karma of the past; it also is the way to neutralize it — our dharma.

In this sense the lower mind and the desire-nature (**kama**) together constitute one side of a coin, the other side of which is the higher mind and the spiritual Quality. Karma and dharma are the same structure. Karma is the negative aspect, yet it "expects" and longs to be "redeemed" by the action of the positive dharma. This longing is at the root of the devotional aspiration, toward a redeeming God, Avatar, or Savior, which is innate in all human beings. In an individualized person, devotion and the longing for redemption can be transmuted into the active will to rise above the conditions imposed by biological instincts and sociocultural imperatives.

When a person says, "I was such-and-such a person in a previous life," he or she actually identifies his or her present personality with **the karma** left by a past human being — thus with the quality of the desires this deceased person experienced and exteriorized into objective responses, which inevitably included discordant acts or the refusal to act when action was necessary. The life of the deceased may have had good features, but the spirit oriented or spiritual aspect of the dead personality was absorbed and assimilated by the spiritual entity in that person after death. What remains is essentially, **the memory** of the unfinished business and the failures of the past. The new person is born **primarily** to deal with these failures. If I say, "I WAS< b>that past person from whom I inherited my **personal sense of self** (my lunar selfhood)," I am, I repeat, identifying myself and my desires with a set of karmic failures. What I ought to do instead is to identify the concrete mind within me with my dharma (the higher mind).

Very general knowledge about the karma one has to transmute may be valuable at a certain stage of the evolution of consciousness; but it also can give power to the negative factors in the desire-nature by rationalizing their objective manifestation and inciting one to concentrate attention upon them. In general, the same can be said about many forms of psychological introspection and many analytical psychological procedures which are fashionable now. What is needed instead is for the lunar self to attune itself to the solar being within — the archetypal dharma-mind and the spiritual will — and to allow the meeting (fleeting as it must be at first) between the spiritual Quality and the desire-free and doctrine-free ego to occur within the field of a united mind.

This field is the "body of individuality." In **The Planetarization of Consciousness** I called it the ideity field. A "field" should be called a "body" only when a centralizing principle can operate fully in it — as, for example, the ego operates in a physical body. The operation of the centralizing principle in the ideity field is the **will**. In the lunar desire-body, the ego-will is at work once the lower or concretizing mind has given a stable form to the multiplicity of desires and personal reactions to relationships with the outer world. In the body of individuality, the centralizing factor is the spiritual will — the operation of the principle of individualization, which is the lowest aspect of the triune spiritual entity. For this spiritual will to operate effectively and consistently, the higher mind must have given an archetypal form to the body of individuality. It then presumably is the **karana sharira**, a Sanskrit term usually translated (inadequately I believe) as "causal body." It is

"causal" in the sense that an acorn is the "cause" of an oak tree. Thus I have spoken of the "God seed" at least latent in all human beings.

The difference between this God seed and an ordinary vegetable or animal seed is that in Man a psychic (or astral) entity stands between the God seed and the physical body. This psychic-astral entity is there because a human being generates karma: he or she can be **existentially** what he or she **essentially** is not. Plants and animals cannot fail to perform their dharma; they are compelled by instincts and tropisms. Human beings, on the other hand, are only impelled by desires — unless they have totally lost the human power to choose and have reached a subhuman state through constant misuse of the power of will, as, for example, through the steady practice of "black magic," eventually becoming the total failures of human evolution. However, **because** a human being can be a total failure, he or she also can be a total success. In religious terms, the light of a heavenly union with God predicates the fires of hell; but even the Christ-being could reach complete union only **after**, out of pure and all-inclusive Compassion, he experienced hell for "three days" (that is, totally).

Moreover, any individual must emerge by his or her own power from the matrix of the collective psychism of the culture in which he or she was born. This emergence is never an absolute separation, even if the individualized consciousness believes it is. As long as a human being has not passed through the Gate of Silence in full consciousness as Illumined Man, the power of the collective is still active in the psychic depths of his or her desire-nature. This power urges participation in relationships in which either pleasure and pain, enjoyable possession and tragic but often stimulating loss, can be experienced.

After death, the memory of all the relationships one has participated in remains as a binding force, as karma — unless one has completely understood the meaning of the relationships, of their results, and of the desires that engendered them. Such an understanding — a full experience of meaning — should give rise to Compassion. Then karma, which is an **unconscious** instrumentality for the operation of Wholeness, dissolves into Compassion, the positive and **conscious** power of Wholeness.

The Cyclic Process of Spiritual Embodiment - 2

Postmortem processes

When death ends the particular combination of factors we call a person, each factor follows its own course according to its own nature. The several components of the state of personhood separate, yet they normally remain within the planetary field of existence, which has several interpenetrating spheres.

The atomic and molecular matter of the **physical body** — whose cells constantly changed through the years and in old age had been progressively dying or replaced by toxic substances — returns to the soil, water, and air of the earth from which they emerged and were organized by "life." Sooner or later these material components are reabsorbed into other living organisms, and they may once more enter the bodies of other human beings as food. They are not lost; nothing is lost. Recurring cycles affect all forms of existence; all elements combine, de-combine, and recombine. Moreover, although the body disintegrates, the reproductive cells it released during its life span pass from generation to generation, pursuing their own impersonal rhythm. These germ cells are, of course, altered by genetic interactions, yet their characteristics reappear in new forms over the course of development of a particular racial strain or within a combination of ancestral lines active within a particular geographic locality.

The **etheric field** usually (but not always) vanishes very soon after death, because physical death implies that the life force, **prana**, has left the body; its multifarious currents have stopped operating. Prana returns to the life field of the planet (the biosphere) from which it had been derived yet never fully separated. Indeed, prana operating within a body is only "loaned" to a particular human being, presumably at the time of conception. The loan is made, one might say, under a "contract" formulated by karma, which limits and defines the use of the life force for a broadly specified period. Once the period ends, the contract ceases to operate and the previously form-bound prana escapes back to the biosphere. During the life of the human being, however, this form-bound prana becomes closely associated with the energy of desire, **kama**, and if the desire for life in the human being vanishes almost entirely, the life force may become paralyzed ahead of time and unable to hold together the complex mechanisms of the biological functions. The biosphere basically operates under the law "Eat or be eaten," and the catabolic and anabolic aspects of the life force perpetually struggle for control of any biological organism.

What happens to the **personality** after death has long been and still is the subject of often passionate controversies. On the basis of the picture I have outlined, the following is a logical conclusion, but the actual outcome depends on many variables. One variable is the level of consciousness and activity the person had reached. At all times and in all geographic regions there are human beings whose individual state of evolution is far

above or below average. The level of mankind's evolution at the time, and of society's and its culture's, also are important factors usually completely unrecognized in arguments about the after-death state. Thus statements that would apply to all individual situations (for example, the length of time between two "incarnations") can have only general validity. This validity also depends upon the expectable reactions of persons to whom such statements are made. Knowledge has validity only in terms of the knower or (in some cases) of a new generation to which it will be imparted.

Thus if a person is convinced that his or her "soul" exists primarily or essentially in terms of the desire for and the fulfillment, failure, or frustration of interpersonal relationships — and therefore is identified with the **kama** principle — this person is right when saying that the **personal soul** not only persists after death, but returns later on as a new person. This is the "personal" way of **interpreting** the situation that develops after death.

The interpretation based on the Movement of Wholeness defines death as the beginning of the symbolic Night of a very small sub-subcycle constituting a particular human life. Death is the "Gate of Silence" through which a human center of consciousness passes at the close of the existential Day hemicycle. At this time the principle of Unity begins to dominate the Movement of Wholeness as **experienced by this particular person**, "being" assumes increasingly subjective states, and the principle of Multiplicity and objectivity becomes internalized. This internalization produces **memory images** in the consciousness. These images constitute a **subjectivized mode of relationship**; they resemble the dreams that occur during the sleep of the physical body — and there are many kinds of dreams, including powerful nightmares.

Thus in the case of a person closely identified with the **kama** principle, the desire-body (in which **kama** Operates within the structures defined by the concretizing or lower mind) survives for a period after death. The length of survival depends on several factors. Among them are the intensity and character of the desires and the organizing power of the concretizing mind. Also significant is the degree to which the karma of the past has been neutralized by the performance, unconscious if not conscious, of the dharma which the higher mind and the spiritual will attempted to impress upon the personality's lower mental consciousness. Other determining factors are the extent to which this spiritual will and higher mind had been active, the degree of differentiation and concentration of the spiritual Quality, and the state of development of the ideity field as a place of meeting for the potential union of the spiritual entity and the personality. Because Western civilization today primarily and often exclusively accentuates the personal, ego-centered factors in a human being and in personal relationships to people, money, profession, and possessions (including pets!), the persistence of all these personal factors **in terms of subjective memory experiences** must be the norm in the period following death. But what are these "subjective memory experiences"?

Because a human center of consciousness having passed through the Gate of Silence (the "portal of death") of its own particular sub-subcycle operates in a realm in which subjectivity is the increasingly dominant factor, all experiences also must become mainly subjective. Experiences can no longer be physical because the body has vanished as a support for consciousness, feelings, and desires. Therefore they must be "psychic" **if** the personality is the experiencer. (We will see presently what may happen in the spiritual entity after the death of the physical body of the experiencer). But because psychism is originally and essentially collective, the character of after-death psychic experiences must be predominantly collective — **unless** the dead person had become strongly individualized during his or her life.

Accounts of seemingly authentic contacts with a dead person or of experiences following a temporary death and quick revival report that the person meets deceased parents, friends, and loved ones after emerging from a dark tunnel into a world of happiness and light. Such descriptions may be significant **interpretations** of occurrences in the predominantly subjective after-death state; the dreams remembered on awakening are also interpretations by the objectivizing lower mind of what occurred in the subjective state of sleep. What is remembered evidently has been personalized (in a sense "mythologized") by the brain-mind in terms of images and words belonging to the everyday experience of the just-awakened sleeper. The person supposed dead and then revived is in a state which is not essentially different from the one experienced by a suddenly awakened dreamer.

Similarly, when a trance-medium speaks or acts as a deceased personality, the words and images used by this personality most likely are taken from the brain-mind and psychic consciousness of the medium. This does not mean that the communication is without a "genuine" basis; it means merely that it is an interpretation, at best a fairly accurate "translation," a subjective reality that has been objectivized by the medium's concretizing mind.³⁷

In **The Tibetan Book of the Dead**, the striking imagery used to describe subjective processes — the various gods and demons, the Judgment, and so on — is symbolic. This does not mean that it is not real or that it is "pure imagination." It is an interpretation befitting the mentality of the people to whom it was addressed, and it still remains a

³⁷ As I see it, most psychic phenomena — with exceptions belonging to a higher level of activity and consciousness — are manifestations of the subconscious power of community, that is, of a power arising from the transmutation of the compulsiveness of life into a communal-social force which also acts subconsciously, unbeknown to most members of the community. A "psychic" is a person in whom the **collective** psychism of the culture operates in at least partial independence from his or her personality and **individual** consciousness. The psychic is able to give voice or form to subconscious forces and desires in another human being and to some extent to reveal the past — **as the past is still inherent in the present**. To the extent the future is conditioned by forces and desires already operating unconsciously within a person (in the biological organism, etheric body, and/or body of desires), the psychic may be able to Visualize or "sense" something of the person's future — or the future of the whole social collectivity in which the psychic has his or her biopsychic and cultural roots.

valuable, beautiful, and meaningful interpretation. Nevertheless, Western consciousness differs from traditional Tibetan consciousness, even if the level at which many Europeans and Americans think and feel today is not too different from that of the Tibetan culture when it was being formed. This may be because a new culture is now beginning to concretize, and it calls for such a devotional, form-worshipping consciousness. Still, this, new culture must create its own symbols and formulations. The Movement of Wholeness might provide such symbols to the consciousness of individuals who are ready to face the future as builders of a "new order" (**Novum ordo seculorum**) instead of as perpetuators of dying cultures, great as these cultures were. Yet there are always many and varied dharmas!

The Cyclic Process of Spiritual Embodiment - 3

The successive relationships between a spiritual Quality and a series of human persons

The psychic entity surviving the death of the physical body operates in terms of collective psychism, and when communicating to living persons addresses them (via the concretizing, culture-conditioned mind of a psychically sensitive intermediary) in terms of their collective, culture-defined consciousness. However, when a person has become strongly individualized during a lifetime, the character of his or her individuality persists in the period after death. Also, the individual may have been able to reach **beyond** the individualistic state before dying; he or she would have performed the rite of passage at the Gate of Silence as Illumined Man, or at least as a partially illumined consciousness aware of the meaning of Wholeness, and either utterly devoted to the creative God (the One in the beginning) or self-dedicated to the service of the Pleroma, the "White Lodge" of Illumined Beings. Other possibilities more difficult to define may also occur.

A human being having become a truly autonomous, self-reliant, and responsible **individual** person, at least mostly free from the dictates of biology and culture, has to be more or less consciously related to the principle of individualization — to the lowest of the components of the triune spiritual entity. His or her lower mind must have at least attempted to reflect the archetypal mind and to perform the dharma formulated by the latter. The ideity field must be operative, and a link must have formed to serve as a magnetic-spiritual channel of communication between the lower and higher mind and theoretically between the principle of desire (kama) and the spiritual Quality infused with divine Compassion.

Even so, this link (presumably **antakarana** in Sanskrit) is not permanent. It can be broken temporarily or permanently if the power of some intense desire leads the person to indulge in violent or destructive acts dictated by anger, jealousy, hatred, ruthless ambition, or devastating lust. If, however, the link is strong and operative at death, all that was spirit-oriented, truly compassionate, and dharma-fulfilling during the life span is "taken up" by the spiritual entity along the channel of communication. What is so taken up represents the spiritual harvest of the personal life. It is absorbed and assimilated by the spiritual entity and becomes part of the contents of the permanent aspect of the ideity field (**karana sharira**), the definitive "body of individuality."

