

The Mystery of the Ego

*All must engage in individual self-study, asking again and again, “What is important to me? What am I prepared to let go? Have I the courage to die and be reborn?” A person who is in earnest will, without losing a sense of proportion and humour, set aside periods in which to take specific steps in the direction towards the Path. This centres upon what H.P. Blavatsky called the mystery of the human ego, the mystery of each human being.*

From the standpoint of Reality, that of measureless homogeneity, all planes of consciousness and of form are illusory. There exists nothing inherent within the ceaseless flux. There is no permanent reality to be found. Thus, does the Buddha teach in the *Diamond Sutra*, “There are no beings to save.”

There are those whose existence is one with changeless Reality. It is through their teachings we learn of our immeasurable divine inheritance, our boundless spiritual potential. This pertains to a broadening of our conceptual awareness, to a deepening of our fine feelings for all.

One must engender within one’s heart a deep yearning for the Real, coupled with a firm determination, a kind of vow to one’s self, within the

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mind. This leads naturally to the desire for help, for teachings leading toward this “mystic marriage” between the higher mind and the spiritual heart, neither of which bear direct correlation with their physical counterparts.

Although all human beings are the same in essence—and in the seven *principles*—each is utterly unique as a complex manifestation of individual, national and collective karma. The countless threads weaving, over lifetimes, the karma of any Ego, are so ancient and interwoven that it taught only a Sage can see and understand the deep mystery of any being.

Thus, few be they who can this clearly see. We as individuals, therefore, are not in a position to correctly see, let alone understand, any other being. We can, however, seek to unravel our own karmic threads, simultaneously beginning to weave a gossamer fabric composed of our golden moments, understood from the standpoint of the Teachings. To begin such a quest enables one to discover the profound need for self-study, coupled with some form of meditation. These practices must be combined with the gradual

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withdrawal of consciousness, of attention from the ceaseless flux, from names and forms within it, from conventional conceptions of time and space, from the atavistic habits arising through desires and aversions.

If this three-fold practice is maintained through daily continuity of effort occurring, at least once a day, at the same time and in the same place—a place set aside for only that purpose—one has commenced upon the road leading towards the Path. One will, at some point, become blocked, able to proceed no further. This unfortunate condition can, we are taught, be avoided to the precise extent that our motive for action is to benefit mankind, not merely what we take to be our selves, our own private, separative search for the Real. As an ancient text has it, “To live to benefit mankind is the first step.” Thus, one must generate appropriate means, methods and modes, consistent with one’s inherent karmic variables, avoiding unrealistic optimism—often associated with desire for some form of vicarious atonement—or undue pessimism—usually resulting from an overly truncated view of reality, accompanied by claustrophobic anger

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and self-hatred. There must be a realistic assessment of one's variables and their potentials, divorced from blurred vision, from self-serving editing of one's karmic field, of one's life to date.

As the seeker increasingly looks to the higher, the more expansive, withdrawing blind attachment to the perceptual field—considered by most as Reality itself—there will, inevitably, come a point at which a *void* is entered. This experience is disorienting, often terrifying. Having been taught this in advance of its occurrence, the student knows this to be an important and necessary transitional phase along the Path. Often everything is thought to be truly meaningless, unreal. It is during such transitions that the deeper meanings of, and necessity for faith become apparent. Seeing no meanings, feeling no Reality, lacking a solid place upon which to stand, leads to a condition beyond the capacity of the conventional mind to transmute the condition, to truly understand. The mind has become useless. Lacking deep faith in the Teachings and the Teachers, a motive encompassing the good of all beings, one will become stifled,

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overcome by fear, paralyzing the will, staying all further progress. This state, inevitable along the Path, is brilliantly described and commented upon in *The Dark Night of the Soul*, by St. John of the Cross.

This phenomenon, characterized by H.P. Blavatsky as “a series of progressive awakenings,” does occur, through different sets of variables, to nations, to civilizations. Here, we are limiting the discussion to individual seekers, lovers of truth.

Each of our lives, whether we be seekers or not, occurs in “whole and in all parts” within the stream of our unique consciousness, our unique perceptual field. This fact the philosopher Libnitz referred to as “the windowless monad.” Nothing can be known or experienced independent of our own consciousness. Three correlative aspects of this consciousness can be conceptually and experientially distinguished: the field or space, the contents of the field and one’s awareness of each. The contents of the field must, initially, be examined, found to possess only a kind of pseudo reality lent to them by our engrained world views: This can lead the student to an awareness of the space in

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which exist the ever-changing contents of the field. One has become aware of what might be referred to as “the objective void.” Thus, the contents of one’s field of consciousness are seen to be as mere shadows superimposed upon empty space: the Void. What, then, is to be said of the third correlative aspect of consciousness, the awareness of the heterogeneity of perceptions, homogeneity of the field within which these perceptions occur? This awareness of the field and its backdrop can be traced to what source? Initially, it will be thought that the source of this awareness can be captured through the pronoun “I”. Upon further self-study and meditation, however, it will be discerned that this “I” is itself an item within the field, not that which is conscious of it. The ancient dictum “Man, know thyself,” Rama Maharshi’s injunction to continually ask the question, “Who am I,” both point towards beginning to uncover the mystery of one’s self, of one’s Egoic Individuality and its consubstantiality with “the Self of All.”

We are each unique. We must each, therefore, find our own way, the teachings and practices which aid us

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the most during any given phase of our development. Certain general teachings, conceptual maps, practical aids are freely given. “The Path is one; the means to reach it must vary with the pilgrims,” and, as the Koran teaches, “There are as many ways to Allah as there are children of the breaths of men.”

In one sense, this is a solitary, sometimes lonely, journey. In another sense, given Buddha’s teaching of “The Sangha”—the community of seekers—especially if viewed metaphysically, we are never truly alone in our seeking. Beginning to understand this community and always remembering those who have entered the Void survived and returned to help us along our way, enlivens the seeker with hope, thus lessening one’s fear, one’s sense of meaninglessness. In other words, beginning to see one’s self as a seeker among seekers, as a pupil among pupils, gratefully striving to follow the footsteps of Teachers, one is no longer overcome by the deep, yet illusive, sense of loneliness upon the way. This truth can be grasped conceptually with ease. Through the practices mentioned it can, gradually, fill one’s heart with love for the All of which

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one is an integral part. Deeply considered, these teachings will enable one to resolve the alleged problem of the One and the many. As Raghavan Iyer once succinctly put it, “Ten is the Perfect Number. The seeker of the Perfect Number, Ten, must, however, always remember to put the zero before the one rather than the opposite.”

Once again, from the highest standpoint, it will come to be clearly discerned that the field, the contents of the field and consciousness of both are one, that “the mystery of the Ego” is one with the mystery of mankind, the divine mystery of Krishna’s Lila, of the Dance of Shiva.

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