In most instances, however, "something" remains in the psychic world after death. These psychic remains become increasingly subjective as time goes on — a time not measurable in objective years based on regular motions of celestial bodies (and, more recently in science, of atomic particles). This "something" is basically what is left of the energy of desire (**kama**). But what can desire mean in a predominantly and increasingly

subjective realm in which the power of the principle of Multiplicity — the basis of relationships between diverse, objectively perceived entities — is constantly decreasing? If there are no objective relationships, there can be no objectivized forms of desire, only **subjective memory experiences** of desire.

These "memory experiences" are as "real" as experiences in the objective, existential world. They are the kind of experiences (**imperiences?**) possible in the Night period of the Movement of Wholeness — in the realm of "inistence." These subjective experiences are conditioned by the objective events of physical life which they continue, as in acoustics overtones seem to prolong the vibrations of a fundamental tone. But sooner or later the memory experiences dissipate. They cease to be the experiences of a centralized personal consciousness; **kama** fades away, and with it what remained of the ego, the desirer. Yet the karma of the results of **kama** remains, because karma can be neutralized only by the performance of dharma through an activity as actual and objective as the karma-producing acts (or feelings or thoughts) of the past had been.

When the sub-subcycle of being constituted by an individual person reaches its phase of greatest subjectivity — the equivalent of the symbolic Midnight, its own **relative** Godhead state — the spiritual entity that had sought to enter into at least partial relationship with the once-alive person is moved by Compassion (its highest and most universal aspect). To make possible the neutralization of the old karma, the spiritual entity seeks to contact a new human being yet to be born. Gradually, the archetypal structure of a new dharma is formed by the archetypal mind united with the principle of individualization (the spiritual will, **Ichcha** in Sanskrit).

From the point of view of the spiritual Quality, the new human being's task will be to perform this dharma, but the new human being is **not** the old human being reappeared. It is **any** human being ready to be born in the biosphere whose biological characteristics could be the foundation for the performance of the new dharma. This dharma "projects" an image of itself upon the virgin etheric matter of such a human body about to be conceived — upon its "fourth ether," the level of etheric substance which reflects, and focuses karma into a particular human body. As karma is only the inverted or negative aspect of dharma, this projection of dharma is **reflected in matter as karma**. By this projection, the genetic pattern produced by the combination of two ancestral lines of germ cells (sperm and ovum) is altered to some extent, often considerably; the more developed the spiritual entity and its spiritual will, the greater the transformation.

Only in this sense can one say that the spiritual entity "chooses" a new body; the body is selected for its possibility of adequately responding to the dharma. Because the dharma is determined by the karma of a once-living person, a cause-and-effect relationship obviously operates between the deceased person and the one being born. But to say that the former "reincarnates" in the latter is not accurate. The new person succeeds the dead one as holder of the same "office."

The relation is a succession, not only because the old karma has been transmitted to the new person, but because both persons, together with many others preceding and following them, constitute a **series whose successive terms are all related**. They are related through a karma-dharma linkage to **one single spiritual entity**, one of the immense number of Letters of the creative Word, the Logos. This one single spiritual Quality — together with its servants, the spiritual will and the archetypal mind — constitutes the pole of Unity in a dynamic process whose Multiplicity pole is represented by a series of personalities periodically succeeding one another. During this process the two polarities of being interact, and the process operates two ways: the spiritual Quality "descends" toward matter and becomes increasingly differentiated, specialized, and focused; while through an "ascending" serial evolution, the many human persons participating in (and belonging to) the process achieve an increasing degree of refinement, sensitivity, and close attunement to the vibration of the spiritual Quality.

Gradually, these persons increasingly come to reflect the archetypal Image spatializing the vibration of the spiritual Quality (the **Augoeides** in Greek mystical philosophy). The process is "consummated" in the "divine Marriage" of which mystical traditions speak — from the point of view of true occultism, in the "great Initiation."³⁸ The last person of the series is not only spiritualized, but in a special sense "immortalized" when the spiritual Quality becomes "impersoned" (rather than "impersonated"). As a concrete, pure manifestation of a spiritual Quality, the individualized but ego-transcending organization of consciousness and will gains the same degree of permanence as the Quality — that is, permanence until the close of the great planetary cycle.

³⁸ In the great mythos of Christianity this consummation takes place in two scenes: one is the Transfiguration, when the Son of God (the Christos) becomes totally united with the Son of Man (Jesus); the other is the Crucifixion ("**Consummatum est**" — it is consummated). As the blood (the vital principle) of the Son of Man (the perfected, "christed" person) falls upon and impregnates the soil of the earth, a **process of humanization of the planet** symbolically begins. Thereafter, matter itself can become more responsive to spirit, to the power of divine Compassion. This occurrence heralds the coming of a future humanity, whose bodies will be finer instrumentalities allowing for a better attunement with spiritual Qualities. The recent process of the "dematerialization" of matter in the development of subatomic physics, Teilhard de Chardin's spiritualized vision of matter (see his beautiful **Hymn to Matter**), and the life-work of Sri Aurobindo and Mother Mira in Pondicherry, India, may be precursorial indications of an eventual planetary transformation. The negative aspect of the transformation would of course be a cataclysmic nuclear war destroying most of present day mankind. Yet if not total, such a destruction might leave a small number of positive human mutants out of whom a new species would grow (perhaps with cells or bodies more translucent to the light of spirit and dynamized by a higher vibration of the life force).

The Cyclic Process of Spiritual Embodiment - 4

The Cycle of Man and its pancultural fulfillment

The process I have outlined above deals only with a single spiritual Quality — only one of a myriad of aspects of the creative Word (Logos) — and a single series of personalities magnetically drawn to this single aspect. Billions of these processes are now at work, their earliest phases having taken place in societies forgotten long ago. In most of them, a person now living is a rather narrowly circumscribed system of organization dominated by biological drives, by the assumptions and imperatives of his or her culture, and by the desires, emotions, and expectations of an insecure, constantly shifting center of gravity, the ego; and previous personalities in the series probably felt, acted, and thought in much the same way, at a similar level of consciousness in various cultures.

Instead of focusing attention upon these series of persons, each attracted (mostly unconsciously) by a particular spiritual Quality, one can as well think primarily of the gradual evolution of cultures through the millions of years mankind has been active on earth. Each culture is also a whole, a system of organization giving a particular structure and character to a collectivity of human beings, a society. This structure concretizes an archetype of interpersonal and social relatedness, according to the possibilities of a region of the biosphere and the need of the human species at a particular stage of the planet's evolution. Cultures are systems of collective living, which gradually form, mature, and disintegrate either rapidly or through a slow process of senescence and institutional sclerosis. They usually leave some kind of mental or perhaps spiritual harvest to future societies, and all these harvests contribute to the development of the earth's noosphere — that is, the planetary Mind. But even this Mind is not the ultimate reality of the planet. A planetary spiritual realm corresponds to the spiritual entity in the total organization of a human being.

To think of the whole earth as a system of organization encompassing all levels of activity and consciousness, from the most material to the most spiritual, may be difficult for people whose conception of "being" has been limited by Western traditions. However, there is no longer any reason to remain blind to the amazingly well-organized interactions integrating every component of the planet into a single organism, able to maintain the balance of its functions, heal, and transform itself. This planetary organism has a physical-material basis of rocks, minerals, water, and soil; and a biosphere gradually develops on it. As vegetable and animal species evolve and become increasingly interrelated and interdependent, ecosystems take form and at least rudimentary forms of collective psychism evolve in them, especially as animal, and later primitive human societies, appear.

As the contents of this psychic realm become ever more conscious and mental through the operations of human cultures and socioreligious institutions, the planetary Mind or noosphere becomes a relatively independent field for which the archetypes of many cultures provide structures relevant to the needs of human collectivities. The highest levels of this noosphere can be considered the base of operation from which planetary or cosmic forces radiate into the whole earth. They may correspond to what Sri Aurobindo called the

"overmind," beyond which he envisions a "supermind" referring to the planetary dharma (or supreme "Truth") of humanity.

From such a point of view, the planetary function of humanity as a whole is to develop a network of integrated mental consciousness progressively filling the noosphere with the harvest of significant and revealing experiences left by every culture. Archetypally, Man is the being in charge of giving meaning to every activity within the planetary organism — meaning in relation to the whole; meaning which includes much more than sense-data and rationalistic interpretations. Ultimately, this meaning includes a full awareness of the original archetype structuring the various activities within the entire planet — and much more than the archetypal structure. The "omega-state" is not only a perfect realization of the "alpha-creative" release. At least in principle, it also includes a plus factor which is essentially unpredictable — the spiritual harvest of meaning produced by the magic of relatedness, by the unceasing interaction between all existents within the planetary field.

The factor of interrelatedness should never be ignored. It is ignored if one believes that a single individual alone can reach a state of being identical to the state which the Communion of co-conscious and co-active perfected human beings (the Pleroma) can attain at the close of a great planetary cycle. Inasmuch as a self-conscious individual human being is a whole, he or she can experience Wholeness and be "illuminated" or "initiated" in terms of the "divine Marriage" mentioned above. But the illumination an individual can receive is always colored by the particularity of the spiritual Quality (the Letter of the creative Word) which constitutes his or her spiritual identity. At the level of any particular being, light is colored; or perhaps we should speak of luminescence rather than light. A red radiation may be extremely intense, but it does not contain the entire spectrum of solar light human beings consider "white."

Modern students of esoteric philosophy (though evidently it is no longer "esoteric"!) speak of seven "cosmic Rays" emanating from the originating release of divine power; and such a sevenfold differentiation of a primordial creative release seems almost universally accepted by esoteric philosophies (though in some instances only five streams of power are mentioned publicly). If the one creative release beginning the cycle divides at once into seven streams of power, it is logical to expect that at the close of the cycle the complex interrelatedness of seven groups of perfected human beings is needed to produce the **synthesis of meanings** out of which the one white Light would emerge as a supreme final realization, balancing, as it were, the primordial unity of the creative Word.

The problem implied in the preceding paragraphs is encountered at every level of existence, because at every level an organized system — an existent — is **both** a whole and a participant in the field of activity (and also in the consciousness) of a greater, more encompassing whole. Every whole is a manifestation of Wholeness, but only at the level at which it actually operates. The greater whole in which its activity takes place contains many other existential units that are also wholes, all of which perform only limited functions in the organism of the greater whole. As every whole is therefore at the same time whole and part, it may identify itself either with its own wholeness — with its own sense of being a complete system — or with its "partness," that is, with the function it performs not only **in** but also **for** the greater whole.

Every whole that has reached the human stage of self-consciousness theoretically can have an experience of Wholeness **relative to the level** at which it primarily functions. Yet the experience of Wholeness at the biological level has not the same scope and quality as the experience of Wholeness at the sociocultural or personal level. A human body may experience Wholeness as health and vitality, in terms of the quality defining yet limiting everything that is born and has matured in the earth's biosphere. At the level of personhood, Wholeness is experienced in terms of sociocultural values. The experience of Wholeness is thus **qualified** by the dynamic character and intensity of the activity and the consciousness of the experiencing whole. In this sense it is "colored" by the place the experiencer occupies in the entire cycle of being.

If the whole reaching its cyclic climax results from the integration of a spiritual entity and an individual person perfectly attuned to it, the experience of Wholeness includes the spiritual harvest of a long series of personalities brought to a focus in the concluding "divine Marriage." The quality of the experience could be called "panpersonal" as well as spiritual. At the level of the Pleroma, it presumably is "panhuman" and planetary; all "Rays" (and sub-Rays) and the harvest of all the cultures of human evolution contribute to it. Thus one can symbolize it as perfect, all-inclusive "whiteness" — hence the symbolic appellation, "White Lodge." In the ultimate moment of planetary consummation (the symbolic "Last Day"), the whole earth should experience planetary Wholeness in its fullness. Beyond planetary Wholeness one can envision an experience of heliocosmic Wholeness in which the entire solar system (helios=sun, cosmos=all-inclusive system) would fully experience both its unity and its cosmic meaning.

The human mind with its passion for reducing every possibility of experience to some quantitative value, when faced with the logical impossibility of placing an end to the series of ever more encompassing wholes, can only take cover under the negative, pseudo-idea of infinity — just as the mystic speaks of timelessness when, for a moment having paralyzed in his consciousness the operation of the principle of Multiplicity, he or she experiences an ecstasy of oneness. For the "mind of wholeness" all great experiences are both all-inclusive and qualitative. Wholeness is. At whatever level it is experienced, it is unquantitized Wholeness — neither small nor vast, because satisfied in being what it is, filled with the serenity of plenitude of being, illumined with the peace that glows with the "light" of a harmony in which all motions are balanced. Where such a plenitude and such a perfection of polarized movements exist, there is neither small nor large, neither time nor infinity — only Wholeness, undefinable because the defining mind is totally absorbed in the immeasurable peace of totally "being."

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Principle of Holarchy and the Interplay of Horizontal and Vertical Relationships - 1

The mention of vertical relationships brings to mind a picture of a hierarchical structure, which in turn suggests a descending series of levels of authority. A decision, usually taking the form of an order or a set of rules to be imposed on lower levels, is transmitted downward from level to level. Such hierarchical structures operate in the Catholic Church, in the military, in national governments, and in all large business organizations. From the point of view of the many **individual units** operating at the descending levels, these collective sociopolitical or religious institutions are hierarchies of **command**. The activities of individuals at the lower levels, and in totalitarian organizations even their thoughts, are governed by the will and decisions of their superiors.

From another point of view, however, a hierarchy is a series of **structures**. The top structure contains a number of smaller structures at the next level below, which in turn contain many still less encompassing structures, and so on, all the way down the structural ladder to the smallest grouping of units. Such a structure is a hierarchy of **containment**.

The hierarchy of wholes (that is, of systems of organization) occurring in nature operates mainly on the basis of the principle of containment. The physical universe accessible to human perceptions contains billions of galaxies, each containing millions of star-systems with (or without) planets; a planet contains trillions of simple and complex living organisms, and each cell contains myriads of molecules, each containing atoms, and so on. While the universe thus pictured is a hierarchy of wholes, it need not be interpreted as a hierarchy of command, unless one imagines an all-powerful God at the top of the cosmic hierarchy. The will and mind of such a God would not only have worked out the entire system and set the rules for its operation at every level, but somehow would always direct and control the behavior of the innumerable components of the universal whole, either directly or through a hierarchy of spiritual beings.

The typical Western scientist does not approach the universe by investigating a vast organization based from the beginning on a hierarchical series of structures. He or she is concerned primarily with immediately observable, separate entities whose activities have such an integrated, persistent, and repetitive character that they can be considered and defined as "wholes." These, when possessing identical features in their organization, are further classified into increasingly larger groups and species, each of which is precisely described, named, and categorized.

Recently, however, a few biologists and philosophers of science have begun to think of larger systems within which a vast number of different classes of beings interact, each following a definite and interrelated function within the whole. Thus they have come to realize that all the living organisms within a definable region (plus the region's soil, water, atmosphere, and climatic processes) constitute an ecosystem; and a myriad of ecosystems in turn constitutes the planetary system or life-field (biosphere). Thus a trend toward envisioning an ascending hierarchical series of wholes of increasing magnitude is

beginning to balance the urge that for several centuries has driven classical Western science to use analytical procedures to discover ever more about ever more restricted wholes — to know, as Einstein said, "more and more about less and less." This new trend may mean knowing less and less about ever more encompassing wholes, but it also should provide a more balanced and realistic understanding of the processes implied in vertical relationships, because these processes work two ways. Entities or systems active at lower levels affect entities or systems active at higher levels, just as those at the higher influence and in various degrees control the behavior of wholes at the lower levels.

In addition to vertical relationships linking greater and lesser wholes, horizontal relationships link units operating at a basically similar level of activity and consciousness (always using the term **consciousness** in its broadest sense, not merely with reference to the self-consciousness or objective consciousness of human beings). Such levels may be defined, not only at the biological level, according to the usual biological classification of family, genus, species, and so on, but also at the sociocultural level in terms of nations, religions, social castes or classes, income groups, age groups or generations, education, or even neighborhoods. Today the peer group has become especially important, because of the general trend toward an increasingly egalitarian and popular society and popular culture. This trend, which is fostered by the media and by a constantly spreading concern with problems of strictly personal relationships and personal growth in terms of material, social, and individual success, is the latest aspect of the drive toward individualism and theoretical democracy in Western culture. The latter have been developing since the Renaissance and in science and philosophy have taken the form of an "atomistic" rather than "holistic" approach to reality.

The Principle of Holarchy and the Interplay of Horizontal and Vertical Relationships - 2

Holism and a hierarchy of levels

The official trend in modern science is still mainly atomistic and focuses considerable attention on horizontal relationships — a focusing which is even more dominant in sociology, politics, and popular psychology. The new trend toward the holistic approach offers a logical basis on which a more inclusive concept of vertical relationships can develop. A passage from the book **Accent on Form** by L. L. Whyte, a British philosopher of science, may be worth quoting here, because it provides apt characterizations of these two approaches. According to Whyte, the "Atomistic School" of knowledge has been represented in the European past by "Leucippus, Democritus, Gassendi, Newton, Boyle, Dalton and contemporary atomic physicists" (his book was written in 1953); among the leaders of the "Holistic School" he lists "Goethe, Bergson, the Gestalt psychiatrists, Whitehead, and Jan Smuts."³⁹

The classical atomistic doctrine asserts that the universe is made up of ultimate particles, each of which is simple, indivisible, and permanent. All observable changes are due to the reversible spatial rearrangements of these particles resulting from their motions and mutual influences. The particles although small must be of a finite size or effectively occupy a definite volume of space, since a finite number of them make up ordinary objects. Moreover if atomism is to work there must be very few different kinds of ultimate particles, for the aim is to simplify our view of nature. The complexity of observed phenomena is to be accounted for as the result of the motion of units which are each simple and permanent. This program had the great advantage that it gave physical measurement and mathematic reasoning something to grip. . .

The holistic view . . . regards the universe as a great hierarchy of unities, each following its own path of historical development. Each pattern, whether it is a crystal, an organism, a community, the solar system, or a spiral nebula, possesses its own internal order and is part of a more extensive order, so that the universe is recognized as a System of systems, a Grand Pattern of patterns. Every whole with all its parts is subject to developmental changes which cannot be adequately represented as the mere reversible motions of independent particles.⁴⁰

These two schools of thought are not mutually exclusive; Whyte foresaw their harmonization in a "School of Elegant Structure combining an intuition of the whole with the analytical recognition of detail." Since the late 1960s, an important group of philosophers of science, including Ludwig von Bertalanffy and Erwin Laszlo, has indeed been developing a "general system theory" and a "systems philosophy" in which what I call a "whole of being" is more generally and abstractly referred to as a "system." The two

³⁹ Jan Smuts, the South African philosopher-statesman prominent during the formulation of the League of Nations at the end of World War I, wrote in 1926 a seminal book, **Holism and Evolution**, which provides a new interpretation of evolution in the broadest sense of the term. It was Smuts who coined the words **holism** and **holistic**; the popular use of the latter may or may not always be justified.

⁴⁰ **Accent on Form** by L. L. Whyte (New York, 1954) pp. 53f

aspects of the principle of relatedness — vertical and horizontal — have been mentioned and their implications studied both by "esoteric" groups (for example, the Arcane School founded by Alice Bailey) and philosophers of science, especially Arthur Koestler in his books **The Ghost in the Machine** and **Janus: A Summing Up**.⁴¹ Koestler spoke of the universe as the "holarchy," using a new word which I also had coined, entirely unaware that he already had done so. But he uses the word in a somewhat different sense from my own use, he speaks of "the" holarchy as if it were an entity, while I consider holarchy as a principle of organization.

Several basic questions pertaining to relationships (especially vertical ones) are: How fundamentally different are the activities and the characters of entities operating at the different levels? What are these levels? How few or numerous are they? One can have in mind a few distinct realms (cosmic and planetary, spiritual and material) or one can refer only to levels of organization, authority, or power in the sphere of politics, religion, and culture.

When intensely democratic or "new age" enthusiasts proclaim the basic value of horizontal relationships and denounce all vertical relationships — even in the family — as obsolete and destructive of the supreme rights of each individual to meet all other persons as equals, the words **vertical** and **horizontal** refer only to the level of culture and personhood. Such persons dream of a society entirely controlled by egalitarian principles; a society in which all persons operate at the same level as theoretically self-conscious and responsible sociopolitical atoms. In such a sociopolitical cultural system a person is a characterless unit, an abstract number in vote tabulations and popular polls and in proliferating statistical researches undertaken by commercial or other special interests. Total egalitarianism and absolute individualism are analogous in social terms to what the end of the process of entropy is thought to be in physics. In actual fact, there always are among equals — some who are "more equal."⁴² Any perspicacious advocate of horizontal equality should rightfully challenge and transform any system of social or political organization in which hierarchical structures are rigidly set — and especially in which power, wealth, or educational privileges are inherited. In such organizations hierarchical structures constitute a hierarchy of command, not of containment.

At one time a feudal lord was believed to own all the land and people living around his large, fortified castle; but his subjects found refuge within the castle's walls when the land was attacked. In that sense at least, the lord "contained" his subjects; they existed within his sphere of containment, the realm where his power was effective. This realm was like a mandala whose center was the castle and its chapel. At least in principle, the lord acted "in the name of" the realm and all it contained. He provided security to those he ruled. The relationship was indeed vertical but theoretically impersonal; it was given a

⁴¹ Arthur Koestler, **The Ghost in the Machine** (New York: Macmillan, 1968); **Janus: A Summing Up** (Vintage Books, New York, 1978).

⁴² For a discussion of the concept of equality, see my books **We Can Begin Again — Together**, pp. 46-51 and **Culture, Crisis and Creativity**, pp. 161-65.

vital, ritualized character. Being vital it also was sacred, because at that time religion was still fundamentally vitalistic, in spite of its transcendent beliefs. Vertical relationship is implied whenever one can truly speak of ritual.

A vertical relationship links at least two or in most cases three basically different levels of being. The cultural level at which the ritualized and sacred act is performed is not only rooted in biological values; the rite also reflects a transcendent spiritual reality the scope of which is all-human and planetary. Any truly powerful and inherently transformative symbols, myths, or rites should be considered instrumentalities consciously or unconsciously intended to serve as channels of communication (or links) between the level of spiritual process (archetypes) and that of living organisms (the biosphere).

The Principle of Holarchy and the Interplay of Horizontal and Vertical Relationships - 3

The person-Pleroma relation

In the hierarchy of systems presented in this book, four basic levels can be clearly defined: matter, life, culture (and its central product, personhood), and the Pleroma state of all-encompassing planetary wholeness. In an analogy derived from vegetation, **matter** is the humus and the root; **life** is the power of the sap which transmutes the material of the soil into stems and leaves; **culture** is the flower whose color and perfume represent personhood; and the seed symbolizes the autonomous, self-contained individual. The **Pleroma** refers to the whole vegetable species whose power is potentially focused into every seed.

Each of these basic levels has sublevels. The kind of experiences persons and individuals have at the social, political, and religious sublevels of the cultural level at which they mainly function evidently conditions the value they give to horizontal and vertical relationships. During the individualistic phase of the evolution of human consciousness, because horizontal relationships are more in tune with the process of developing self-reliance, autonomy, and personal responsibility, they tend to be considered more basic and wholesome than vertical relationships. Yet one tends to think favorably of the latter when one is at the top level of a hierarchy of command; one's ego enjoys giving orders or healing or "saving" distraught people! Relationships based on such interactions, however, are not really vertical; they do not imply the containment of numerous small structures by a larger one. Moreover, in a truly vertical relationship, while a single entity operating at the higher level may control, direct, or inspire the actions or mental processes of entities at a lower level, the motivation for control and the type of power used belong to the higher realm of being.

A vertical relationship is at work when a person deliberately makes a physical gesture. The relationship is vertical because a human being operating at this level of personhood (perhaps in order to follow a practice imposed or suggested by his culture or religion) affects biological activity by controlling the electro-chemical reaction of the cells in his body's nervous system and muscles. The level of personhood and social processes constantly interacts with the biological level of cells, organs, and systems through thoughts, emotions, and acts of will; and cells can perform their biological functions only when vertically related to their many component molecules. Such interactions are far from being understood well.

By extension (but through different processes which are even less understood) vertical interactions can be assumed to occur, or at least may occur when required conditions are present, between human persons and beings operating at the Pleroma level. These interactions can be viewed from two perspectives. A person may have devotional, religious, and mystical experiences during which a contact seems to be established with transcendent beings (or with a human guru who speaks and acts in their name), or perhaps with a one and only God in whom all spiritual values are condensed, yet with whom a "dialogue" is possible. Impelled by a poignant or precise personal need, the

human being initiates the relationship with prayer, invocation, or even magical incantation. Remarkable transformative changes may result; but from the point of view of modern psychology the transformation probably would be interpreted as the resolution of psychological conflicts. The psychologist would refuse to accept the possibility of an actual vertical relationship with a superpersonal divine being who is aware of the human prayer and responds to it in a quasi-miraculous way.

From the holarchic point of view, beings operating at the Pleroma level not only can respond to a human call for assistance; they are impelled by their essential nature (supreme Compassion) to seek to interact with and exert pressure upon men and women operating at the level of personhood — the level the Pleroma beings have experienced and transcended. Another interpretation of such compassionate action is that the greater whole, the earth, is relating itself vertically to and affecting the many lesser wholes (human beings) it contains; but such an interpretation makes sense only if one realizes that the planet is a living, thinking, spiritual system, not merely a mass of matter.

The earth thinks **through** humanity at the level of the human mind and, in a different way, at the archetypal and spiritual level of the Pleroma mind. The Pleroma **as a whole** radiates the fullness of God's power and light; but each of its component beings "belongs" to only one of the colors (or "Rays") which in their togetherness constitute this divine power and light. Thus a Pleroma being may be understood to act as a power of attraction for individual persons who resonate to the same basic spiritual vibration (Tone or Ray). However, these beings should not be considered individuals with personal names, but vortices of power and spiritual Qualities, centers of consciousness and activity within the one Pleroma, the "spiritual Body," of the earth. This may be what Paul sought to symbolize as the "mystical Body of Christ," but the word "body" is confusing. If it is a "body," its archetypal form must have been latent since the beginning of humanity; it is developing only gradually (one might say, cell by cell) as human individuals one by one pass from the level of personhood to that of the Pleroma.

Esoteric traditions refer to the arduous process of this passage as **the Path**. This process, and even the preparation for the more or less definite event that starts it, involves not only a vertical "upward" movement of the individual person aspiring to a new state of being, but an equally vertical "descent" of the Pleroma focused by one of the great beings whose vibrations can best stimulate a response in the aspirant to radical transformation. Metaphysical consistency indeed impels us to believe that the action from above **precedes** the personal reaction at the lower, existential level. Spirit is the integrative power. It constantly seeks (impersonally of course and because of its very nature) to establish relationships linking a spiritual Quality to a personality that **might** give it concrete actualization.

When such a vertical relationship is established, at first only as a temporarily effective contact, the lower pole (the individual person) may not even be aware that anything unusual is happening. If the person is aware, his or her mind, which probably is still heavily conditioned by rigid cultural and religious beliefs, may interpret the awareness in terms of such beliefs. In most cases, the contact operates either through the field of mental or intuitive discovery (inspiration) or as a powerful feeling-experience — perhaps the

feeling of a subliminal presence. Only in rare cases is the physical shape or outline of an actual being seen or a voice heard. In such cases a psychiatrist, or even friends or family, are likely to respond to any mention of the appearance by calling it a hallucination; indeed reports or experiences of such appearances or voices may not be easily distinguished from apparently similar ones occurring during psychotic episodes. The possibility exists, at least in some cases, that "psychotic episodes" may be preludes to or intimations of spiritual transformations which become aborted, partly because of the incomprehension and lack of support met by the psychically distraught yet (for a brief moment) spiritually open person.

Both the process of developing personhood (the condensation and integration of the emotional and intellectual elements fostered by a culture) and the process of individualization (the emergence of an individual out of the cultural matrix) almost inevitably produce a residue of irrelevant psychic movements — unassimilated images, symbols, and concepts that block or deviate the flow of the inner personal life. This residual material can be compared to the more or less toxic waste products disgorged by factories in the production of culturally and socially useful objects. These waste products may combine, lead an unnoticed life of their own, and often poison the "water" and "air" (the collective psychism) of a culture-whole.

Moreover, a culture's attempts to build a collectively accepted religious system to comfort sinners, and especially to give mental or moral support to persons eagerly but confusedly aspiring to a state of more-than-human perfection and bliss, always tend to result in a rigid and materialistic establishment. As a religion becomes institutionalized — and like any institution seeks societal and psychic powers, self-perpetuation and expansion — a vast psychic network of distorted images of spiritual reality and misinterpreted metaphysical concepts is produced. These images and labels also assume a psychic life of their own, and the unwary may feel certain that these are indeed the forms or voices of the great founders of religions, planetary Pleroma beings who originally had sought to sow the "seeds" of some of the values of their realm into the soil of the culture's beginnings.

Especially in times of personal or social crisis, "false gods" often act as substitutes for Pleroma beings, because inherently devotional and insecure people, unable to think of spiritual realities in terms of basic principles, easily confuse these simulacra with the true models. Such confusions and misinterpretations of formations of the psychic (or "astral") realm are always to some degree the product of collective fears and emotional insecurity. Many people whose minds lack individualized formative power are impelled to worship the idols fascinating their community, their peer group, or even their entire culture.

At its mountain source, a culture is pure; its symbols and myths are attempts to give concrete form to a spiritual Quality (or set of Qualities) seeking exteriorization because "the time and the season" for it has come in the process of cosmic or planetary evolution. But after crossing human plains and being filled with the waste products and psychic poisons of many cities, the river is often not much better than a glorified sewer. The people who drink its water have become mainly if not exclusively concerned with diverting some of the river's flow for their own personal use or profit. They fight for their "rights" to own and sell it and perhaps proclaim that they have purified what they sell: all this in terms of

the horizontal interplay (often a war) of societal relationships colored by greed and the will to power. Inevitably, some day, a great drought will occur. Somewhere else the compassionate Pleroma-rain will generate a new source, and eventually a new culture will flourish.

The Principle of Holarchy and the Interplay of Horizontal and Vertical Relationships - 4

It is logical to assume that, as there are levels of activity and consciousness below personhood at which entities (atoms, molecules, cells) operate, there also should be levels above personhood and a more encompassing type of beings active and conscious in such realms. However, the materialistic thinker will not be satisfied by the statement that convincing experiences of the real existence of such level are available to those ready and willing to take the arduous steps required to contact such superhuman beings. The materialist asks, "If such entities exist, why can't I perceive them with my senses or detect their activity through my instruments capable of identifying the paths of subatomic particles?" The answer, at the philosophic level, rests on the meaning one is willing to give to the term **existence**. Can there not be several kinds of existence? Another, more symbolical answer might be, "Could the cells of the hands of Michelangelo see and especially appreciate the beauty of the Sistine Chapel?"

As members of relatively advanced societies, human beings now are aware that we are parts of a vast system of activities we call the earth. We realize that it is part of a solar system (a heliocosm) whose central source of energy is the sun. But what do we know of the level of consciousness and activity at which this heliocosm operates? At our level of human consciousness, we can be aware of heliocosmic reality only to the extent that Michelangelo's hands, at their level, knew of molecular activities, nerve currents and muscular contractions. If we cannot assume that these cells were conscious of the total activity of the painter body, let alone of his mind, religious feelings, and of the beliefs of the Catholic Church, why should we find it strange that we cannot perceive all the components of our planet and be conscious of what might be the feelings and spontaneous reactions of the earth? Michelangelo's hand; may have trembled under the tension of his physical exertion — and the earth also shakes! How could we know what the sun in its two hundred million year dance around the galaxy feels and thinks, or indeed what the sun really is **at its cosmic level**, when we, merely human beings, do not live even a hundred years and our proud and assertive science is basically five hundred years old? The eleven-year sunspot cycle may simply result from the beating of a heliocosmic heart whose plasma-type substance obeys definite rhythms of subatomic (or transatomic) activity.

This is not said to claim basic validity for the Hermetic principle of correspondence "As above, so below," which is an uncertain basis for realistic knowledge of whatever exists at superpersonal and spiritual levels. Correspondences of such a nature are only symbolic, at least to present-day intellects. But **everything** human beings think about is symbolic, including their own individual selfhood. When a person says "I am," he or she makes a symbolic statement condensing a multitude of feelings, sensations, and memories; the statement integrates them into an assertion of being which, moreover, claims that this "beingness" is different from the beingness of any other claimant to the prerogatives of "I."

Similarly, any claim to vertical relationship with a Pleroma being is founded upon the condensation and interpretation (conscious or unconscious) of many inner feelings and

experiences. If clear-cut, descriptive statements are made concerning the supernal pole of the relationship, what is said should be based on holarchic principles. Such statements should not be based merely on the transposition of characteristics and events belonging to the level of personhood and culture to an only ambiguously transcendent level of being. If a cell of Michelangelo's hand imagines the painter's hands and body as huge spheroids containing the same kind of molecular constructs as itself, and the same type of relationships between them, such an image evidently is unrealistic. Yet this is what many theologians and "esotericists" constantly do.

Because the concept of holarchy rests on the principle of containment — of the lesser by the greater — if the lesser operates in terms of matter, the greater also must have a material aspect; but, to the greater consciousness, matter may appear different from the way it does to the lesser mind fed only with sense data. For instance, when a modern esotericist speaks of a meeting of the White Lodge in terms reminiscent of the board of directors of a multi-national corporation, such a personalized social interpretation cannot give a true picture of the situation at the Pleroma level. Nevertheless, though the Pleroma level of planetary being transcends the level of personhood and culture, it also must include the lower level in a transformed or transubstantiated aspect. A Pleroma being probably retains something of the structural character and quality he or she had when, as the last of a series of persons, he or she experienced the "divine Marriage" of person and spiritual Quality; but the substantial aspect of such a being must be matter of a type ordinary human beings find almost impossible to perceive — etheric matter of a high order. Matter is energy stabilized in a structure or field; and at the level of personhood on this planet, this stabilization assumes a particular character attuned to the possibility of human perception and response. When the level of individual personhood is transcended, another mode of formation of energy undoubtedly operates.

Unfortunately, the contemporary ego-mind usually is unready and unwilling to think of itself as a participant in a greater planetary whole at a level less than the highest possible on this earth. At the same time it is afraid to let go of the limitations defining our present personal state of consciousness, feeling, and behaving — a state which a Pleroma being (at the level at which he or It essentially operates) obviously has transcended. Our human minds usually cling to their personal, emotional, and biological limitations. Therefore, consciously or not, we interpret the hierarchical concept of structural organization in terms of familiar hierarchies of command — religious, sociopolitical, and military groups, which operate in terms of levels of governing power. The men on top of the system **demand** to be obeyed or served by persons operating at the lower levels; and in one way or another they can enforce such demands, often ruthlessly.

Yet heads of state with enormous power as individual persons can be far less mature and spiritually developed than the people from whom they exact often senseless service — for example, in war. The individuals at the controls of sociocultural "greater wholes" have, it is true, usually won their powerful offices by sustained, arduous efforts which would have been beyond the capacities of average citizens or religionists; nevertheless, while in power they remain most of the time as personally and egocentrically human as the people they command. The secret agent sent by army headquarters (or an equivalent of the CIA)

to discover certain crucial facts his superiors need to know, performs a dangerous act on behalf of his or her national "greater whole." If caught, such a person may remain silent even while being tortured — his or her individual will be steeled by the realization that the fate of the nation depends on such courage. Yet his or her commander in the home office or the White House, though a superior in a vertical sociopolitical relationship, may be a rather insignificant or pompous person in the horizontal civilian relationship of person to person.

In other words, at the cultural and sociopolitical level, the quality of the person may not match the power of the office. Social, political, religious, and corporate hierarchies concern offices, not persons. Human beings working at lower hierarchical levels need not as persons feel inferior to the top executives. These vertical relationships link offices and functions, not people per se. Nevertheless, the relationship between an executive and an employee also may have very personal, horizontal elements; and when this occurs, a deeply confusing situation is created. The more the social class system is abolished, the greater the confusion, especially if the sociopolitical organization has a de facto totalitarian character.

When I speak of vertical relationships, I am not referring to such ambiguous social situations but to interactions between two definite and unquestionably different levels of evolutionary development. The difference of levels is not merely a matter of offices with accompanying titles, uniforms, or other badges of social power or wealth, but one of essential being. It cannot be measured quantitatively, for it implies having passed through a process of radical, qualitative transformation. And the fact that such a transformation has occurred is evident to all who also have experienced such a process. It does not have to be "certified" by sociocultural or religious documents.

The Principle of Holarchy and the Interplay of Horizontal and Vertical Relationships - 5

The formation of groups: Family and peer groups

The importance of groups in modern society is increasing. But contemporary theories of group formation and group interactions are dominated by individualistic, egalitarian, and idealistic attitudes. These attitudes also are reflected in the approach taken by modern science for several centuries to explain the development of the universe. From the astrophysical point of view, the universe evolved after an unexplained — and unexplainable — enormous release of energy that almost at once transformed itself into some kind of protomatter. The original space then filled with an immense number of particles which, unorganized and moving at random, yet according to "laws" whose origin also is unexplained, eventually **came together**, forming increasingly large units. Evolution is therefore the result of a constantly more inclusive aggregation or gradual organization of elements which all operate at the same general level of existence. Evolution is a one-way process. At the sociocultural level it has been glorified as "progress." But can one explain this progress simply on the basis of a more or less fortuitous "coming together" of elements — be they atoms, molecules, or human beings?

In the mid-eighteenth century the French-Swiss philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau took great pains to try to show that primitive societies were formed as the result of a "social contract" in which all the would-be members agreed to follow at least basic rules. Perhaps he was influenced by the event that took place about two hundred years earlier on the Mayflower — the signing of the contract by the Pilgrims who were escaping religious persecution in their native land. However, in the light of what is known of primitive societies and of the gradual emergence of human faculties out of the unconscious depths of animal instincts, Rousseau's concept is senseless. The process of formation of any society is dominated first by biological facts and needs. Only later do the results of the participants' conscious and deliberate interactions become dominant. To a very large extent, the character of the associative relationships that develop through cooperative activity results from the nature of a particular environment which the original settlers did not choose, but to which they were compulsively attracted.

Even more incontrovertibly, the same is true of the relationship between newborn babies and their parents. This is a compulsive as well as vertical relationship, in the sense that the parents fundamentally act — or at least should act in all societies operating in a natural manner — not as individuals but as beings charged with the perpetuation of the human species. **Through** its parents the newborn is related to homo sapiens, first in a strictly biological sense, then at the sociocultural level in terms of the religion and culture to which the parents belong and which it is (or until recently was felt to be) their religious and social duty to perpetuate through their progeny. Therefore, the parent-child relationship should **not** be considered essentially horizontal. Horizontal relationships begin when siblings are present; but these occur **within** the theoretically well-defined field of activity constituted by the family.

During the twentieth century, there has been constantly increasing stress upon individualism and personal self-expression, even in very young children whose behavior is mostly imitative (or in some cases polarized by distaste, fear, and revolt). As a result the quality of relationships desired within the family group has become confused with the quality of relationships appropriate within the peer groups in which family members participate. Naive, immature, or overly idealistic parents desire to be "pals" with their young and (even more) adolescent children. Parents no longer are able, or even willing, to accept and perform their **archetypal functions**. Having lost its archetypal character, the family is no longer, or at least not effectively and significantly, the next "greater whole" to which the child belongs. If the child does not learn to grow **within** this primordial greater whole and does not feel that he or she belongs to it, later the child will encounter difficulty feeling a sense of belongingness to a still greater whole — to the community or nation and eventually to the largest experienceable wholes, humanity and the planet earth.

When such patterns of thwarted development pervade an entire society, the only relationships human beings can accept are with peers. These relationships are theoretically horizontal, though in fact they are not always so. Lacking a sense of belonging to an organic whole, modern pseudo-individuals envision peer groups as being formed by the coalescence of more or less randomly formed horizontal relationships (a picture which is reinforced in the United States by the restless, peripatetic nature of American society). This, of course, is the democratic ideal, as it has come to be understood by recent generations for whom all vertical relationships have become suspect. No great difference is recognized between the often oppressive if not tyrannical "verticality" of **social** relationships (employer-employee, governor-governed, general-private, and so on) and the hierarchical, containing character of the immense series of **natural and cosmic** wholes.

The issue may seem to refer only to social processes and to the place occupied in the modern world by the family and the multitude of peer-groups, unions, clubs, and societies bringing together people who have common interests; but it actually refers to the whole picture human beings make of their destiny and of the future developments of consciousness and activity on earth. This picture radically changes when seen in relation to the "model" of the cycle of being and the concept of holarchy I have presented. The evolution of the earth, humanity, cultures, groups and persons need no longer be interpreted and understood as a one-way aggregation of random contacts operating within the laws of attraction and repulsion (important as these laws are). It can be seen as a **two-way** process integrating the involution of forms (archetypes) and the evolution of material energy-systems. Separate elements — be they atoms, living organisms, persons, or groups — do not just come together; they are brought together. Pre-existing archetypal patterns of organization gradually bring together material elements — including at the sociocultural level, human beings — into structuring "fields of forces." The relationship between these archetypes and the elements that accept their morphogenetic pressures — albeit for a long time compulsively and instinctively, but eventually consciously — is truly vertical.

Such relationships become focused in various ways. Catalytic agents exist in chemistry; at the level of human evolution a similar function is performed by transpersonal agents

through whom the archetypal power of formation is able to operate in a mode appropriate to the human (personal or collective) needs that have to be met. The authority vested in a social, political, or religious office derives from the formative potency of the archetypal function the office is intended to perform in the larger operational system to which it belongs. This **authority** becomes **power** when used by the office-holder, by the "officiant" in the great ritual of society, business, or of culture — or, in a still broader sense, in the great ritual of the development of human consciousness toward Illumination. Yet if this power is to be used for personal profit and ego-aggrandizement, woe to the user generating such negative karma!

While the process of human existence implies vertical and horizontal relationships everywhere and at all times, the two types should not be confused with one another. At least in theory, the horizontal relationships of the great variety of peer-groups dominating our egalitarian society may seem the most common; but these are situations in which a person should consider himself or herself an instrument for the activation of a fundamentally vertical relationship. Nearly every man and woman acts as a channel for the release of the biological power invested in the human species as the greater whole to which they belong, whether they are conscious of belonging and so acting or not. That power uses them; they do not possess it.

Whoever becomes a focusing agent for the desired or unwelcomed activity of biological processes of embryonic formation establishes a vertical relationship to the product of this activity — a child. The relationship is potential in the mere fact of the production or presence of reproductive cells in one's body. However, these cells live their own lives. Their production or cyclic release generates powerful biopsychic currents. These currents seek to dominate the consciousness and the activity of the cell-holders — until somehow the consciousness, mind, and will have consummated the long and arduous rite of passage that leads to metabiological being and eventually the Pleroma state.

Similarly, but at the level of culture and religion, a person may act as a channel for the release of archetypal ideas. To the extent such a person acts as an agent for humanity (or for a particular section of it) his or her activity is transpersonal. It establishes a vertical relationship with the people who accept the validity of the formulation of the release and are moved and aroused to action by it. When a guru transmits to chelas a current of psychic power generated by a vast collectivity of spiritual entities — who as human beings had found inspiration and transcendent fulfillment in a particular "lineage" — the relationship between the disciple and the guru also is vertical (and usually devotional as well).

At the sociocultural level, the relationship between the creative genius (or even the formulator of a new approach revolutionizing collective behavior or business methods) and his or her public tends to be much less focused and more taken for granted. Moreover, as every person today is urged to be "creative" — which usually only means productive in a more or less personality-revealing way — the relationship of student or disciple to "master" has lost the quality it had in Medieval and Renaissance times. When "creativity" is reduced to technical proficiency or special expertise in a field of research, relationship

can only be horizontal. But where only horizontal relationships are accepted by "rational" minds, an inevitable compensation occurs. An irrational kind of activity fascinates an ever increasing number of persons; "mediums" multiply. Transpersonal activity finds in mediumship a shadowy twin; and the twain are not easily distinguished.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Transpersonal Activity versus Mediumship - 1

Because of the several meanings of the Latin prefix trans, the word **transpersonal** is ambiguous. For contemporary psychologists and participants in the "consciousness movement," the word applies to a state of being or consciousness **beyond** the personal level and to any direct or indirect attempt to experience or better understand such states. However, I have used the term since 1930 to represent action which takes place **through** a person, but which originates in a center of activity existing beyond the level of personhood. Such action makes use of human individuals to bring to focus currents of spiritual energy, supramental ideas, or realizations for the purpose of bringing about, assisting, or guiding transformative processes.⁴³

The word **through** also has several shades of meanings. It can mean **across** in a strictly spatial sense (as for instance a transatlantic line), or **by the intermediary of** — as something done "through" a person's influence. When one speaks of diffuse sunlight being focused through a lens, both of these meanings are implied; the light rays pass across the specially shaped piece of glass, but the **special form** given to the glass condenses the rays making them **more effective** in producing certain results, such as the production of heat.

A "transpersonal action" can refer to the release through a person of either a stream of transformative energy, perhaps able to produce seemingly miraculous results, or of information not normally available to the present-day mind. Nevertheless, the person **through** whom the power or the information is released cannot be merely **anyone**, any more than a lens can be any piece of glass. The personhood of the human being must have a special kind of **form** as well as unimpaired **translucency**. It must be sensitive to transpersonal impressions and attuned to the quality of being of the active source of what is conveyed, transmitted, or "transduced."

Any transpersonal action or communication implies, first of all, the existence of beings, or sources of power and information, beyond the level of personhood and culture, which is always intellectually and emotionally limited and to some degree exclusivistic. Such an implication, however, presents problems to the average intellectual person of our science-worshipping civilization. Intellectuals may be willing to peep through cracks in the walls of their rationalistic castles and to accept the possibility of discovering exalting vistas suggesting the wondrous nature of the country beyond the walls; they may be willing to learn techniques to pierce windows through the walls, perhaps even to make doors so that they can step outside. But if they do step out, they tend to see a blinding light under which

⁴³ To my knowledge I was the first to use the term — though C. G. Jung may already have used it in German without my being aware of it — in an article in the magazine **The Glass Hive** (1930) edited by Will Levington Comfort. The word came into wider use in 1968 when Abraham Maslow, Anthony Sutich, and other psychologists started the Association for Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, California.

everything seems to be a vast, all-encompassing oneness of being. If forms appear, they are given much the same separated, personalized character which familiar entities within the castle have always been understood to have.

This situation is bound to remain essentially unchanged and transpersonal activity will remain misunderstood in spite of everything psychologists and New Age devotees may say until certain concepts are understood. First, a clear picture of a hierarchy of levels and of modes of structural organization must be accepted and its full implications consciously grasped. Also the nature of and motivation for communication or transmission of power from the higher to the lower level must be interpreted on the basis of operative principles based on fundamental values, instead of being analyzed in quasi-intellectual and technical terms. Above all the distinction between mediumistic "communications" and transpersonal transmission (or, symbolically speaking, between a plain piece of glass and a carefully formed lens) must be made clear. If this distinction is not made, the ideal of transpersonal living may become negative and potentially dangerous. Indeed this is a possibility against which one must constantly guard. This requires that one must develop the capacity for discrimination, which in turn can be based only on fundamental principles, such as the principle of operative wholeness through hierarchical structures, that is, holarchy.

When fully reliable, discrimination implies the activity of a mind both free from cultural fashions and aware of archetypal principles of organization and of an intuition able to resonate to the particular quality being exteriorized (consciously or not) by whatever has called for discriminatory evaluation. An inner **feeling for value** has to be associated with an objective perception of the place and function anything occupies within the evolving situation (the cycle of activity) to which it belongs. Its proper place is the central factor in assessing the emotional character, significance, and value of anything, anyone, or any act. Where one belongs colors and often determines the quality of the relationships constituting any particular situation. This is especially true in situations claiming or implicitly believed to be transpersonal and thus to be the result of a relationship between two different levels of activity and/or consciousness.

What are these levels? What motivates the relationship? What is the mode of operation of the relationship and of the interaction between the related factors? Answers to these questions depend on the determination of the nature of the levels to which the related factors belong — thus on the ability to use discrimination. Such an ability requires not merely "feeling," but a mind capable of objectively perceiving the place, function, and motivation of the perhaps multiple elements of the **situation as a whole**.

Wholeness demands that any situation be approached as a whole. Analysis of a particular situation or experience may seem to reveal only horizontal relationships at work between entities existing at the same level of being; but this may be so only in relation to the surface actions and reactions of the participants. Vertical relationships also may be implied, and they may even be the basic factors if one or more of the participants in the

situation is deeply dissatisfied with, or only superficially belongs to, the level at which the situation apparently develops. Unfortunately, a truly holistic approach is often difficult to take and sustain, especially by human beings involved in the situation or when the situation includes persons used as transmitters by superior beings or who have become unconscious channels for the operation of catabolic forces.

An example is the traditional case of an Avatar **through** whom a divine being — or in more modern terms, the values and ideals of a new step in human evolution — "manifests" or reveals transformative ideas. The vertical character of the relationship between the physical person and the power or entity active through him or her should be clear to a perceptive, open-minded, and sensitive witness; but history dramatically proves that this is not so in the great majority of the cases. Today "reductionist" philosophers and psychologists insist that strictly personal factors and horizontal conflicts can explain everything about the Avatar's life. The same type of explanation may seem even more relevant concerning the creative activities — and some noncreative and seemingly strictly personal actions and reactions — in the lives of great artists or in the behavior and inner motives of statesmen and inventors whose actions have profoundly affected the way of life and the thinking of large collectivities.

From the holarchic point of view, this reductionist interpretation is superficial and essentially incomplete, even if welcomed by devotees of an egalitarian and nonhierarchical philosophy of life. Such an approach in music would reject the possibility of a polyphonic interplay of melodic lines, because music can only mean unison singing — as was the case in most ancient cultures. On the other hand, a great many people today — whether they consider themselves Spiritualists or refuse to accept such a label — are reductionists in reverse. They see their actions merely as a passive, guitar-like accompaniment to melodies that have little meaning and even less transformative impact — melodies believed to be played by a transcendent "spirit," a discarnate "soul," a "Master" whose name has come to public notice, or even "the Christ."

Transpersonal Activity versus Mediumship - 2

While the materialistic reductionist cannot see farther than his senses and analytical intellectual processes allow, the Spiritualist has not yet left the stage of subservience to forces belonging to the level of collective psychism and emotional mass-vibrations — collective hopes, fears, or expectations, which take control of the all-too-open "medium." In the past these forces may have been associated with the thought-forms, psychological tensions, or emotions of a once living, now deceased personality; but they also may be direct or inverted projections of inner confusion and longing with which the passive, undeveloped mind is unable to deal frontally and to integrate within an individualized structure of selfhood. Once the process of individualization is definitely under way, the vertical interaction of ascending and descending movements should be discernible in any situation which can be called ever so slightly creative, transformative, or revelatory. The two levels may not be ready for full interpenetration yet, but one should speak of interaction rather than action and reaction; for evolution is essentially a two-way process.

Several levels of activity can be distinguished in a present-day, developed human being; and all interact in various ways according to the particular person's stage of development. The two extreme levels may be succinctly called "spirit" and "matter," but the whole situation involves a definite spiritual Quality seeking precise and concrete actualization in a differentiated form (a person) of the material substance of our planet, according to a fundamental archetypal structure. To human beings with limited senses, the earthly substance is "physical"; but senses capable of responding to more subtle and differentiated vibrations would perceive finer substances, material formations, and vibratory energies. Theoretically, these exist in everyone already but are mostly latent; eventually the entire planet may experience a transmutation resulting in their concrete actualization. Thus the matter referred to in statements about the concluding omega stage of a great planetary cycle, when spirit and matter are to be integrated in a perfect form of being, is not the kind of substance that can be perceived or touched by today's gross senses or coarse hands. It will have to be a materiality so sensitive and attuned to the vibrations of spiritual Qualities that a process of total harmonization and interpenetration can be consummated at least partially.

This consummation can occur only **within and through** an adequate form or structure; otherwise, however valuable the results may be, one can speak only of mediumship. Thus a process of form-building is required. It is a process that unfolds in two phases: first, in terms of collective structuring (a culture and systems of social organization), then in terms of the individualization of persons from the collective cultural matrices. The building of the form (or alchemical vessel) required for the harmonization and interpenetration of a spiritual Quality and a particular type of earth-materials is the work of **mind**. The human mind operates at two levels: the level of archetypes (**formulas of organization**, which are not concrete entities until human beings imagine them that way), and the level of collective cultural and personal (or egocentric) structuring.

Initially, personhood is merely a **particularization** of a culture-whole's collective structures (symbols, myths, traditional beliefs, modes of thinking, feeling, behaving, and

relating). Persons are differentiated cultural structures adequate for performing communal functions. They **are** what they **do**, and the nature of the doing is determined primarily by biological particularities (physique, temperament, ancestral lineage). Yet **individual** selfhood is a potentiality present in every specimen of homo sapiens; what at first was only an "overtone" contained in the inclusive "fundamental tone" of a culture can become itself a fundamental tone — a creative origin. But with rare, super-normal exceptions, this potentiality can develop only through an arduous process of individualization involving personal experiences of cathartic dissatisfaction (or "divine discontent"), reorientation, and self-induced mental and emotional repolarization. It is analogous to the musical operation of "modulating" to another level of structural organization (a new "key"). Psychologically speaking, the individual-in-the-making must modulate to the level of a centralized will and a truly autonomous selfhood. Only at that level can spirit and matter be harmonized and a spiritual Quality be able to irradiate and radiate through a physical human organism. The individual having his or her biological roots in that body then can "perform" transpersonal actions or think transpersonal thoughts. In addition, such an individual can experience transpersonal inner movements registering in the consciousness as a certain kind of nonpersonal "feeling" and emotion — for example, what Buddhists call **compassion** and presumably was meant by the Greek word attributed to Jesus, **agape** (which has been mistranslated as **charity** in English).

Any activity that can be called transpersonal (in the sense in which I use this term) has to occur through and by the intermediary of an adequately structured individualized person. Nevertheless, the person may not necessarily be conscious, or fully conscious, of what is occurring through him or her. When consciousness is still pervaded with the residual characteristics of both the culture's collective mind and the person's ego-mind, the transpersonal movement has to bypass the brain consciousness and operate by controlling nerve pathways in the body of the apparent performer of the action. On the other hand, generally speaking the Avatar type of human being (whatever his or her level of consciousness may be at the time) is conscious **in** the action — thus, as he or she performs it. For a brief moment, activity and consciousness are fused in a transpersonal "movement," through and during which spirit penetrates the matter of the performing material system — the human body.

This, however, does not imply that the person through whom the spirit-induced action is performed is "nothing but" what is now popularly acclaimed as a "channel" for communications from a superior Being or "Master." Channeling usually implies an almost entirely passive or mechanical operation in which the structure and quality of being of the self-proclaimed channel are negligible factors. Whenever such an interpretation is correct, the process is mediumistic, not transpersonal.

Transpersonal activity implies a definite interaction between the performer of the transpersonal act and its spiritual source transcending the strictly human level of consciousness; the quality of the interaction conditions the form of the communication or the release of transhuman power. The Bible was not "dictated" by the God of the Hebrew people, nor the Koran by the Angel Gabriel. Relatively exact transpersonal communications from a Pleroma being to a "disciple" occur only to the extent the receiving

human personality has made himself or herself steadily **attuned** to the vibration and power of the spiritual Source, and also to the extent the **motive for accepting** the role as intermediary has been entirely free from ego, pride, and subtle self-glorification. In any case, the mind of the human pole in such a polarized interaction provides at least the formulation (the words and forms of speech) of whatever the vertical communication or transmission intends to convey.

More specifically, the human receiver acts as a focalizing agent for **the need** of his people and his culture. Though he or she may be unaware of it, the entire inner being of such an agent takes the form of a "prayer" to the Pleroma — the greater planetary whole operating at a higher level of the hierarchy of being. In the case of a potential "genius" in the arts, in literature, or even in science, the creative person becomes at least to some extent, even if perhaps not obviously, a "representative" man or woman of his or her culture and of the people molded by the culture. As such, the "representative" man or woman is at the same time the problem and the solution the spirit offers. The transpersonal action or communication answers not only a personal need, but, even more, the need of the community.

Unfortunately, in a great many instances the creative person is so stirred and exalted by the experience of creativity (and perhaps by fame) that the ego pounces on the experience and makes it a pedestal for self-glorification. This is to be expected of many great creative persons, for often even they do not realize that the source of their inspiration and power transcends their personhood; they can consider creative work only as "self-expression" — or in Nietzschean Romantic terms, as the "release of the torment of plenitude." More disturbing and misleading is the "spiritual teacher" whose ego colors or even alters a transpersonal transmission or act. Such a situation almost inevitably leads disciples or the general public to vulgarize or disparage their image of spiritual realities.

Transpersonal Activity versus Mediumship - 3

Who is the "self" in "self-expression"?

It is difficult to define the nature of **both** the creative process (in terms of cultural products) and the "spiritual" transfer of knowledge, healing energies, or transformative power able to produce basic changes in consciousness and the quality of the will. This is largely due to the fundamental ambiguity inherent in the word **self**. What does the prefix **self** refer to in the word **self-expression**? What does the word **form** mean in any process inducing transformation?

Most students of Oriental philosophy, theosophy, mysticism, or even of today's popular psychology and "metaphysics" believe in the existence of a "higher" and a "lower" self. Some psychologists and philosophers nevertheless point out the incongruity of a person having two selves; for the term **self** implies identity or individuality, the latter literally meaning **not-divided** or **indivisible** and refers to the exclusivistic feeling of being "I" and no one else. Philosophically, the problem posed by the concept of two selves results from confusing the inner feeling-realization of **wholeness** with the nature and quality of the **contents** of the realizing whole. These contents may originate from two different sources and also may be interpreted in relation to two different frames of reference; yet this does not mean that one can legitimately speak of two "selves." The word **self** should have no plural, no more than one should speak of two "wholenesses."

A human being is a whole, the contents of which (energies, impulses and unself-conscious realizations) initially belong to the level of "life." These contents are progressively modified and partially transformed; they are also interpreted in terms of a new frame of reference — the level at which cultures and societies operate. Only when the societal stage of evolution is reached do philosophers and psychologists usually begin to speak of "self." Culture-man is said to be "self-conscious," a term which often is defined as "conscious of being conscious" or objectively conscious (implying a separation between subject and object). Still, a large portion of the **contents** of self-conscious personhood (in either a primitive tribe or a complex modern society) remains the product of biological functions and drives and continues to be influenced by health and disease, vitality or weakness.

Another portion of the contents of personality nevertheless results from the interpersonal relationships and functional (or dysfunctional) activities of a social community. A sociocultural frame of reference tends to be at least partially substituted for the basic pattern of biological drives, including the will to survival. In some cases of extreme religious asceticism or patriotic fervor, the sociocultural frame of reference may even overpower the biological drives. The experience of selfhood — that is, the centralizing feeling-realization of being "I" — and the quality of the human being's actions and "radiations" change with alterations of the balance of forces in his or her personhood

and the nature of the contents of personhood. The consciousness and will may be divided from time to time, driven now by the power of life, then by culture and religion. Nevertheless, one should not speak of a biological self and a cultural self. Self remains self until the human whole fragments at death.⁴⁴

However, the totality of a human being includes not only a biological organism and a self-conscious, culturally, and mentally developed personality but also a higher trinity of archetypal and spiritual factors. From the holarchic point of view, "self" refers to all these factors, and more specifically to a power eventually able to integrate the whole combination of constituents in body, personhood, and spiritual entity. This integrative power is the "highest" principle of the spiritual trinity, and it is a power that penetrates **all there is**, including the body.

As a conscious ego, a human being is not aware of this all-pervasive power, any more than inhabitants of the earth are aware of existing within the solar system, indeed within galactic space. Similarly, the atoms and cells of our physical body probably are not aware of operating within a higher (because more inclusive) field of organic activity and self-consciousness (a human body and psyche). Nevertheless, all self-conscious persons operate within a higher field of spiritual selfhood, although the present stage of human evolution precludes an awareness of it; the physical and mental instrumentalities required for conscious perception of this field are still (normally) under-developed.⁴⁵ Nevertheless they exist in a latent condition, and the experience of a few extraordinarily evolved spiritual pioneers testifies to the possibility of their development. Indeed human evolution can be interpreted as the process of developing these capacities for perception. The basic purpose of the long series of cultures and religious practices is the development of these higher means of consciousness, which are implied from the beginning in the archetype of human selfhood, Man.

⁴⁴ After biological death the body obviously decays, but a less obvious psychic death also can occur when culture-built contents in the personality become sufficiently disassociated, fragmented, and even forgotten, even though the biological functions of the body may still operate. In the latter case it often would be far better, for society as well as for the person, if the body were not artificially kept "alive."

⁴⁵ This field presumably is what in Theosophy is called the "monadic" auric egg. In the human microcosm it is what ancient traditions of Indian occultism call **hiranyagarba** (the "cosmic egg"). See T. Subba Row, **Essays on the Gita**.

Transpersonal Activity versus Mediumship - 4

A definite contact between Pleroma beings and creative or transformative persons or groups is a vertical relationship, but so is the relationship between the spiritual trinity within the total field of selfhood and the physical brain, nerves, and muscles of a particular individual. The latter is the case, however, only if (a very important "if!") the person's higher mind is adequately formed. Only then can it act as an instrumentality for transmission — as a symbolic lens condensing and transmitting the intentional activity of the spiritual constituents of the total human being.

Such a total human being, however, is not merely a "person." Personhood is only one aspect of total selfhood. So is the sexual polarity of the body. Personhood refers to culture, gender to biological sexual differentiation. Therefore, a creative human being should be called neither "he" nor "she," neither English nor Russian. Yet the current of creative, transformative, or healing activity emanating from the spiritual trinity has to flow "down," as it were, **through** the culture-conditioned mind and the sexually differentiated physical body. During the passage, the creative current acquires secondary characteristics. In many instances, these conflict with, deviate, or impair the integrity of the archetypal purpose giving form to whatever the creative-transformative current was to convey, exteriorize, and express.

When this happens — and it presumably **always** happens to some degree — self-expression is ambiguous or ambivalent. Indeed the prefix **self** may refer only to the level of personhood, to the culturally determined contents of the person's feelings and mind. In this case the character of creativity is only personal, and even healing (though perhaps called "spiritual") may only release some of the healer's own vitality. Then the relationship between the healer, creative artist, or performer and the people he or she affects is horizontal. It is a **cultural exchange**, occurring only at the cultural level — the exchange of a product and perhaps money.

Indeed, today most works of art, music, and literature are cultural **products**, not true **creations**. When many people seek "creative self-expression," they do so to compensate for their unsatisfying, disharmonic, nonfunctional and embittering social, business and cultural lives; so also in many instances are their biological-sexual experiences traumatized by unnatural family relationships and waves of fashion. This, however, always occurs during the period of a culture's disintegration. It is particularly disturbing and dysfunctional today because the panhuman evolutionary drive demands a transference of biological energies to the personal level — or at least gives biological (especially sexual) impulses an ambiguous character which is both "personal" and determined by collective fashions.

For an activity to be transpersonal in any meaningful sense, its source must be **beyond** the level of personhood. The creative current is transpersonal, because it flows **through** the person, using the materials made available by the culture. A spiritual power acts as carrier of an archetypal idea seeking adequate form through the mental processes of a creative, individualized person, whose physical body can accurately, effectively, and convincingly

exteriorize what the mind has formed or formulated. Thus four factors are involved, and none can be omitted from a truly transpersonal process or vertical relationship.

A transpersonal activity usually requires the ability to act positively and effectively as a person amidst other persons, thus in terms of horizontal relationships. Such an ability demonstrates the existence of adequately formed instrumentalities of mind and will and a relatively autonomous approach to life. Nevertheless, the person's activity, thinking, and feeling is transpersonal only when these instrumentalities are placed at the service of processes operating at a higher, more inclusive level of being.

At the service — this is the essential key to the true meaning of hierarchical order and transpersonal action. Yet in our self-consciously and indiscriminately egalitarian society, the word **service** has negative connotations unless applied to the maintenance and repair of machines or to "self-service." No one wants to be a servant any longer, because service implies a difference of levels, a vertical relationship between two classes of people, and some kind of hierarchical structure. But if all persons are equal to all others, without any legitimate distinctions, interpersonal relationships are always horizontal.

Several interrelated persons constitute a group or community in which the persons are expected to act positively and responsibly to further the group's decisions and aims. Yet even a wholehearted devotion to the group's purpose is not considered "service," because each member is supposed to have actively and equally participated in the generation and formulation of this purpose which — it is believed — did not exist prior to the deliberation of the group. If the purpose is believed to have existed before-hand, it was only as an unformulated answer to a collective need or desire, probably one of several possible answers.

From a holarchic point of view, any meaningful and valid collective need **already has** an archetypal answer. The answer is not only potential but based on planetary or cosmic principles of organization which need only (a big "only"!) to be brought to a **particular focus** to fit an existing situation or one soon to develop. The focalizing process requires a transpersonal agent who is self-established, self-reliant, and mentally, emotionally, and dynamically effective at the level of culture and personhood. A group can act as such an agent, but one individual in the group usually is the "inspired" focus for the transpersonal transmission of the archetypal ideal. Nevertheless, the interaction of two, three, or more minds may be needed to clarify the need of the larger community (or of mankind as a whole) and to **formulate** the words (even initially the collective "feeling") of the answer to it.

The performer of any truly transpersonal act should be aware (at least during or immediately after the performance) that a superior reality beyond his or her normal personal self is seeking an "actor" to play a part required in a larger system of activities. Thus a religiously conditioned person aspiring to transpersonal agenthood may say to the God of his or her inner life, "Thy will be done, not mine." But this God may well be only a word or image needed to condense, unify, and personalize everything transcending the everyday realities of personhood, matter, and life. This all-purpose condensation may obscure the existence of levels of being which actually can be reached by human efforts or

(I must add) from which a person may fall if the pull of negative cultural or personal forces proves overwhelming.

It seems particularly difficult for intellectuals and scientists, but also for most other persons, to accept the idea that planetary beings might exist and operate at a level of consciousness and activity as superior to our present-day sociocultural modes of living and thinking-feeling as a person like Goethe or Edison is superior to a primitive biological organism. Most human beings lack a cosmic kind of imagination. They reduce the cosmos — the greatest whole of existence we can speak of — to a mass of matter and modes of energy similar to those their senses perceive. What a pathetically narrow reductionism! Yet minds still close to the compulsive level of instincts ruled by the requirements of biological functions seem to need such a reductionism to feel secure. This need for biological security and personal comfort and happiness still dominates the consciousness and relationships of the immense majority of human beings, even those claiming the status and privilege of individualized and autonomous selfhood.

Thus, before the majority of human beings can even barely begin to adequately understand and assent to being components of the planetary greater whole in which we all "live, move and have our being," many intermediate steps — transitional phases — are required. Persons determined to free themselves from the binding pressures of biological drives often avail themselves of "occult" religious disciplines such as asceticism and certain yogic practices. Other modes of yoga and meditation are used in attempts to control the unsteady protean activity of the mind; but the context in which they are used often retains the sociocultural and religious limitations of the mother-culture and the language that had formed the mind. A still more radical process of transformation eventually has to be experienced if the Pleroma level of being — which includes not only consciousness but also activity — is to be reached. This process has been symbolized as "the Path." It is often called "the Path of discipleship" to indicate that successful completion of the process requires the **interaction** of the individual person "walking" on the Path and a Pleroma being — thus a linking of two fundamentally different levels. The divine must "descend" to meet the "ascending" human being. There must be interrelationship, nay more, an interpenetration of minds, as well as exact attunement of the centralizing powers operating as "selfhood" — individual selfhood and pleromatic selfhood.

The process inevitably is arduous and long. At any step along the way it may backfire or abort, even up to the last moment before the consummation of the "divine Marriage." This consummation implies Crucifixion: the transmutation of root-power into seed-power. The seed is set free and falls to the ground filled with the humus of the decaying failures of past subcycles — a "three-day" descent into hell. Then the resurrection.

Symbols, of course; but all that transcends personhood and the individualized experience of a culture-built mind must be evoked by symbols that are the harvest of collective human experiences at the levels of culture, personhood, and life. Every step a human being takes on his or her evolutionary journey has to be illumined by symbols, which at the level of culture take the form of myths and rites of passage.

Our society, alas, has largely forgotten the use, or at least the deeper meanings, of rites of passage even during normal processes of the growth, maturation, and disintegration of

the biological and sociocultural human being. Organic growth always implies phases of transition — passages from one state to another. An end becomes a new beginning, and to begin without any understanding of what is being initiated condemns the opening phases of the new process to spiritual barrenness and mental confusion. Because modern individualistic and materialistic society has lost the sense of the importance of biological and cultural rites of passage, it cannot easily grasp the meaning of a transcendent Path of total metamorphosis which involves a series of graded steps and difficult, often crucial, transitions. Indeed this society operates in conditions of spiritual barrenness and mental confusion, even though powerful ferments of transformation and metamorphic pressures are increasingly active.

To assist such an activity ever so little by trying to elucidate what is today at stake and the deeper meaning of the impending transitions — this is the purpose this book is meant to serve. The future alone will reveal to what extent the writing of it can be interpreted as transpersonal service.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Rites of Passage - 1

Whatever occurs at the level of personhood and culture is deeply affected by functional processes and changes in the individual's biological organism. Thus, movement from one sublevel to another in the socio-cultural system in which a child is born normally is related to the factor of age, particularly to biopsychic periods of transformation such as puberty, change of life (or menopause), and the progressive deterioration of biological functions in old age. A person also experiences sociocultural transitions from narrower to more inclusive areas of interpersonal relationship if he or she moves from a village to a city, from a parental home to a university, or sooner or later shifts his or her sense of involvement and concern from a family group to a nationwide business or governmental organization or even to international issues and the future of mankind under the menace of a nuclear holocaust.

Unless precipitated by unpredictable catastrophes, all basic changes — be they biological, biopsychic, sociocultural, or even more far reaching — require a period of transition. If a critical event, decision, or move precipitates the change, a brief or long period of conscious or semiconscious preparation for or expectation of the actual occurrence nearly always precedes it, and the latter is followed by a time of readjustment. If the change is radical enough — if it affects the very roots of the being and the framework of consciousness — it is a crisis. A crisis (from the Greek **krino**, to decide) is essentially a series of internal or external occurrences that forces a person to take a decision or (negatively) compels him or her (more or less unwillingly) to alter his or her way of feeling, thinking, and/or behaving. The alteration may affect relationships with other people, the environment, and/or society as a whole; or it may manifest as an inner transformation, a new perspective on life and the universe, a deep new feeling of what is valuable and "real."

In many ancient societies, a great deal of attention was paid to periods of biological and psychosocial changes resulting in a new type of relationship between the person experiencing the transformation and his or her community. "Rites of passage" were devised to accomplish definite purposes. Modern individualistic and materialistic societies usually fail to understand and appreciate these purposes and rites, and this failure has serious, negative ramifications in the psychological and sociocultural development of a personality. This does not mean that rites of passage or ritualistic processes are absent from Euro-American society; many sociocultural processes (especially in education, business, and politics) are **de facto** ritualistic. However, the element of "sacredness" is absent from them. If it is present theoretically, as in Catholic sacraments, most of the people performing the rites only superficially realize the essential meaning and vital challenges the rites were meant to convey to those experiencing them.

According to the Catholic tradition (which sadly is being diluted today), a sacrament has two aspects. It is a symbol of the progressive participation of a person in the community of the Church; and it theoretically establishes, actually and psychically (or spiritually from the Church's point of view), a two-way relationship between the person

and God, through the intermediary of a consecrated servant of God, a bishop or priest. This vertical relationship begins with Baptism. From a theological point of view, it is "substantiated" and made effectual by the sacrament of Communion in which the member of the Church ritualistically partakes of substance of the "Body of Christ" in which we all "live, move and have our being."

From a holarchic point of view which seeks to interpret spiritual tradition anew, this Body is referred to or is a symbol of the spiritual level (the "pneumosphere") of the planet earth. The sacrament of Communion symbolically should bring to the communicant the sustaining power of the realization of being fully **human** in a universal, planetary sense. This obviously is not what happens to the present-day child who passes through the ritual of a "first Communion," and it probably was not the original meaning and intention of the ritual, which was derived from the practice of communal meals in ancient "Brotherhoods." Nevertheless, the Catholic rite of "first Communion" can be interpreted as the Christian equivalent of the puberty rite performed in most tribal societies; but since young children are allowed to receive Communion today, the connection has been lost.

In tribal societies, for a boy the puberty ritual usually meant leaving his mother's **psychic** womb and qualifying for participation in the tribe as an individual member. In India, the young Brahmin received his "sacred thread" (symbol of the thin current of spiritual force linking the outer person with its triune spiritual entity) and in some cases left his maternal home in search of a guru, a spiritual father-mother. The native American boy, after days in the sacred **kiva** (which represented the psychic womb of the tribe as a consistent and organic whole), was sent into the forest to fast until he received in a vision his "true name" — the certification of his place and function in the tribal organism. In Africa, boys and girls had to pass through various tests and a ritual circumcision symbolizing a new openness to the inflow of the forever fecundant principle of life. In all cases, these rites originally were meant to sacralize as well as ritualize the biopsychic activation of sexual, reproductive energies and the archetypal end of a childhood which had been the embryonic stage of personhood within a safe, womb-like home.

After years of study or further biopsychic tutelage, the process begun with the rite of puberty was brought to a further level in the ritual of marriage, which held the promise of actual progeny and thus of the cultural-religious as well as the biological perpetuation of a particular tribe, race, creed, or nation.

In the Catholic Church, the repetition of Communion is intended to keep the root-power of the Church alive and vibrant in the participant at the level of collective psychism. The ritual of matrimony, in which God is understood to be invisibly present through the priest, insures the dedication of the intended future progeny to the perpetuation of a religious community, which is no longer tribal but considered all-inclusive, all-human, and thus "planetary." This "universal" community is believed to be the "bride of Christ," the planetary matrix out of which a "Communion of Saints" — a spiritual organism to some degree comparable to what modern theosophy calls the "White Lodge" — gradually is emerging, century after century.

The Catholic sacraments (baptism, first communion, marriage, and extreme unction for the dying) are, or should be experienced as, rites of passage; Protestant Churches, Judaism,

and most other organized religions also have their own rites of passage. Unfortunately, all have become primarily social formalities. Commencement (graduation from college) is an instance of a secular rite of passage relevant to a change of social status; so is the coronation of a king or the inauguration of a president. All such rituals, however, have little value and even less "sacred" meaning if they are not (1) conceived and passed through as a conscious preparation for a crisis of transformation, and (2) referred to an encompassing "greater whole" - be it the tribe, Church, nation, humanity-as-a-whole, or Christ as the planet's mystical body - that actually or symbolically participates in the rite.

When such rituals are understood and performed in their original meaning as truly functional events, they focus the power of a new level of existence (a new "greater whole") upon the person or persons experiencing them. A rite of passage is a rite of empowerment and a true initiation into a new realm of being in which the experiencer receives the power to operate and is accepted by new peers. Only then can the new initiate have horizontal relationships with his or her elders; until then these relationships inevitably are vertical, even though their character as such may be disguised by kindness or compassion. It is also most important that the would-be initiate experience the rite and the passage in clear consciousness of what it is meant to accomplish. The elders, who already have experienced the passage and are established at the new level, usually prepare the aspirant for the ritual of empowerment beforehand, so that the person being transformed can pass through it as fully conscious of its purpose as possible.

In an unprepared person, deep-rooted changes from one sublevel of personhood to another may manifest as ominous feelings or forebodings, internal mental arguments, and/or psychosomatic pressures or illnesses. The total meaning and purpose, indeed the essential causes of these, usually are unknown or unclear to the experiencer or distorted by his or her rationalization of a self-protective ego. Ritualization gives meaning — be it collective or generic, psychic or biological, or mental and spiritual — to such a crisis by revealing it as a necessary phase of transition between two levels (or sublevels) of an impersonal, more or less universal process which inevitably obeys evolutionary rhythms and "laws." The understanding that the latter operate not only within the particular individual in crisis of transformation but in **all** human beings (and in one form or another in all systems of organization, be they material, psychic, or cosmic) should help dissipate the particular individual's resistance and fear, and help him or her pass fully consciously through the crisis.

Rites of Passage - 2

Is knowledge always constructive?

The ability to pass through a radical crisis consciously, with a fully open and aware mind, may make the difference between success and at least partial failure. The Greek oracle at Delphi exhorted everyone, "Know thyself"; but what is this "self" which should be known? What is to be "known" (at least at first) is not so much **who** "I" am, but **what** "I" am. This means the contents of the at least relatively insulated and differentiated sphere (or mandala) of the being centralized by this totally abstract feeling of being "I," a separate, different, relatively unique entity. The important facts to know refer to the "am," not to the "I." "I" is a universal, formless, level-less principle, active everywhere, without any possible qualifications. The "am" is the pattern of composite relationships constituting a definite system of organization. In a crisis, this pattern is upset (the deeper the crisis the more thorough the upset) because the fundamental character of the system itself is changing. The "I" remains what it is, as long as the system does not totally break down. If it does, the "I" vanishes, though persistent memories of its presence may keep the fragments relatively integrated for some time.

When the conscious understanding of the complex nature of the "am" is referred to the superpersonal reality of a persistent and significant greater whole, a breakdown of the total structure of the system of "personhood" can be avoided. A correct meaning can be given to the relationships operating at the new level, because the essential character and quality of that level is symbolized in the rite and at least to some extent explained during the preparation for it. The inner attitude (or emotional reactions) of the person preparing for the change is the basic factor, but it is deeply affected by the manner in which whoever assists in the process presents the change and the necessity (or inevitability) for it.

This is particularly evident in the special field of preparation for changes known — and usually misunderstood — as natal astrology. The essential purpose of astrology is to reveal to the "I" of the person the organization of its "am" as a biopsychic system. It is also to make the "I" conscious of the meaning of changes that can be expected periodically during the continuous process of unfoldment from birth to death. During this process what is only potential at birth is to be actualized through the complex relationships of the state of personhood within a sociocultural environment. The philosophical basis of astrology is the concept that all systems in nature operate according to the interactions of a few fundamental, interdependent principles of organic, functional order. While human beings observe and experience the operation of these principles all the time, when one is closely and subjectively involved with what they represent it is difficult to see beyond the play of superficial and seemingly chaotic experiences. In contrast, the order revealed by the periodic motion of celestial bodies in the universally human experience of the night sky refers to factors that are so remote and seem so simple that one can be very objective to what they convey concerning cyclic processes of change.

Nevertheless, the practicing astrologer is confronted by two basic problems: how to interpret these processes and give their phases concrete meanings that can be applied to events and relationships at the level of personhood; and how to effectively yet safely

present these interpretations to a client about to meet a crisis of transformation. This is difficult because an abstract relationship (the angular distance between astrological factors, be they planets or other symbolic points) has to be **translated** into terms that make sense at the levels of biological, sociocultural, and personal-individual events. Furthermore, the exact nature of these events remains largely uncertain, as they may be internal or external, and often both. Another difficulty involves knowing intuitively or through empathy how the client will react to the announcement of an impending change — perhaps a harsh crisis of transformation — and how he or she will be affected subconsciously by the information. In any field of investigation, the basic question is always how valuable, usable, or safe is knowledge — especially any knowledge which cannot be integrated immediately, securely, and intelligently into a more-than-personal picture of human existence, either as human existence is today or as it can be expected to be in the future.

A process of self-protection may operate in any situation involving a truly esoteric revelation, because an unready person simply will not understand what has been said or will even fail to realize that something of deep, previously hidden significance has come to light. Nevertheless, before new social or personal happenings actually can occur, human beings seem to need to be able to imagine them, even if the imagining is imprecise or confusing. Indeed, the anticipation of an impending change can produce powerful effects (or affects), including fear, strong emotional uncertainty, uncontrollable restlessness, and the urge to escape from what has been predicted. Such reactions weaken in advance the inborn yet still potential faculty which the future confrontation is meant to stipulate or arouse — a faculty having its place and function within the total life-process, just as the crisis also has its place and purpose.

The only way to avoid such negative reactions to foreknowledge is to present the predicted event, as an unavoidable phase of a deeply significant and universal process which sooner or later all human beings will have to experience simply because they are "human." Painful and disturbing as the event or its anticipation may be, it should be given the meaning of being a necessary and inevitable step leading to a higher level of experience and fulfillment — a means to be accepted in view of a magnificent end.

Whether predictive statements be astrological, psychological, medical, political, or astronomical, all forms of foreknowledge or mentally pictured expectations have to be evaluated in such a light. The validity of information conveyed depends entirely on the frame of reference within which it has meaning and value and on the temperament, character, and the quality of the will and understanding of the person or group being confronted with foreknowledge and new perspectives.

To live transpersonally is (in the highest sense of both these terms) to live in a state of transition between personhood and a Pleroma type of consciousness and activity. Because it implies consciously accepting to be an active, positive intermediary between the future and the present, it requires allowing the vibration, power, and light of a state of being which is only one's future to pass through one's organism as it presently is. The present state, not only of the consciousness and mind, but of the whole personality, including of course the physical body, its nerves and organs of action, has to be made to resonate in

tune with rhythms operating at the higher Pleroma level. Periodic or occasional states of crisis inevitably result. Indeed what I have called "the transpersonal way" should be understood as a broader, less specific version of "the Path" referred to by most relatively recent esoteric traditions.

Rites of Passage - 3

"The Path" as a rite of passage

The Path is, I believe, most significantly and constructively understood as a long and arduous rite of passage. The now popularized concept of a series of four or five "great Initiations," which is derived from Buddhist as well as from Masonic traditions, refers to crucial moments of this ritual process at which successive levels of Pleroma power and consciousness are brought to a focus in the individual treading the Path of total and irrevocable transformation. The whole process is a rite because the factors structuring it have a universal or rather planetary validity; they refer to the archetype of Man and what is generically possible to a member of the species homo sapiens. The form of the rite nevertheless is colored by the culture and religion of the individual undertaking the transformative process. The form is also affected by the responses that can be expected of an individual whose sub-conscious motivations have been conditioned since birth (or even before) by a particular set of early family patterns and religious assumptions which are extremely difficult, though necessary, to overcome.

The Path of radical transformation implies a vertical relationship between centers of consciousness and activity at two levels, between the person treading the Path and one (or more) Pleroma beings. The spiritual power of the planetary level becomes focused through the "Master" (the Pleroma being), for the purpose of assisting the "disciple," insofar as assistance is possible and safe. A more or less definite mode of communication may be established, normally involving prayer or meditation at the personal level and a concrete or symbolic, direct or indirect, answer from the Pleroma level. The human being's tendency to personalize the relationship and personify its spiritual pole is unavoidable in most instances and in a sense justifiable; yet it can cause the disciple to misinterpret and give an overly concrete, literal form to the products of a relationship which seems to take a personal form only because it is interpreted by a disciple still functioning in a very personal way.

Much depends upon the exact level at which the individual center of the disciple's being is able normally, or under abnormal pressures, to operate — thus on his or her quality of will, purity of motives, and capacity of mind to picture the ritual process of transformation. The resilience and strength of the body are also very important, for a release of spiritual power would easily shatter a weak or unprepared organism. At the level of the collective psychism of the disciple's culture responsible for the structure of his or her mind, it also could arouse forces always ready to oppose any individually determined and effective ascent toward the Pleroma — the spiritual all-human community. Such an opposition has been dramatized in "occult" novels and assuredly can be a powerful factor setting limits to what any individual on the Path can hope to accomplish in his or her present life span.

However, these limits should be considered manifestations of the individual's karma, thus of the legacy he or she received at conception from previous cycles of existence, either recent or long past. In addition to personal karma, collective racial and sociocultural karma also is involved, for both the individual and collective polarities of human existence

inevitably are activated in any determined effort to radically transform the fundamental nature of mankind at any particular stage of planetary evolution. Just as the level of evolution of mankind affects the possibilities open to any particular person, so the success (or failure) of any one individual consciously entering the Path affects to some degree the entire evolutionary process on earth.

The situation can be understood more clearly by referring the Path, as a process of transformation, to the great cycle of being outlined in Part One of this book. The **possibility** of beginning this process can arise only in an individualized, conscious, determined, and relatively independent or self-induced manner at a particular stage of the evolutionary curve. This must occur somewhere past the midpoint between the symbolic Noon and Sunset, for such a midpoint symbolizes the definite beginning of the process of individualization. If ultimately successful, the process leads to the stage of Illumined Man, the Gate of Silence at which the principles of Unity and Multiplicity are of equal power and the human consciousness is illumined by the light, power, and presence of the creative God (the symbolic Sunrise or "first point" of a particular cosmic cycle). Strictly speaking, the "human" phase of the great cycle of being is consummated in Illumined Man; what human beings experience as objective existence passes into an increasingly subjective state of "inistence" leading to the Godhead state at which the principle of Unity attains its maximum value for the particular cosmic cycle.

As discussed in Part Three, what is rather inaccurately called "reincarnation" is actually the development of a relationship between a single spiritual Quality (one of the myriad Letters of the creative Word-in-the-beginning, or Logos) and **a series** of successive earth-born human beings developing within successive cultures. Such a series of increasingly individualized persons becomes gradually more attuned and responsive to the spiritual Quality seeking to find a perfect vehicle of expression in a human form and thus -to consummate the "divine Marriage" of spirit and matter. The process of radical transformation called the Path begins when one of the personalities of this series becomes aware **in an individualized and self-induced manner** that it is connected with a spiritual Quality — in whatever way his or her religion, philosophy, and culture names it and explains its existence — and completely accepts union with it as an essential, ideal goal.

A particular person may not accomplish much toward this goal, but efforts made in that direction are not lost; they strengthen the subtle connecting link between the spiritual Quality and any new person drawn to the series. Every positive and successful step counts; every moment of crucial weakness, indecision, or collapse delays advance on the Path. Progress can be so delayed that the planetary cycle of mankind ends before the supreme moment of union occurs, in which case the process will have to begin again in another great cycle, and probably at about the same point at which the decisive delay previously took place. From the point of view of Wholeness, nothing can ever be lost, except the possibility for a particular participant in a cycle to experience Wholeness **in that particular cycle**.

If one thinks of the reason for the formation of a new universe, it is the loss of such a possibility which generates a new time. Many years ago I wrote, "Time is God's compassion for chaos." The polarization of God and chaos (or of Unity and Multiplicity,

which has much the same philosophical meaning at the level of abstract principles) implies either time or an absolute dualism denied by the very fact of thinking about it; for the thinker evidently is neither God nor chaos but part of a movement of relatedness between these opposites. This dynamic process of relationship is the Movement of Wholeness.

Every whole in the universe, be it an atom, a galaxy, or a human being, is a phase of that movement. When a human being enters the Path, the movement accelerates. It takes the form of a ritual because every movement, every act, becomes symbolic. It becomes a **mythos** which must be lived by every person on the Path. It is a walk, a series of falls and recoveries. Each individual must tread it alone, yet his or her whole culture also is involved, for the culture has molded the individual's mind. The Pleroma, too, is involved, because the future includes the past whence the Pleroma has emerged through dynamic but always uncertain and dangerous presents. Whoever does the walking must carry the burden of time and causation, must experience the birthing of the future out of the womb of the past through individualized nows. The individualization of time — of the meaning a person gives to a series of events, once he or she has started on the Path of transformation of the basic frames of reference to which these events are to be related — is indeed an unrelenting necessity. So, at least, it must seem to the traveler on the Path.

Yet perhaps as one comes very close to the supreme moment of Illumination, this too may seem to be an illusion produced by an unbalanced relation between Unity and Multiplicity — between "I" and the universe. As the Gate of Silence is reached and the opposite polarities of being are perfectly equilibrated for an instant, does not Wholeness reveal itself as changelessly perfect and whole? Is it "for an instant" only? Are transitions and rites of passage, from self-limiting levels to always more inclusive ones, never ending? Is even the continuum of change the ultimate illusion? Or does the supreme realization arise only when one totally accepts the fact that Motion **is** unceasing, that Wholeness **is** a tidal movement of being; and that peace and fulfillment can come only to the consciousness that has identified itself with that movement, whatever form its turning points and reversals of polarity may take? For such a consciousness every moment sings with a rapture of change and unceasing renewal.

EPILOGUE - 1

If motion does not cease and the continuum of change forever pursues its cosmic and metacosmic oscillations, can we conceive of an end or a beginning to the hierarchy of wholes — of an absolutely greatest and smallest whole? Indeed we seem compelled to say that the hierarchical series extends **ad infinitum** in both directions. Yet we are faced with a question which cannot be evaded: Has the word **infinity** — so easy to pronounce! — any valid, understandable, real meaning?

As I conclude this book, these questions, already discussed, once more take hold of the consciousness, clamoring for answers. But how can answers be formulated except in words which would be but symbols, as indefinite as Wholeness is indefinable? Yet Man's supreme destiny is to express in symbols what his "walking on" from fulfillment to ever greater plenitude of being can never totally reveal, because "that" has no form, yet is implied in all perfect forms.

No mind can ever ascertain the meaning of infinity — or of similarly negative terms as timeless and changeless — because what actually is at stake is the validity of the **quantitative mind** whose nature compels it to deal with numbers, thus with multiplicity, though unity is implied as its polar opposite in an unending relationship. Nevertheless the human mind has thought of a concept which seemingly eludes the antiphony of the One and the Many.

"Number one" can be considered both the first number and the principle of numeration; every subsequent number is produced by the addition of one to itself. The series seems to have no possible end, as no number can ever be the largest possible. But this is not all: the intellectual mind also has imagined a series of equally endless negative numbers, which is the inverted image, as it were, of the positive series. What, then, of the zero that stands **between** the positive and negative series? Zero may be called "no-number," but has this negation any real meaning? Mathematicians also use the symbols of plus and minus infinity. These, too, are "no-numbers"; they do not refer to quantity. To what could they refer, together with zero, if not to the experience of Wholeness, for Wholeness cannot be understood, much less experienced, in quantitative terms?

Zero and plus and minus infinity are symbols of the realization of Wholeness by the whole that has become conscious of the choice it can make between affirmation and negation. Such a whole is Man. The true symbol of conscious Man is zero — a symbol whose form signifies the elliptical orbit of a planet. An ellipse does not have one center but two foci. Similarly, the Movement of Wholeness results from the tension between two complementary forces of opposite polarities.

Man stands in the midst of the duality and is fulfilled in Illumination at the symbolic Sunset, when the two great forces of being reach a state of equilibrium which, in terms of the rise of an ever more integrated consciousness of being, polarizes the Sunrise moment of divine-cosmic Creation — the perfect Act in which Unity and Multiplicity are also balanced. Illumined Man stands at the midpoint, way between the size of the largest cosmic whole and that of the most minuscule subatomic particle our instruments can reveal. Most significantly, as the scientist's vision reaches meta-galactic fields of existence

at practically the same time it gains the ability to perceive the smallest molecules and to identify the paths taken by disintegrating atoms. The evolution of human capacities of perception is **one** movement of consciousness in **two** directions: zero reaching toward plus and minus infinity.

Any **whole** is finite, for it belongs to the realm of quantity, the realm of number. The more it belongs to the half-cycle of existence dominated by the principle of Multiplicity, the more it can be objectively represented by a particular number. Yet a moment may come when the consciousness in finite wholes becomes aware of Wholeness. As the mind reacts to the experience, the person can only think of it as infinite. He or she **wants** it to be infinite, for one finds exaltation and ecstasy in the denial of all limitations and in the ability to conceive or envision infinity. Indeed, the more constricted by finite boundaries the consciousness had felt itself to be, the more intense the ecstasy. But the fully mature consciousness in the state of illumined equilibrium realizes that infinity is as much a lure and an illusion as the finite structure of a particular whole of being is a prison.

Reality is in the movement that leads from lesser to greater wholes. It is an ever-repeated rite of passage. Whoever seeks to perform it successfully should invoke the "blessing" of Wholeness upon his or her movement, which should be a movement attuned to the rhythm of Wholeness — a movement **sub specie aeternitatis**. It should be Wholeness in act — a totally conscious act, because consciousness inheres in Wholeness.

The question raised by the logical impossibility of attributing an end to the hierarchical series of wholes is therefore self-defeating, for when posed in such quantitative and dimensional terms it reveals a consciousness bound to a particular set of personal-intellectual limitations. It reveals a mind that has become identified with a particular number. Wholeness cannot be understood, and even less experienced, in quantitative terms. Any number in search of a "Father" should go back to the One-in-the-beginning, but the realization of Wholeness can arise only in the consciousness which has accepted becoming the no-number, zero. In this metaphysical and symbolic sense, in zero only can there be Wholeness. In zero the concept of and the longing for infinity becomes meaningless. Zero can be added to any number; the "presence" of Wholeness illumines any whole that can be inspired by it to take one step forward in the hierarchical series of wholes.

In order to "walk on" the "I" must be ready to experience the fall into zero and then to pass on. At each step, the horizon of Wholeness seems to increase, but Wholeness must remain indefinite because essentially undefinable. It is undefinable because it can be anything, yet is nothing in particular. Any attempt to define Wholeness merely defines the position of the definer in the Movement of Wholeness. Yet, recognized or not, Wholeness is everywhere and at all times "present" in every whole. It gives power to every act of relatedness open to the realization of Its presence — a dynamic presence, for It is unceasing motion. And in the Movement of Wholeness all there is, was, and ever will be is inter-related and interacting.

One factor, as yet unmentioned, should not be forgotten: the speed of motion. At the level of molecular activity, the speed at which molecules move takes the form of measurable heat. At the human level, the possibility of accelerating the process of change parallels the possibility of a greater or lesser **intensity of response**, either to the avataric manifestation of a new aspect of archetypal Man or to an individual experience of one's spiritual Self and the realization of one's existential dharma.

Intensity of response: how basic a factor in the lives of human beings these words reveal! The "laggards" in human evolution are the slow-minded, the hesitant, the individuals who, enamored of their narrowly defined sphere of being — of the contents of the mandala of their personhood — "take a long time" to resonate to the great bell announcing the opening of a new day. For whoever immediately takes hold of the opportunity for self-transcendence and with tremendous intensity of feeling commits the lesser in his or her nature to the greater — whose presence perhaps has been intimated only by a seemingly trivial event — will find the implications of every phase of existence appearing in a radically new light.

As the inertial resistance of the past and its traditional formations are overcome, such an individual becomes resistlessly and undeviatingly attuned to the new Tone of the Movement of Wholeness perceived by his or her inner ears. The individual's sense of time, having lost its egocentric and culture-bound character, then can merge with the immeasurable continuum of change, unconditioned by clocks and planetary cycles. For such an individual, in fever of ever-accelerating experiences of culminating fulfillment, the Movement of Wholeness may seem the prodigiously fast whirling of the wheel of being, as sub-cycles are almost immediately compounded into ever larger cycles. The many colors scattered upon the whirling disc of a universe vibrant with incredible speed fuse into whiteness; and the whole Image of the cosmos which was envisioned by the Godhead at the Midnight hour may appear projected upon this whiteness of limitless space. Dimensionless, timeless, changeless: what else could the vision be called? The cyclic motion is so great that the wheel of change appears to stand still, radiantly frozen in Space, all relationships being worked out according to their formation in the compassionate Imagination of the Godhead. For a supreme Instant, the heat of ever-changing existential relationships becomes the light of Wholeness — but only for an Instant.

The consciousness that has experienced such a state of wholeness may retain the mystery of the experience deep within; but seeking to formulate and perhaps communicate what has happened, the mind struggles with words and concepts that only dim and confuse the memory. Yet the numinous experience may have forever severed ancient and obstinate forms of bondage. A powerful sense of inner dynamism and unceasing movement may become a driving force of total transformation. As the "I" becomes the movement itself, the now unresisted motion leads the transfigured human being to his or her place in the Pleroma of Man, the sublime Company of all Illumined beings in which the Creative Word experiences Its perfect actualization.

They watch; their united love sustains, even through the darkness that may follow the experience of too much light for the individual to bear and assimilate. Above and Below

synchronize in conic duration. And in this interrelatedness and interpenetration of the greater and the lesser there is, for individuals still mostly human, power and certitude — an inner peace more stable than mystical ecstasy.

Out of the ever-renewed chording of innumerable wholes, within wholes, within wholes . . . the cyclic melody of Wholeness rises. Is it a melody? Or is it one immense Tone sent forth by the gong of Space for countless wholes to resonate to — if they can, if they dare? Oh, blessed are those whose hearts respond to it, and in whose minds its overtones become Meaning, and Meaning, peace!